

# 3. Why is there an NHS staffing crisis?

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The NHS has 1.4 million NHS staff. Over its 14 years, the Government has failed to give the NHS the resources needed to meet increased demand. NHS staff are covering 121,000 vacancies (8.4%), including 42,300 nurse vacancies. There are over 152,000 care vacancies and £10bn is spent on agency and temporary staff. The NHS depends on the quality and quantity of its staff to deliver safe and effective care – but staff are undervalued, underpaid, and demoralised. Yet they keep our NHS going under ever-increasing pressure, working themselves into the ground for patients.

## WHAT ARE THE FACTS?

- 2,100 health and care staff died with Covid; 10,000 NHS staff have Long Covid; and 21% of health and care workers have high levels of depression (5% pre-pandemic)
- There are 10.8k hospital doctor vacancies and 4 in 10 doctors are considering leaving the NHS
- Nurses' pay is worth 20% less in real terms since 2010, doctors 30% less
- 4,200 GP full time vacancies (2022); but England would need 16,700 more GPs to match the average OECD country
- In 2015 the Government promised 5,000 more GPs but by end-2023 there are 1,881 fewer
- Nearly 8 million on waiting lists places unbearable pressure on staff and patients (who are being failed and dying avoidably)
- Tens of 1000s of healthcare staff are outsourced to private companies without NHS terms and conditions
- The Government's contempt for public services has undermined staff morale
- For 13 years the Treasury refused to fund a workforce plan that ensures staff numbers rise with need. An inadequate plan appeared for the first time in June 2023 and will take years to deliver
- The UK would have **50% more doctors and nurses** and over **£40bn extra health spend every year** since 2010 if funding matched Germany
- The Government is replacing much needed skilled, experienced doctors and nurses with less-skilled non-doctor physician associates and nurse associates with shorter training
- 169,512 staff left the NHS in 2022 (up 25% from 2019) - including 40,000 nurses

## **WHAT MUST HAPPEN NOW?**

- Restore fair pay, staffing levels and morale for health and care staff
- End outsourcing to private companies
- Restore NHS student bursaries, fully fund staff training and abolish student debt
- End de-skilling and downgrading of the health workforce
- Implement an NHS workforce plan to meet the long-term health and care needs of the population and staff, alongside ethical recruitment