Junior and consultant contract proposals

In December 2012, the UK government and the devolved administrations announced that they wanted to pursue, on a UK-wide basis, changes to two sets of national NHS contracts – for consultants and for junior doctors.

The announcement coincided with publication of the Doctors and Dentists’ Review Body (DDRB) review of clinical excellence award schemes across the UK and the scoping report from NHS Employers on possible areas for change in the junior doctors’ contract. The Department of Health in England also said it wanted to explore changes to consultants’ contracts to facilitate seven-day working. The recommendations made for both the junior and consultant contracts have implications for junior and consultant clinical academics.

Junior doctors
The BMAs Junior Doctor Committee is having informal discussions with NHS Employers to find some broad terms for negotiation. It will only begin formal contact negotiations if they believe it is in the interests of UK junior doctors. As a number of academic trainees are employed by the NHS, MASC will work to ensure that their interests are reflected in the discussions and that any changes are translated into the academic sector.

Consultants
The UK Consultants Committee has also decided to begin exploratory discussions with NHS Employers to see if it is possible to find some broad terms for negotiation. It has not committed to negotiations at this stage and will only take part if it believes it will be in the best interests of consultants to do so. Exploratory discussions will only take place on behalf of NHS consultants in England and Northern Ireland as the Scottish and Welsh Consultants Committees have decided not to take any part in UK-level discussions. They do not believe a UK-level approach would be in the best interests of consultants in Scotland and Wales.

Find out more
A new web resource is available on the BMA website. It outlines the proposals, has links to the DDRB report and its recommendations, the scoping document, and provides in-depth analysis. You can find out what you need to know here and get involved in the debate around some of the key themes.

MASC would welcome your views on what is being proposed. Please send your initial views to info.masc@bma.org.uk.
Francis Inquiry Report published
The report of the public inquiry into the care provided at the Mid-Staffordshire NHS Trust was published on 6 February. It addressed the issues raising concerns, performance measures, regulation and leadership. The BMA will reflect on and consider the findings of the report. Chair of Council, Dr Mark Porter said ‘It is not enough to say that lessons must be learnt. It is essential that we all – politicians, NHS organisations, doctors, managers, nurses, and patient groups – work together to develop a different kind of health service where the system will not tolerate poor quality of care... We must urgently develop a new culture – everyone working in the health service must play their part, and be allowed to play their part, in practising zero tolerance to poor and dangerous care’. Read more, including the BMA’s analysis, the full report and the BMA’s response here. MASC co-chair Dr Peter Dangerfield has also highlighted that the sections in the reports on culture, education and training will have significant implication for clinical academics and how we all work.

Honorary Contracts of Academic GPs and Public Health Academics
MASC has been concerned for some time about the future of the honorary contracts for academic GPs and public health academics with the demise of PCTs and other NHS organisations on 31 March. The Officers of the Committee first raised these concerns with the CMO at a meeting in September 2011 and then wrote to her in February last year. Since then, the Committee has met with the Public Health England (PHE) Transition team on a number of occasions in order to press for the smoothest possible transfer to the new structures. Unfortunately, this seems not to have been possible, but PHE is now working hard to collect the data that they think they need and has promised to write to all affected academics by the end of March. MASC’s letter to all public health academics can be found here. Similar activity has taken place alongside the Society for Academic Primary Care on the holders of the honorary NHS contracts for academic GPs. Despite some last minute hiccups, the NHS Commissioning Board agreed to take on the honorary contacts of academic GPs who had not already made other arrangements. If you have any concerns then contact the BMA.

Academic Trainees Conference
The 2012 conference was the sixth in a series of highly successful conferences for all academic trainees across the UK drawing on the ideas and suggestions of academic trainees themselves. Professor Morris Brown, Professor of Clinical Pharmacology at the University of Cambridge spoke to trainees about his career path so far and in the afternoon, delegates heard Professor Sadaf Farooqi, Wellcome Trust Senior Clinical Fellow & Professor of Metabolism & Medicine speak on Translational Research in Metabolic Disease. A new format for the discussion groups was trialled at this conference, with delegates divided into three groups, according to training level. This allowed people to hear about and discuss in more detail those issues which specifically affected them. Feedback was positive and the Trainees Subcommittee will consider how to build on this at the 2013 conference.

