

2nd March 2022 – for immediate release

PRESS RELEASE:

Overseas NHS Workers Day – 4th March 2022

Overseas NHS Workers Day is a recognition of the extraordinary contribution that people who have migrated to the UK play in the NHS, as it faces the biggest challenge in its history with the continuing Covid-19 pandemic and the need to care for increasing numbers of patients in its wake. Yet many overseas NHS workers face an increasingly hostile environment, making their stay here precarious and uncertain - despite coming here to help our sick, our frail, our vulnerable and our dying. We can do better than this, and we need to.

The Doctors' Association UK with support from the Royal College of Physicians (RCP), and the British Association of Physicians of Indian Origin (BAPIO) aim to recognise the incredible contribution these people make in all the roles they fulfil in the NHS, and has asked every NHS Trust in the country to join in with the celebrations.

Almost 200 different nationalities are represented within the NHS in England. The majority of staff are British, but despite being the biggest employer in the UK, the NHS doesn't have enough staff to meet demand and now faces a workforce crisis it has never seen, with the growing need to cater for delayed elective procedure after the pandemic. We need people from overseas. We always have. We need them now more than ever.

This year, DAUK will be screening the documentary 'Hostile' (by independent filmmaker Galeforce) as part of the Day. The documentary charts the uncertainty, hostility and insecurity workers and students from overseas face, and focuses on several NHS staff.

Dr Pushpo Hossain of the Doctors' Association UK (DAUK) Committee said:

“Until the authorities acknowledge the contributions of international healthcare workers in the NHS and establish measures to retain staff, the quality of care and patient safety will suffer.

“On this Overseas NHS Workers Day, we want to stand beside our colleagues from countries that are currently suffering due to political conflict, war, illegal occupation and natural disasters such as Afghanistan, Myanmar, Palestine, Syria, Ukraine, Yemen. We pledge our support for them.”

Sir David Jason said:

“In these uncertain times, the role of NHS Overseas Workers is as important as ever. I would like to send my personal thanks to all the NHS employees who make sacrifices in order to make a difference around the world.”

Dr Ramesh Mehta, President of the British Association of Physicians of Indian Origin (BAPIO), said:

“BAPIO is delighted to support this excellent initiative by DAUK. Celebrating the incredible contributions of the international staff to the NHS will not only be educational but also morale boosting to the staff”

Dr Elissa Abi-Raad, a GP trainee from Lebanon, said:

“We do not want claps or words of appreciation, We did not get into this job for that. We want the right to call the UK our home, to be able to do the job we love without worrying about our visa expiring. I built a life here, I want to keep it.”

DAUK Committee member anaesthetist Dr Matt Bigwood said:

I have worked with hundreds of fantastic colleagues from a huge number of nationalities. The NHS is truly multinational. They are all heroes in my eyes and without them the NHS would catastrophically collapse. They show amazing resilience and positivity often in the face of poor treatment of discrimination and they are not helped by the current political environment. They deserve better and I support them today and every day.”

DAUK Chair Dr Jenny Vaughan said:

"Overseas NHS Workers Day recognises the extraordinary contribution healthcare workers who have migrated to the U.K. have played in the fight against Covid-19. We have a simple message: Make the U.K. a Home for Heroes.

“Our call is for all healthcare workers who have served in the NHS in any capacity during the Covid-19 crisis to be granted indefinite leave to remain in the UK.”

Notes to editors

You can access more information about Overseas NHS Workers Day at:

<https://www.dauk.org/overseas-nhs-workers-day-2022/>

#homeforheroes
#ILR_4_NHS

Doctors' Association UK (DAUK) is an organisation run by frontline doctors for frontline doctors: <https://www.dauk.org> .

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