

DR. CAROLINE LUCAS

Green Party  
*for the South East of England*

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

April 20<sup>th</sup> 2007

Dear Secretary of State,

A number of constituents have lobbied me about the new MTAS system for applying for clinical posts. As you will be aware, this does not form part of my remit as an MEP. However, the information I received from my constituents was quite alarming and I felt it necessary to write to you to express my concerns.

As I understand it, the MTAS system has been beset by what I can only call teething problems. For example, there was very short turn around times for applications to be made and for notice to attend interview. Also new questions were added to application forms after some candidates had already applied. The online forms did not allow for applicants to include all the relevant information, and the website was offline for some considerable time during the crucial application period.

The most concerning outcome of all these and many other problems is that, according to Remedy UK, over 6,000 experienced junior doctors may well be unemployed in August 2007. This situation, which appears to have arisen because of poor workforce planning, will pose a risk to the NHS's ability to deliver adequate patient care and be devastating for the health professionals involved. Remedy UK have also estimated that over £1.5 billion has been spent on training these doctors, money effectively wasted if these individuals are not employed by the NHS this year.

I would like to add my voice to those from the BMA and Remedy UK calling for a complete overhaul of the MTAS system and a review of the overarching Modernising Medical Careers program that has led to such a disastrous episode. Please be kind enough to advise on how the government plans to address this crisis, so I may offer some reassurance to my constituents.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,



Caroline Lucas - Green Party MEP for South East England.