

Healthcare Recruiter responds to automatic UK citizenship recommendation

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Following a report

(<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2016/aug/25/nhs-needs-eu-employees-to-avoid-collapse-says-thinktank>) from the Institute of Public Policy Research (IPPR), which recommends that EU nationals who work as doctors, nurses and physiotherapists should be granted automatic rights to British citizenship, specialist healthcare recruiter, MSI Group (<http://www.msigroupltd.com/>), has voiced its support.

The suggestion is designed to prevent a post-Brexit 'brain drain' from the NHS, with the IPPR warning that the cost and complexity of the current process deters both low-skilled workers and high earners who want a quicker and more efficient system.

Commenting on the recommendation, Nick Simpson, CEO of MSI Group, said:

"As an organisation which is on the front line of recruitment into the NHS, we are already witnessing chronic talent shortages. Many of the Trusts that we work with have already found that recruiting the appropriate number of staff is becoming increasingly challenging."

"Historic cuts to nursing training places, the recent abolition of bursaries for student nurses, changes to Tier 2 visa requirements, and last year's caps on agency pay have all contributed to damaging talent pipelines. Without EU workers the NHS would simply fall over."

"With this in mind, we fully support the IPPR's recommendation. The NHS has been built through the support of hard working immigrants, not least those from the EU. Waiving the £1,200 citizenship fee and fast-tracking valuable NHS workers who have lived in the UK for more than five years, as recommended by the IPPR, would not only help safeguard our National Health Service from potentially disastrous levels of staff attrition, it would also serve as a gesture of thanks to the healthcare professionals who help maintain safe staffing levels and keep the wheels in motion."

"There was a 14% spike in applications for British citizenship by European Union nationals living in the UK in the run-up to the EU referendum and immigration experts have predicted that the Home Office would need to process the equivalent of 140 years' worth of visa applications in 12 months if the 3.5 million EU nationals currently working in the UK decide to seek residency rights if free movement is restricted post Article 50. The truth is that the bureaucracy, cost, and waiting times associated with the process may prompt many healthcare professionals to seek careers elsewhere – and this is a risk that we simply cannot afford to take if we are to maintain patient safety levels."

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