What needs to change to improve care for patients and the working lives of doctors?

As the only medical organisation that represents all doctors and medical students in the UK, we have drawn on their experiences to find the answers.

In this manifesto for health, we have set out our priorities for any incoming government:

– Reform the punitive pension tax system for doctors
– Pay doctors fairly and address historic underpayments
– Legislate for safe staffing
– Increase spending on the NHS by over 4%
– Give the public the final say on any Brexit deal
A valued workforce

Where everyone who works in the NHS feels valued, and part of a properly staffed team with the right mix of skills to do the job.

Pensions

Scrap the punitive annual allowance and tapered annual allowance pensions tax regulations which are driving senior doctors out of the workforce. Without action, the staffing of services is in severe jeopardy.

Pay

Deliver pay increases which truly value our medical workforce and commit to introducing a mechanism to address historic underpayments to doctors.

Safe staffing

Enshrine ministerial and commissioner accountability for staffing levels across UK health services in legislation, meaning individual clinicians are not blamed when the system places them under unmanageable pressure.
A properly resourced structure

Where all NHS staff work together in an adequately funded environment, across traditional organisational divides, supported by a modern IT infrastructure that facilitates the best care for patients.

Funding

**Increase** NHS spending across the UK by at least 4.1% per year, including respective Barnett formula increases, to address the gap between funding of current services and future demand, and to put the NHS on a sustainable long-term footing. This equates to an extra £9.5bn per year by 2023/24.

**Set out** credible long-term funding plans for social care so that everyone who needs care and support is able to access it.

**Reverse** cuts to public health services in England since 2015, requiring at least £1 billion of additional investment in 2020/21.

End wasteful competition

**Repeal** legislation in England which has led to wasteful and detrimental competition in the NHS and restore the NHS as the preferred provider of services. This must be comprehensive and transparent to ensure cooperation, rather than enforced competition, across the NHS.
A supportive culture

An environment where diversity is celebrated, which supports doctors’ wellbeing, promotes learning and encourages the development of systems to improve safety and quality of care.

An open and learning culture

Adopt an approach to investigations that asks ‘what has happened’ and not ‘who is to blame’. It is vital that providers and regulators recognise the impact of patient safety incidents on doctors and provide them with support.

Workforce health and wellbeing

Implement the BMA’s wellbeing charter in full and ensure doctors and medical students across the UK are effectively supported and cared for. Healthcare workers face unique strains and pressure every day, yet there is still stigma attached to discussing their own wellbeing and mental health.

Equality and inclusion

Support all doctors to achieve their full potential and create an inclusive culture by improving flexible working, increasing representation of women and BAME staff at senior levels and removing barriers that disabled medics face.
Population health

*Improving physical and mental health outcomes – promoting wellbeing, reducing health inequalities, and increasing life expectancy.*

**Prevention**

*Put* prevention at the heart of the healthcare system: action on smoking, alcohol misuse, physical inactivity and poor diet could prevent 40% of health service uptake and would drastically reduce system pressures.

**Environment**

*Introduce* policies to deliver carbon neutrality by 2030 to minimise the impact of climate change on health and introduce robust legislation to tackle the country’s lethal levels of pollution via legally binding limits on pollutants.

**Mental health**

*Establish* a cross-government strategy to improve public mental health alongside a sustained focus on filling vacancies across the mental health workforce.
Brexit

No Brexit deal will ever deliver the benefits which the UK’s current membership of the EU confers on patients, the medical workforce and health services across the UK and Europe.

Given the challenges and the risks presented to the NHS, the BMA opposes Brexit.

A no-deal Brexit will have damaging consequences for patients, the health workforce, health services, medical research and medical education across the UK and Europe. Every step must be taken to avoid it.

**Given what we now know about Brexit, it is vital the public has the final say on any proposed Brexit deal.**
Brexit and health are two clear priorities for the UK voting public. In our manifesto for political parties ahead of the 2019 General Election we outline, using the expertise and experience of doctors, the key solutions to meeting the pivotal challenges facing the NHS.

Patients and doctors need parliamentarians of all parties to support their concerns and to prioritise the NHS and its workforce. From addressing Brexit-related medicine shortages, to waiting lists, to workforce gaps and the damaging impact of pension taxation policies driving doctors out of the profession, to cuts to public health – our manifesto for health is the blueprint from which the NHS can grow and thrive.

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