[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 the [INSERT JOB TITLE] of [NAME OF BUSINESS], a healthcare business operating in [NAME OF CONSTITUENCY] as a partner to [LOCAL TRUST].

By providing the people the NHS needs, my business keeps wards open, helps reduce waiting lists and provides safe patient care. If someone calls in sick, there is an emergency or a spike in demand, a temporary worker from my books steps in. As a member of our industry body, the Recruitment & Employment Confederation, I am signed up to and audited for compliance standards above and beyond the legal minimum.

I am deeply concerned that [NHS Trusts/NAME OF LOCAL TRUST] [are/is] attempting to end all agency staffing – in some cases with just five weeks’ notice. This approach risks patient safety, removes flexibility for workers, and is likely to drive up temporary staffing costs overall.

On any given day, just over 1 million people work on a temporary basis via an agency in the UK. A high proportion work in the NHS – latest stats put this at around 15%. I can give all sorts of stats and figures but sometimes a picture paints a thousand words. So let me tell you about [Clare, a locum radiographer.](https://www.rec.uk.com/our-view/policy-and-campaigns/voice-of-the-worker)

After 18 years in substantive work, Clare felt she was spending too much time on bureaucracy and not enough on the things that made her job worthwhile – direct patient care. Now, as well as being a locum, Clare runs a training business for radiographers. And she is fully flexible – if a Trust needs someone and it is 50 miles away, she will get in her car and be there for the start of the shift – no matter the time of day. Clare loves her work and gets great feedback from patients and colleagues alike. She is really good at being a radiographer. But if she hadn’t been able to work on a temporary basis, Clare would have undoubtedly left the NHS.

There are countless people like Clare in the NHS. Many juggle both substantive and temporary roles, providing the flexibility needed to continue working in the NHS.

But now, the NHS is pursuing a crusade against agencies for reasons that have never been adequately explained. Objective evidence shows bank staffing solutions are more expensive than agencies procured through a Crown Commercial Services framework, which includes caps on the rates that agencies can charge. With holiday entitlement, higher pension contributions and often higher rates, the cost of bank staff surpasses that of on-framework agencies. Overall, £5.8bn was spent on staff banks last year, while the equivalent amount spent on agency staffing was £4.6bn. In recent communications I have seen, a 50p/hour incentive payment is promised for the first six months for someone to shift from agency to NHS Professionals (a government-backed staff bank) - swelling the overall temporary staffing cost at a time when that money would be better invested elsewhere.

Despite these incentives, many agency workers will not transfer to staff banks. Bank membership has always been available to them, but they value the flexibility agency work provides. A large number have already left substantive roles due to burnout, rigid scheduling, or lack of support. This will simply push more skilled professionals out of the NHS altogether – into equally paid, more flexible roles in other sectors, or overseas where conditions are better.

We are hearing increasingly concerning things about what is going on in our wards. Work is shifting to other, less sustainable and often less safe arrangements as a result of DHSC's "crackdown" on agencies. 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.

[OPTIONAL ADDITION FOR SMALL BUSINESSES: As a SME, it is heartbreaking that this comes just after the Government launched its Small Business Strategy, which included a commitment to “making SMEs a national priority in our new procurement policy system”. This move – particularly without a timeline or a clear plan – threatens my livelihood, as well as that of my team.]

It is time for a sensible and considered conversation about the future of temporary and flexible staffing in the NHS and in [LOCAL TRUST]. 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, recruitment industry bodies 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]
[BUSINESS]

1. 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)