



# Home Office

Home Secretary

2 Marsham Street  
London SW1P 4DF  
[www.gov.uk/home-office](http://www.gov.uk/home-office)

Professor Sir David Metcalf CBE  
Chairman of the Migration Advisory  
Committee  
3<sup>rd</sup> Floor - Seacole Building  
2 Marsham Street  
London  
SW1P 4DF

15 October 2015

Dear Sir David,

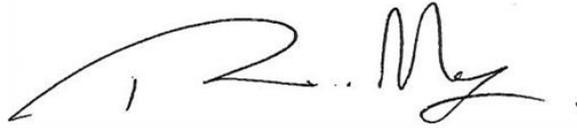
## **NURSING SHORTAGES**

I am writing to commission the Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) to examine whether there is a shortage of nurses or specific nursing job titles which it would be sensible to fill through non-EEA migration.

I am conscious that the MAC considered the issue of nursing shortages in the health sector in your partial review of shortage occupations published in February this year and that you recommended against adding nurses to the shortage occupation list, as well as removal of certain specialist nursing roles. I regret asking you to look at this again so soon.

I understand that your recommendation in February was based on the evidence available at the time, including detailed submissions from the Centre for Workforce Intelligence on behalf of the Department for Health and from the Royal College of Nursing and other health sector organisations. However, since then increasing numbers of NHS Trusts and other interested organisations have raised concerns about nurse staffing levels, highlighting recent changes to recommended safe staffing levels within the NHS. In addition, developments since February include the Government's manifesto pledge to deliver a seven-day NHS and new rules to clamp down on the use of agency staff. I am advised that nursing vacancy rates may be as high as 10% across the health and social care sector, which if so would be twice the maximum level recommended by NICE. It is not for the Home Office to judge these representations and I should therefore be grateful if the MAC could consider the latest evidence.

In view of the potential risks associated with high vacancy rates and the fast-approaching winter period in which we can expect the NHS to be under particular pressure, I have exceptionally agreed to place nurses on the shortage occupation list on a temporary basis pending that full review of the evidence and your subsequent advice. I should be grateful to receive the MAC's report by 15 February 2016 and look forward to your analysis.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. May', with a large, sweeping initial stroke.

**The Rt Hon Theresa May MP**