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12 February 2010

Rt Hon Andy Burnham MP
Secretary of State for Health
Department of Health
Richmond House
79 Whitehall
London SW1A 2NS



CHIEF EXECUTIVE
Alan R Potter
MBE MPhil DSc(Hon) CSci FIBMS

Dear Secretary of State

Modernising Scientific Careers

The Institute is the professional body that represents over 19,000 biomedical scientists, most of whom are employed by the health service or private companies that provide services to the health service. Approaching 6,000 of our members are Chartered Scientists with Masters-level qualifications.

I am writing on behalf of the Institute's Council to express its real and considerable concerns over the direction that this project is taking.

Specifically, I regret to say that the Institute has lost confidence in the Modernising Scientific Careers team. The method of working that the team has adopted lacks transparency and has built discord and disagreement. This lack of consensus, we believe, is being ignored and denied in equal measure. This, in effect, is beginning to destroy trust between government and some of the professions.

The MSC project is proposing radical change without any visible evidence base for benefit. There has been no meaningful discussion about the many points of concern that were raised during the consultation period, which we know were received. No credible transitional arrangements have been discussed. It must be that there are major implications for funding for both the degree programmes and training; again there has been scant acknowledgment of this.

The Institute has been represented in the various working parties and committees, and is concerned that its mere presence is being used to assume agreement and compliance. This is not the case, and major concerns remain with the framework proposed.

In 2012 the Institute celebrates its centenary, which represents 100 years of working tirelessly for the benefit of this profession, the health service that it serves and specifically patients. It is therefore with considerable regret that the Institute is forced to the view that continuation with this project without a fundamental review would be improper and not in the best interests of the service or the safety of the patients that it serves.

With kindest regards

Yours sincerely

A R Potter MBE MPhil DSc(Hon) CSci FIBMS
Chief Executive

Copies of this letter were also sent to the following:

Ann Keen MP
Parliamentary Under-Secretary

Phil Hope MP
Minister of State (Care Services)

Rt Hon Mike O'Brien MP
Minister of State (Health Services)

Gillian Merron MP
Minister of State (Public Health)

Andrew Lansley CBE MP
Shadow Secretary of State for Health

Norman Lamb MP
Shadow Secretary of State for Health

Hywel Williams
Plaid Cymru spokesperson
Children, Schools and Families; Health; International Development; Work and Pensions

David Nicholson CBE
NHS Chief Executive

Nicola Sturgeon MSP
Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing

Dr Kevin Woods
Chief Executive
NHS Scotland

Jacqui Lunday
Chief Health Professions Officer
NHS Scotland

Dr Kevin Woods
Director General and Chief Executive
NHS Scotland

Dr Harry Burns
Chief Medical Officer
NHS Scotland

Dr Aileen Keel
Deputy Chief Medical Officer
NHS Scotland

Professor Peter Donnelly
Deputy Chief Medical Officer
NHS Scotland

Michael McGimpsey MLA
Minister for Health, Social Services and Public Safety in the Northern Ireland

Ms Joyce Cairns
Deputy Director of Human Resources

Dr Andrew McCormick
Permanent Secretary
Department of Health, Social Services & Public Safety

Paul Williams
Director General, Health & Social Services
Chief Executive, NHS Wales

Dr. Tony Jewell
Chief Medical Officer Wales

Mrs Jennifer A. Frost
Deputy Chief Scientific Adviser
Welsh Assembly Government

Professor John Harries
Chief Scientific Adviser Wales

Dr Anna van der Gaag
President
Health Professions Council

Marc Seale
Chief Executive and Registrar
Health Professions Council

David Fleming
UNITE

Prof Hardial Chowdrey
Chair
Heads of University Centres of Biomedical Science