

Department of Health: Modernising Medical Careers: Consultation on graduates from outside the European Economic Area**Response by the Wellcome Trust**

May 2008

1. The Wellcome Trust is the largest charity in the UK. It funds innovative biomedical research, in the UK and internationally, spending around £650 million each year to support the brightest scientists with the best ideas. The Wellcome Trust supports public debate about biomedical research and its impact on health and wellbeing.
2. Given that the Trust supports a large number of clinical scientists in the promotion of world-class research, we are pleased to have the opportunity to comment on the Department of Health's consultation which proposes to change the eligibility for recruitment to foundation and speciality medical training.
3. One of the Trust's core funding activities is the provision of fellowship, PhD and studentship programmes, including those aimed specifically at medical students. We have seen many examples of International Medical Graduates (IMGs) who have competed successfully for fellowship funding and have made significant contributions to the UK, including in the specialities which face some recruitment difficulties, such as general surgery and anaesthetics.
4. The Trust also puts significant resources into building clinical research capacity in developing countries. This is a national priority too. The Department for International Development's research strategy, announced last week, sets out the UK's aim to help strengthen research capability for health in developing countries. Training is an essential part of this aim.
5. There are important mutual benefits in promoting training opportunities for developing country medical graduates to spend a period of time in the UK, and similarly for UK medical graduates to spend time in developing countries. Lord Crisp's recent report *Global Health Partnerships: The UK contribution to health in developing countries* makes recommendations to promote opportunities in both directions, some of which have been accepted by the Government. This is also consistent with the Kampala Declaration from the 'First Global Forum on Human Resources for Health' held by the Global Health Workforce Alliance in March 2008.¹
6. It would be detrimental to medical exchange if there were a significant reduction in the opportunity for developing country doctors to train in the UK. The impact of UK medics spending time abroad could be undermined if opportunities for medics in developing countries to come to the UK could not be reciprocated. This could hamper efforts to build capacity for health service delivery and research in such countries.
7. There is demonstrable value in enabling mobility for clinicians as part of their training. Therefore, although the Trust recognises the challenges with the current situation, we would caution against being overly prescriptive if introducing restrictions for IMGs. The Trust would

¹ <http://www.who.int/workforcealliance/forum/en/>

strongly recommend that if changes to recruitment are introduced, these are closely monitored post implementation to assess any impact both on the UK clinical and research environment, and more broadly in terms of exchanges and programmes with other countries.