



16th March 2025

Joint statement in response to the Prime Minister's announcement to abolish NHS England

Dear Prime Minister and Mr Wes Streeting,

The Association of Surgeons in Training (ASiT) and Surgical Specialty Training Organisations (SSTOs) issue this statement in response to the abolition of NHS England and the centralisation of NHS functions under the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC). ASiT and the SSTOs represent surgeons in training and are committed to the highest standards in surgical training. We seek immediate assurances that postgraduate surgical training will be safeguarded during this process.

We recognise and commend the goal of improving NHS efficiency and patient access to front line care. However, these reforms **must not** come at the cost of surgeons in training. This is an opportunity to prioritise the surgical workforce and those in training. We especially seek reassurance that the structured deanery network of Training Programme Directors and Heads of Schools will be protected. These individuals play a critical role in overseeing and quality assuring nationally coordinated training pathways that produce skilled consultant surgeons for our NHS. Moreover, we seek reassurance that the national recruitment process will be appropriately funded and run by the DHSC with the surgical workforce at its core.

We, therefore, request the government to commit to the following principles:

1. **Ensure continuity of the current and future surgical recruitment cycles.**
2. **Adequate support and resources for surgical trainers.**
3. **Trainees must be actively involved in all future decisions impacting their training.**

We are particularly concerned about the significant reductions in staff in this reform and seek reassurance that this will not impact already stretched postgraduate education

bodies. Training opportunities are already limited, and further disruption risks worsening workforce morale and expertise.

This transformation is an opportunity to strengthen the NHS by prioritising its workforce. We welcome collaboration with the DHSC to ensure surgical trainees play a central role in reforms, united in our commitment to innovation and improved patient care.

No training today, no surgeons tomorrow.

Yours faithfully,

Raiyyan Aftab, ASiT President on behalf of ASiT Council

Eleanor Crossley, President of the Association of Otolaryngologists in Training (AOT)

Rosa Sun, President of the British Neurosurgical Trainees Association (BNTA)

Oliver Townsend, President of the British Orthopaedics Trainee Association (BOTA)

Tony Tien, Chair of the BAUS Section of Trainees (BSoT)

Charlotte El Sayed, President of the Duke's Club

Emily Thompson, President of The Herrick Society

Thomas Hubbard, Chair of The Mammary Fold

Kellie Bateman, President of The Moynihan Academy (MA)

Amit Dattani, Chair of the Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery Fellows in Training (OMFS FiT)

Susan McCrossan, President of the Plastic Surgery Trainees Association (PLASTA)

Benjamin Chan, President of the Roux Group

Lauren Shelmerdine, President of the Rouleaux Club

Walid Mohamed, UK Representative of National Trainee Committee for Cardiothoracic Surgery (NTCCTS)

Chloe Roy, ASiT Representative of Trainees in Paediatric Surgery (TriPS)