Other talks covered pensions, funding, and BMA support. Delegates also attended two workshops on a range of topics pertinent to life as an academic trainee, from mentoring and less than full time training, to pharmaceutical medicine and getting published. There were also opportunities for delegates to discuss anything of concern in small groups, with facilitators who recorded the main points and then forwarded them to the Joint Academic Trainees Subcommittee and Medical Academic Staff Committee.

The day ended with a networking reception, where delegates could relax with a drink and snacks after the busy day.

The next Academic Trainees’ Conference will take place in November 2013. Your suggestions on topics and speakers would be very much welcome. Please contact us at info.masc@bma.org.uk
News

Pension schemes: contributions set to increase in April
NHS Pension contributions will rise in April 2013 to 13.3%, and then further again in April 2014. In addition, the BMA is continuing to lobby on the Public Service Pensions Bill, which is currently in the House of Lords. We are also working with other unions to build a joint campaign against the increase in the NHS pension age. You can read more about our activities, the changes to the pension scheme, and use our pension calculator on the BMA website.

Meanwhile, the University and College Union is still in dispute with the employers regarding recent changes to the Universities Superannuation Scheme. Talks on possible amendments to the scheme have re-started and MASC is continuing to monitor the situation.

New Trade Union Side newsletter for medical academics employed by the Medical Research Council
The BMA is part of a group of trades unions that negotiates with the Medical Research Council. Read the latest newsletter from the trades unions on transfer to university units, pay and other issues. Please send any comments to info.masc@bma.org.uk

We have also received a query from a member employed by the MRC regarding revalidation which we have raised directly with the Council.

New from MASC

Conference of Medical Academic Representatives
COMAR will be taking place on Friday 10 May 2013 at BMA House. Click here to register for your place.

This is your conference. If there is an issue that you feel strongly about, or if you’ve had an idea for change, submit a motion to COMAR. Email Marianne Simmonds at m.simmonds@bma.org.uk to submit your motions or to find out more. Information on motion writing and past policy is also available here. The deadline for receipt of ordinary motions is 5 April at 17.00. Emergency motions on events that occur after the deadline for motions can be submitted on the day of conference.

COMAR is open to all doctors holding a contract of employment with universities or other organisations involved in medical education or research. It provides medical academics with an opportunity to raise any concerns they may have about academic medicine and to shape the policy of the Medical Academic Staff Committee and BMA. The broad conference theme will be REF, Revalidation, and Redundancy, picked up in keynote speeches, panel discussions and informative talks. There will also be plenty of time to discuss the motions sent in by representatives.

Election to MASC/Regional Councils/COMAR agenda committee
Elections will take place at COMAR to the Medical Academic Staff Committee, BMA Regional Council Executives and the COMAR agenda committee. Nomination forms and further information is available online and on the forms themselves. Please ensure that you submit them by the 9 May 2013; alternatively, you can bring them with you to COMAR.
Get involved

Medical academics and local negotiating committees
LNCs are made up of elected local representatives who negotiate – and have the authority to make collective agreements – with local management on behalf of medical and dental staff of all grades. Given the close contractual connections between clinical academic and NHS medical staff and the important clinical roles of academic staff, it is important that clinical academic staff take up the opportunity to be represented at these meetings. We have recently surveyed academic members of LNCs on the support that they would like from MASC. If you have not completed the survey please do so.

You make life-changing decisions everyday – joining the BMA should be one of them.

If you are not a member of the BMA you could be missing out on the support of your national and local committees when protecting your terms and conditions of service, individual representation on personal employment issues and the online guidance and information available to consultants. Don’t be left out, join today.

We want to hear from you
Tell us what you think about this newsletter, how we can improve our communication with you, and anything else you think we should know.

Check your membership details!

Are you registered as a medical academic with the BMA? To receive the latest information from the MASC, specific guidance for medical academics and a copy of the Medical Academic Handbook, your membership details need to list you as a medical academic as your first job.

You can update your membership and place of work details on the BMA website. This does not prevent you from being on our register as a consultant, GP SAS doctor or junior doctor at the same time as your second or third job. We would also like to know more about your colleagues that undertake academic work as a second or third job. Please encourage them to amend their membership details also.

We would be particularly keen to hear from clinical tutors as the Committee has agreed that it needs to build better links with this group of doctors.