Pay briefing for junior doctors in England

This paper aims to provide members with a baseline understanding of the background to junior doctors pay over recent years.
Background

The below briefly summarise the recent relevant events over the course of the last session that explain the position of the BMA currently on junior doctor pay in England.

Junior doctor pay erosion

Junior doctors in England are guaranteed at least a 2% pay rise in 22/23, as part of the multi-year pay deal agreed in 2019. While this agreement has ensured junior doctors have been guaranteed an uplift every year, these uplifts have been insufficient to compensate for sub-inflationary pay rises in recent years. As shown below, the estimated take-home pay for the average junior doctors in England declined by 22.4% in real terms (RPI) between 2008/09 and 2020/21, taking into account estimate tax and pension contribution changes.

Figure 1: Real decline in value of estimated take-home pay for average junior doctor (England) using RPI

![Graph showing the decline in estimated take-home pay for average junior doctor in England](image-url)

(Source: BMA analysis of NHS Digital's NHS Staff Earnings Estimates)

1 The Retail Price Index (RPI) used in this calculation, is the preferred inflation measure in the wider British trade union movement to reflect rising costs of working households. [https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/inflationandpriceindices/timeseries/chaw/mm23](https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/inflationandpriceindices/timeseries/chaw/mm23)

2 This period includes significant contractual change, including the introduction of the Doctors and dentists in training terms and conditions (England) 2016 contract and subsequent review this contract, which resulted in the current multi-year pay deal.)
2018 Review Framework Agreement pay deal for Junior doctors in England

The 2018 Contract review negotiations concluded in June 2019. The negotiations delivered a large number of key improvements to the 2016 junior doctor contract in England, with agreement for future work across several working groups and areas for joint guidance.

The deal agreed with NHS Employers and the Department of Health and Social Care included a guaranteed pay uplift of 2% each year for the next four years of the deal, which at the time was within the projected forecast for CPI over the term of the agreement.

On top of this, there was an additional £90 million investment, which is distributed as follows: 0.3% in the first year (2019/20), and then 1% in 2020/21, 1% in 2021/22 and 1% in 2022/23. This is used to fund pay-related items, including incremental increases in the value of the 5th nodal point.

The other key changes achieved through the 2018 Review were:
- Fifth nodal point, with a final value of £7,200 extra in basic salary for doctors who are ST6 and above
- Increases to weekend and night shift (shifts ending after midnight and by 4am) pay
- £1,000 a year allowance for all less than full time trainees
- A fifth nodal point on the payscale at the level of ST6
- ‘Section 2’ transitional pay protection extended until 2025
- Improved GP trainee mileage and confirmed supernumerary status
- Improvements in rest and safety entitlements, with no more pay-to-stay when too tired to drive
- Contractualised NROC/LTFT rostering guidance
- Exception reporting for all ARCP/portfolio requirements

The pay deal was agreed in the context of the additional funding required, and therefore a total anticipated spend on junior doctor pay during this time period, providing some degree of certainty for Employers. From the BMA perspective, it provided a guarantee of annual uplifts that were higher than those seen since 2008, in the context of an uncertain time due to the potential impacts of an impending Brexit. 82% of junior doctor members who voted in the referendum on the new terms and conditions agreed to accept them, including the associated long term pay deal.

BMA submission to the Review Body on Doctors’ and Dentists’ Remuneration (DDRB)

In January 2021, the BMA submitted evidence to the DDRB. The key asks for 2021 were:
- A significant and early pay award, that is much higher than the retail price index and will go some way to closing the real terms pay erosion that doctors have faced over the past decade.
- Recognition that all doctors, including doctors who had previously agreed multi-year pay deals, have gone to extreme lengths to tackle the pandemic and that they should be rewarded as such.

It should be noted that the ‘significant and early’ ask was at least partly based on the terminology used by the other health unions in their submissions and campaign.
JDC Conference, 8th May 2021

At the 2021 junior doctor conference on 8 May a motion was passed calling on the BMA to lobby all the government for a 15% pay award for junior doctors.

The below table reflects the Doctors and Dentists in training (2016 contract) 21/22 pay scale in England. The final column shows the 21/22 pay scale values, increased by 15%.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Basic Pay</th>
<th>Basic Pay + 15%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FY1</td>
<td>£28,808</td>
<td>£33,129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY2</td>
<td>£33,345</td>
<td>£38,347</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CT/ST 1-2</td>
<td>£39,467</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>CT3/ST3-5</td>
<td>£50,017</td>
<td>£57,520</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ST6+</td>
<td>£56,077</td>
<td>£64,489</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fairness for Frontline campaign

On 14th May, JDC launched a campaign for junior doctors in England as part of calling for Fairness for the Frontline, to demand recognition that all doctors – including doctors who had previously agreed multi-year pay deals – have gone to extreme lengths to tackle the pandemic and that they should be rewarded as such.

