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### **Anaesthesia Associates and Physician Associates Order 2023:**

Since 2019 the Government has sought to regulate associates to ensure that patient safety is maintained through adequate oversight. A Department of Health and Social Care report, published on 11 December 2023, argues that the General Medical Council (GMC) is best equipped to regulate AAs and PAs.

New secondary legislation, The Anaesthesia Associates and Physician Associates Order 2024 seeks to give the GMC statutory powers and duties relating to associates. These include powers to register qualified AAs and PAs, set standards of practice, education and training, approve AA and PA education and training programmes, and operate fitness to practice procedures.

I believe it is vital to address NHS workforce challenges and increase efficiency, whilst also maintaining high standards of patient care and safety. Regulation is a crucial part of maintaining high standards, ensuring patient safety, and providing clarity around the boundaries of functions associates can and cannot perform.

I recognise the concerns constituents have raised and am concerned that the wider state of crisis within the NHS has led to increased pressure on the NHS workforce, leading in certain cases to physician associates taking on responsibilities that they have not been trained or equipped for. The Government has dragged its feet and failed to bring in regulation for years. Regulation must come alongside comprehensive workforce planning to make sure we have the right people, with the right skills, in the right jobs across all parts of the health and care system.

We are committed to ensuring the NHS has the staff it needs to ensure patients are treated on time. The long-awaited NHS workforce plan mirrors commitments we have been calling for. But it should have happened a decade ago, to ensure our NHS has the staff it needs now.

As regulation is introduced, it is vital that the Government listens and works constructively with all stakeholders involved. I pay tribute to the medical community's commitment to the health and wellbeing of patients and share my sincere gratitude for their service within our NHS.

**Marie Rimmer CBE, MP**

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