[INSERT NAME OF YOUR LOCAL MP HERE] MP[[1]](#footnote-1)
House of Commons
London SW1A 0AA

Dear [FIRST NAME OF MP],[[2]](#footnote-2)

I hope this letter finds you well. I am writing to you as an NHS worker living in your constituency. I work as a [INSERT JOB TITLE].

Like 150,000 other people everyday, I choose to work for the NHS in a flexible way by working through an agency. This allows me to balance my life with my career – which working full-time wouldn’t, especially as many parts of the NHS haven’t adapted to modern flexible working practices. If someone calls in sick, there is an emergency or a spike in demand, I step in. I’m proud that the way I work helps keep wards open, reduces waiting lists and provides safe patient care.

I am deeply concerned that as directed by the government [NHS Trusts/NAME OF LOCAL TRUST] [are/is] attempting to end all agency work in favour of staff banks. This takes away my preferred route into working for the NHS and may even put my ability to contribute to the NHS at risk. That puts patient safety in jeopardy given the staffing shortages faced by most Trusts.

Many agency workers like me don’t want to work for staff banks. Bank membership has always been available to us, but we value the flexibility agency work provides. Most people I know who work as locums left permanent roles in the NHS due to burnout and unreasonable shift patterns. This push to get agency staff to join banks instead means a number of us will leave the NHS altogether for equally paid, more flexible roles in other sectors, or overseas where conditions and pay are better.

As a result of DHSC’s “crackdown” on agencies, work is shifting to other, less sustainable and often less safe arrangements. Last year, [a report from the Health Services Safety Investigations Body](https://www.hssib.org.uk/news-events-blog/temporary-nhs-staff-a-lost-voice-in-crucial-patient-safety-investigations/) found that attitudes towards temporary staff were putting patients at risk by reducing the overall quality of the staffing mix. [An RCN survey last year found that just a third of shifts had enough registered nurses working on the ward](https://www.rcn.org.uk/news-and-events/Press-Releases/patients-dying-alone-as-just-one-third-of-shifts-have-enough-nurses-analysis-shows). How can this be the right thing to do when the system is under such pressure?

Trusts tell us that they want to transfer us to banks to save money. But objective evidence shows bank staffing is more expensive than most agencies. Overall, £5.8bn was spent on staff banks last year, while the equivalent amount spent on agency staffing was £4.6bn.

It is time for a sensible and considered conversation about the future of temporary and flexible staffing in the NHS. Will you write to the Department for Health and Social Care on my behalf to urge them to pause current plans and commit to engaging with agency workers, the recruitment businesses we work with and other experts?

I would be keen to discuss these issues with you in further detail at a time of your convenience.

Yours sincerely,

[NAME]
[POSTCODE]

1. To find out who your MP is, enter your postcode [here](https://members.parliament.uk/FindYourMP). Check for any additional titles your MP has been awarded on parliament.uk – for example “The Rt Hon” or “Sir/Dame”. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. “The Rt Hon” should **not** be included here. However, “Sir/Dame” should be – so, for example, you would write “The Rt Hon Sir Keir Starmer KC MP” in the address line, but it would be “Dear Sir Keir” in the salutation. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)