

NHS turns to Indian nurses in staff crisis

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The NHS is in talks to bring in more nurses from India as hospitals struggle with an exodus of staff from the EU.

Chiefs are negotiating with an Indian hospital chain to find nurses who would work in Britain for two years in exchange for specialist NHS training.

Ian Cumming, chief executive of Health Education England, said the crisis had been caused by doctors and nurses going part-time or leaving the NHS, not because Britain was not training enough staff.

There are 40,000 nursing vacancies in England and the shortfall is one of the most serious issues facing the NHS. Figures published this month showed that the number of EU nurses arriving was down 96 per cent since last summer's referendum. "I am sure ... we are losing nurses from this country, for various reasons of which Brexit is one," Professor Cumming said.

He told the *Health Service Journal* that he was in discussions with Apollo Hospitals about bringing in some of their staff: "This would be for a fixed period on an earn-learn-return basis. Maybe two years." He said Apollo was "very enthusiastic" because the deal would give their staff training in A&E, paediatrics and other specialisms.

Professor Cumming said that the biggest problem was doctors and nurses no longer wanting to work full-time. Graduates "have come off the pipeline exactly as we anticipated", he said, but added: "More people at the higher end of expectations have left and we have seen an increase in part-time working ... There is no point in just using the training pathway as the solution if we are then losing people."