The campaign specifically asks for a significant pay uplift well above RPI. Sessional GPs and consultants are also running campaigns as part of the Fairness for the Frontline work. The campaign has used paid promotion across social media to promote the campaign to doctors. This campaign was promoted across social media and in workplaces, and saw over 4,000 medics and members of the public write to their MP using our campaign tools.

JDC pay meeting, 8th June 2021

The junior doctors committee (JDC) met on Tuesday 8th June. Responding to calls from the committee, the meeting was nearly entirely focused on junior doctor pay. The committee discussed the practicalities, advantages and risks of a range of actions that could be taken in response to the potential outcomes from the pay award process.

At the meeting it was agreed that:

a) the BMA should run a public campaign in response to a pay award of 2-5% or in response to a pay award that is a non-consolidated one off payment
b) the BMA should survey on industrial action in the event that the government does not offer junior doctors any pay award above the existing pay deal in this pay round

DDRB response in relation to junior doctors

Despite complying with the government’s request that no pay recommendation be made for junior doctors in England, the DDRB did make a pointed effort to state that junior doctors should also benefit from any pay recognition that other staff groups might receive for their efforts in response to the pandemic, despite any previously agreed multi-year pay deals.

Pay award for junior doctors in England for 2021/22

On 21st July, the government announced that all NHS staff, who were not subject to a multi-year pay deal, would receive a pay award of 3%. As a result of the government’s request that there be no pay recommendation by the DDRB for junior doctors in England, the previously agreed pay award of 2% for the 2021/22 financial remained unaltered. This pay award was applied on 1st April 2021.

The multi-year pay deal, agreed as part of the 2018 Review Framework Agreement, has one more year to run. In the 2022/23 financial year, junior doctors in England are also due to receive a 2% pay award.

Initial BMA response to 2021/22 pay award

In response to the pay award, the BMA issued a statement which focused on the decision by the government to exclude doctors on multi-year pay deals from the 3% pay award. In addition, the statement highlighted that the 3% pay award could itself represent a sub-inflationary pay award.

Following the above statement, the BMA issued a further statement which focused on the government’s decision to ignore the DDRB’s recommendation that doctors on multi-year pay deals also be subject to any recognition through an increased pay award.

Direct Lobbying of Government

In addition to the BMA’s public statements, we also directly lobbied the government through the below actions:

- On 12th July, letter sent from Deputy Chair of JDC to the Secretary of State urging him to provide a pay award greater than the 2% agreed as part of the multi-year pay deal.
- On 23rd July, letter sent from Chair of Council to the Secretary of State to emphasise the need for all doctors to receive the 3% pay award
- On 11th August, meeting between Chair of Council and the Secretary of State, where the Chair expressed how extremely disappointing the pay award was and did nothing to address the significant pay erosion experienced in recent years, along with being sub-inflationary
- On 16th September, meeting between JDC Chair and DHSC representatives to discuss the impact on morale and anger among junior doctors as a result of this year’s pay award, particularly the exclusion of junior doctors in England from the 3% pay award.
Survey of junior doctor members in England

In accordance with the actions agreed at the 8th June JDC meeting, the BMA circulated a survey to all junior doctor members in England on 6th August in response to the government’s pay award decision for junior doctors in England.

This survey sought the views of members on the following questions:

− what pay award they feel should have received?
− what the impact of the pay award has been on them?
− what forms of industrial action they would be willing to take part in?
− how long they would be willing to undertake industrial action for?
− what pay award would be sufficient for them to be no longer interested in pursuing industrial action?
− If they weren’t willing to pursue industrial action, what their reasons are for this position?

The survey received over 6,000 complete responses from eligible members. The responses showed that:

− nearly all respondents (96.6%) felt the uplift was either completely unacceptable (63.8%) or inadequate (32.8%)
− 93.5% felt their morale had decreased as a result of being excluded from the uplift
− 90.7% feel the Government doesn’t value their work.

The results of this survey were reviewed by JDC at a meeting on 2nd October. At this meeting it was agreed by the committee to intensify the BMA’s campaigning regarding pay, it was also agreed that the committee would withdraw from the DDRB process on behalf of junior doctors in England.