

18 February 2021

The Rt. Hon Boris Johnson MP
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London
SW1A 2AA

CC: Rt Hon Matt Hancock MP, Secretary of State for Health and Social Care
Mr Robin Swann MLA, Minister for Health
Jeane Freeman OBE, Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport
Vaughan Gething MS, Minister for Health and Social Services

Dear Prime Minister,

Re: Protecting health care workers - better ventilation, PPE, awareness and research

Over the past 12 months, you have seen the professionalism and dedication of health and care workers across the UK and, as you know, this care has been given at huge personal risk. Across the UK, at least 930 health and care workers to date have lost their lives and many more are suffering from the long-term adverse effects of COVID-19.

As organisations and individuals representing health and care workers and patients across the UK, we are calling for your urgent intervention to prevent the further loss of lives.

Health and care workers are at three to four times greater risk of developing and dying from COVID-19 than the general public.¹ However, measures to reduce airborne spread in high-risk health and care settings, which are mission-critical to the pandemic response, have thus far been inadequate. Current policies continue to emphasise the importance of fomite, droplet and direct spread but do not properly address airborne transmission.²

There is now no scientific doubt that COVID-19 spreads via the airborne route.³ There is

Yours sincerely,



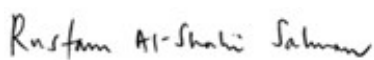
Dame Donna Kinnair
Chief Executive and
General Secretary
Royal College of Nursing



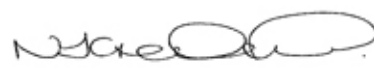
Professor Trish Greenhalgh
Professor of Primary Care
Health Sciences
University of Oxford



Dr Trevor Smith
President
BAPEN



Professor Rustam Al-Shahi
Salman
President
British Association of



- 1 Lednicky, et al. Viable SARS-CoV-2 in the air of a hospital room with COVID-19 patients. *International Journal of Infectious Diseases*: 100, 476-482 (2020).
- 2 Wilson N.M. et al. Airborne transmission of severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus-2 to healthcare workers: a narrative review. *Anaesthesia* (75) 8: 1086-1095 (2020) <https://doi.org/10.1111/anae.15093>
- 3 Zuo, Y.Y., Uspal, W.E. and Wei, T. Airborne Transmission of COVID-19: Aerosol Dispersion, Lung Deposition, and Virus-Receptor Interactions. *ACS Nano* 14 (12): 16502-16524 (2020).