



The All-Party Parliamentary University Group

The All-Party Parliamentary University Group (APPUG) held a meeting on the Health and Care Bill on 21 September, chaired by APPUG co-chair and member of the Health and Care Public Bill Committee Rt Hon Chris Skidmore MP. The meeting gave university leaders and parliamentarians the opportunity to discuss and make suggestions about amending the legislation to improve health and care education and research. Strong messages came through about the need to expand the number of clinical placements available and fully integrate health and social care within medical training.

Short presentations were given by Chair of the Medical Schools Council Professor Malcolm Reed, Chair of the Council of Deans of Health Professor Brian Webster- Henderson, Vice-Chancellor of Brunel University London Professor Julia Buckingham and Vice-Chancellor of Anglia Ruskin University Roderick Watkins, contributions then followed from other university leaders and MPs.

Speakers suggested that the innovative ways in which training could now be conducted, including via simulated placements, was a huge breakthrough and to be encouraged, however regulations needed to change and more investment should be made to fully harness this technology and ease the workforce shortages that can be seen across the country. Discussions are now ongoing about how the Health and Care Bill might be amended to promote investment in such innovations, alongside other ways in which new clinical placements can be created and workforce needs met. This included speeding up the process for new medical schools to be established, particularly in areas of the country with little provision, and broadening access to medical courses to those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Health education leaders were positive about the move to better integrate health and social care but stressed that this should start from an early stage when doctors, nurses and allied health professionals were being trained. Continued professional development (CPD) would also be key for both retaining the workforce and ensuring they are equipped for the challenges of the future.

Co-Chair of the APPUG Chris Skidmore MP said-

“The meeting was extremely productive, filled with good policy ideas for how we prepare for workforce planning better and involve all institutions better who represent the learning pathway of a student who is training for a career within the NHS. Already discussions with UUK and the College of Deans has resulted in tabling several amendments which have been discussed at committee stage. Following this meeting I am hoping to consider tabling further amendments which reflect the discussion and the needs of the wider medical education ecosystem. Once again thank you to everyone who participated to share their views- one of the highlights of the APPG is to listen first hand to those whose experiences need to be reflected in the policy making process”