PROPOSALS TO DISCONTINUE TWO ANOMALOUS FEATURES OF THE CLINICAL EXCELLENCE AND DISTINCTION AWARD SCHEMES

Consultation by Welsh Government/Department of Health

Response from BMA Cymru Wales

INTRODUCTION

BMA Cymru Wales is pleased to provide a response to the Welsh Government and Department of Health’s consultation into ‘proposals to discontinue two anomalous features of the Clinical Excellence and Distinction Award Schemes’.

The British Medical Association represents doctors from all branches of medicine all over the UK; and has a total membership of over 150,000 including more than 3,000 members overseas and over 19,000 medical student members.

The BMA is the largest voluntary professional association of doctors in the UK, which speaks for doctors at home and abroad. It is also an independent trade union.

BMA Cymru Wales represents some 7,000 members in Wales from every branch of the medical profession.

RESPONSE

BMA Cymru Wales supports the Clinical Excellence Awards (CEA) scheme to recognise and reward the highest achieving consultants, consultant clinical academics and senior academic GPs. We also support efforts to ensure this is a fair and transparent scheme. In our view, however, it is inappropriate for the Welsh Government and Department of Health to make proposals to discontinue two features of the Clinical Excellence and Distinction Award Schemes at the same time as broader discussions are taking place on the DDRB report. We believe that these should be discussed as part of the BMA’s wider talks with the UK Health Departments and NHS Employers.

However, notwithstanding this view, since we have been invited to comment on two features of the Clinical Excellence and Distinction Award Schemes please find below our views on the proposals as set out in the Welsh Government/Department of Health document:

Retire and return

BMA Cymru Wales is prepared to support, with conditions, the proposal that once Distinction Award holders have retired and are in receipt of a pension which is partly built in to the award they should no longer be able to claim this award if they then return to work.
The conditions under which this support is provided are as follows:

1) Any money released within Wales as a result of implementing this proposal should be reinvested back in Wales and thereby remain within the existing pay envelope for Welsh consultants. This might be achieved, for example, by increasing the number of bronze awards that are allocated to consultants in Wales.

2) Steps are taken to guarantee that funding previously provided centrally for consultant sabbaticals, which has now been devolved down to Local Health Boards, is ring-fenced for funding consultant sabbaticals rather than being diverted to fund other priorities.

BMA Cymru Wales seeks a written assurance that both these points are agreed as a condition of its support for the proposal.

**Pay protection for expired or withdrawn awards**

BMA Cymru Wales is prepared to support, with conditions, the proposal for the removal of pay protection for expired or withdrawn awards.

The conditions under which this support is provided are as follows:

1) Any money released within Wales as a result of implementing this proposal should be reinvested back in Wales and thereby remain within the existing pay envelope for Welsh consultants.

2) Steps are taken to guarantee that funding previously provided centrally for consultant sabbaticals, which has now been devolved down to Local Health Boards, is ring-fenced for funding consultant sabbaticals rather than being diverted to fund other priorities.

BMA Cymru Wales seeks a written assurance that both these points are agreed as a condition of its support for the proposal.

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