

*Fighting for our rights, fighting for our future*

# Retired members committee Report

## Introduction

This has been my third year as committee chair and once again it has been heavily impacted by the covid pandemic.

## Retired members conference and ARM

Although the retired member committee has continued to meet virtually, this year we returned to a face-to-face conference for the first time since 2019. It was wonderful to see so many members in person. It is worth mentioning that we now have the conference and committee chairs elected as separate posts. This helps to avoid possible conflicts of interest. I would like to thank Dr Stephen Millar, conference chair, for his hard work alongside the staff in running the event and for so ably chairing the conference with the support of his deputy chair, Mr Surjait Singh.

In addition to recognising all of the participants, I would like to thank Dr Jane Orr for a thought-provoking keynote speech about the long learnings for the Covid pandemic, from the 1916-19 Spanish flu pandemic. Thanks also to Mr Tim Goodacre, vice president of the Royal College of Surgeons, for leading a useful discussion about future NHS support from retired doctors. Also, thanks to our chair of council, Dr Chaand Nagpaul, for his talk about the extensive work the BMA has done throughout the pandemic.

Key motions from our conference were highlighted at a meeting of the ARM joint agenda committee and I am pleased to note that some of them have made it to the ARM agenda. We have 19 elected retired member representatives at this year's ARM and no doubt other members of the representative body will also be retired. This should ensure a good level of representation.

## **NHS 'restart' and pandemic retired returners**

As a retired public health doctor and chair of the retired members committee, I have been well positioned to work with BMA staff and other elected members to ensure that retired doctors are included in the plans to support the NHS in tackling the backlog.

To help support doctors returning to work, we worked with the Department of Health and medical defence organisations to ensure automatic free of charge NHS indemnity and professional cover for relicensed retired doctors. We also offered 3 months free BMA membership to any retired doctors returning to work to support the pandemic emergency.

Retired doctors considering a return to work should find useful information on the [BMA website](#) and I would refer you also to my blog about issues related to a possible [return to work](#).

## **Improvements for retired members passed by BMA council**

On behalf of retired members, I took two motions to BMA council in January 2022. The motions had not been debated at the 2021 ARM due to time constraints and I wanted to ask council to vote that they should become BMA policy.

One motion recommended that the BMA should prioritise work to attract and encourage retired doctors to continue their membership into retirement. The other called for work with the GMC and NHS to ensure lessons were learned from flawed re-registration and recruitment processes and that work be done to explore how the skills and experience of retired doctors could be put to good use in future crises.

I am pleased to report that both motions were carried by council and I will be keeping you updated as to progress now that we have the full force of BMA council behind us. I met with Matt Howell, deputy chief executive, and Matt Waddup, BMA interim director of member relations, in March to begin work on enhancing to the retired doctor membership experience. I will be meeting with them again shortly to move this work forward.

## **Retired members committee**

Development of the retired members committee (RMC) has been continuing, following its creation in 2018. The committee is currently transitioning to annual elections. Therefore, of the 5 members elected for the 2022-23 session, 3 were elected for 2 sessions and 2 were elected

for 1 session. A gender constraint was also applied for the first time, with no more than two-thirds of the 5 elected being from any one gender. In 2023 and annually thereafter, 3 members of conference will be elected for two-year terms.

I would like to thank the out-going RMC members, Bobby Corbett, John Hughes, Kanwar Panesar and Andrew West, for their dedication and hard work on the committee. I would also like to congratulate Nicola Mann on her re-election and Carole Cairns, Peter Curry, Tom Kane and Tom Kinloch, on their election to the committee.

Finally, Stephen Millar and Surjait Singh were elected as retired members conference chair and deputy chair respectively and joined the committee as ex officio voting members. My congratulations to them both.

## **Retired members definition**

The retired members committee has been emphasising within the BMA that many retired doctors do still continue with some medical work and that therefore membership arrangements should recognise this. We worked with the BMA's organisation committee to change the definition of a retired member to recognise that there may be some work in retirement. There are now two types of retired membership which members can indicate on the online membership database.

*1. 'Permanently and predominantly retired from all medical practice' with an income limit of £16,500pa from medical practice.*

Alternatively

*2. Members who return to work can now elect to register as 'retired but working in NHS to support Covid' on the BMA database – therefore retaining the benefits of retired membership and discounted subscriptions.*

## **Next steps**

The retired members committee has an active programme of work.

- With the BMA workforce team, we are working with the GMC and NHS to ensure that lessons are learnt from the first 'return to work', as well as looking at how retired doctors can help the NHS catch up with its considerable backlog.
- We are working with the BMA deputy chief executive and interim director of member relations to consider ways to maintain and expand retired membership through providing services and events that retired doctors will value.
- We have been working to ensure that retired doctors' experiences are included in the BMA's Covid inquiry reports.
- Retired members events have been limited during the pandemic and we would like to introduce a schedule of retired member symposia with interesting speakers and good opportunities for retired doctors to keep in touch.

- We are reviewing the secretariat support available to an increasingly active retired members committee. We also hope to have a central resource for supporting retired members events held across the UK.
- Doctors with 50 years of BMA membership are already entitled to free membership. We are looking for additional ways to celebrate this life membership.

## **Conclusion and thanks**

To finish, firstly the thank-yous.

To our support staff at BMA house Laura Clark and Sally-Ann Cole who provide valuable guidance and work behind the scenes keeping everything running smoothly.

To all members of our committee who have worked well together resulting in constructive discussions and decisions. To our outgoing deputy chair, John Hughes, who has provided me with excellent support during the year and has worked on our behalf with the professional regulation committee and the BMA Covid inquiry.

Finally, a message to everybody please - retiring from work gives new opportunities to contribute to BMA activity, whether at division, regional or national level. I would encourage any retired member interested in becoming more involved to get in touch.

Thank you for taking the trouble to read this report.

**Dr Brian Guttridge**

Retired members committee chair

[BMA retired members committee overview](#)