



Department  
of Health

*From the office of Dr Dan Poulter MP  
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Health*

*Richmond House  
79 Whitehall  
London  
SW1A 2NS*

*Tel: 020 7210 4850*

Letter to Royal Colleges

13<sup>th</sup> May 2014

Dear Colleague,

I am writing to you about the conflict in Syria and the important messages I would like to share across the healthcare sector.

The conflict in Syria continues to cause a humanitarian crisis and 6.5 million people have been internally displaced. The UK is at the forefront of the humanitarian effort having donated over £600m, the largest sum the UK has ever committed to a single crisis. British people all over the UK are volunteering their time and money to charities helping the Syrian people.

We know that hundreds of British people have travelled to Syria, many for humanitarian purposes, or to help family or friends. We understand the desire people have to travel to Syria, healthcare professionals in particular may wish to use their expertise to help the Syrian people by travelling there to be part of the humanitarian effort. However the current conflict means that the entire country is unsafe, the situation on the ground is very fluid and anyone who travels is putting themselves in considerable danger.

There is help on the ground from registered UK charities. A number of well established UK charities with experience of providing humanitarian assistance in high risk, dangerous environments are running campaigns to alleviate the crisis. As well as the serious risk of personal harm, direct delivery of aid involves very high logistical costs as well as legal implications. Supporting UK charities already operating in Syria is therefore the quickest most effective way to help the Syrian people.

The British Government is urging all citizens not to travel to Syria for humanitarian or any other purpose. I would be grateful if the attached pdf version of the 'Syria Passport' (<http://www.met.police.uk/Syria/>) could be shared with your members.

Best wishes,

**DR DAN POULTER**