

NHS to pay £100 million to recruit overseas doctors to plug staffing gaps

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1. ITV Report
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The NHS will pay £100 million to recruit GPs from abroad. *Credit: PA*

The NHS is to pay up to £100 million to recruit GPs from abroad in a bid to increase staffing numbers.

Between 2-3,000 doctors are expected to be hired from overseas to start working in British hospitals and surgeries.

Agencies will be given the £100 million to help with the recruitment drive, a contract notice posted by NHS England revealed.

It follows concerns raised by leading medics who fear increasing workloads and a dwindling workforce are putting the NHS under growing pressure.

Health officials aim to increase the number of GPs by 5,000 by 2020.

Initially it had been planned that only 500 doctors would be recruited from abroad by 2020/21, but this has since increased.

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Around 2-3,000 doctors are expected to be hired from abroad. *Credit: PA*

A GP international recruitment office has been launched to run the scaled-up programme operation, with the aim of bridging the "gap between the number of doctors practices want, and the numbers they are successfully recruiting and retaining", NHS England said.

The recruitment agencies will identify, screen and interview potential candidates, as well as provide relocation services.

The estimated value of the three-year contract is £100 million, and NHS England will have the opportunity to extend it for a maximum of a year.

Dr Arvind Madan, GP and NHS England director of primary care, said last week: "Most new GPs will continue to be trained in this country, and general practice will benefit from the 25% increase in medical school places over the coming years.

"But the NHS has a proud history of ethically employing international medical professionals, with one in five GPs currently coming from overseas.

"This scheme will deliver new recruits to help improve services for patients and reduce some of the pressure on hard working GPs across the country."

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