

The NHS has always been an attractive employer for international medical graduates (IMG), who comprise **30% of its workforce**. For the NHS, IMG have been a ready source of trained doctors, and for the migrating doctors the NHS has provided postgraduate training.

From 3 April 2006, non-EEA or non-resident doctors will no longer be covered by the previous postgraduate doctor and dentist category, also known as 'permit-free' training status. Instead of Permit Free training, they will be required to have work permit for any post they apply.

New visa rules giving preference to UK and EU doctors over overseas nationals for all work permit training jobs, seem to have changed all that. Overseas doctors fear this could be the end of the road for their postgraduate training aspirations.

This policy was announced without any consultation and there was no warning. It will affect all the trainees at different levels whether employed or unemployed.

What is unfair is that many hundreds of doctors were misled into believing there was equal opportunity, and spent their money and time to come to UK in the hope of training opportunities. This sudden change means most of these doctors suddenly find themselves in a completely different market place. There were already over 4000 doctors who have undergone the necessary steps for practice of their professions when this rule was suddenly taken.

Also this regulation has brought about the question that UK started to see the color and origin of people regardless of their capacity and experience. If it is so, it means that UK is losing the principles of tolerance and respect of others..

Overseas doctors came here as they were promised quality training and Equal Opportunities in job selection. They expected to be treated as equals for job opportunities, for training jobs it was illegal to discriminate against doctors from outside the European Union.

They put in a lot of time and effort here— adjusting to a different culture and ways of working without any supporting social networks—hoping for the best postgraduate training.

Many doctors who have been providing invaluable service within the NHS, and have families that have been living in the UK for some time who now face having to return to their countries of origin at short notice.

We request the responsible authorities to make an urgent solution to the immense disruption to career, personal and family life which overseas doctors are facing as a result of these new rules. Many of these doctors have been working hard in the NHS and serving the British public as an important component for several years.