

Rt Hon Steve Barclay MP
Secretary of State for Health and Social Care

Sent via email

11 August 2022

Dear Secretary of State,

As co-chairs of the BMA's UK Junior Doctors Committee, we are writing following an emergency meeting of our committee today, which was called in response to the announcement of this year's pay awards. In this meeting, it was agreed that the BMA will ballot junior doctors in England for industrial action if the Government does not commit to full restoration of junior doctors' pay to levels equivalent to 2008/09 by the end of September this year.

Junior doctors in England have experienced a sustained and continued real-terms cut of more than a quarter of our salaries since 2008/09; the recent pay announcement is a further pay cut. When coupled with the Government's decision to again exclude junior doctors from the higher, though still paltry, pay uplift for other NHS workers, this is yet another devastating blow to junior doctors' morale. This is despite the DDRB report again urging the Government to include staff on multi-year deals in the higher uplift, highlighting the context of rising inflation and unprecedented workforce pressures, and warning that failure to do so would 'have a significant effect on motivation, affecting retention, productivity, and ultimately patient care'.

Many doctors are burdened with student debts approaching £100,000 and face a future working in an increasingly overstretched and underfunded NHS, which is struggling with the highest waiting lists and backlog of care since records began. There is a real risk that continued pay erosion will force junior doctors out of the NHS, especially when a worldwide shortage of doctors means graduates could choose to take better paid jobs overseas. Without fair pay, the NHS will struggle to recruit the doctors it needs and retain the ones it does have, which will only exacerbate the current workforce crisis, worsen patient care and result in more pressure on already burnt-out junior doctors.

The Government has refused to say anything about pay restoration, despite the BMA making it clear that a refusal to address this leaves junior doctors with no option but to press ahead with preparations for industrial action. The strength of feeling amongst junior doctors is clear. A recent BMA survey showed that 83% of responding junior doctors in England believe that this year's 2% pay award is 'completely unacceptable', and 72% would be prepared to take industrial action if the Government does not commit to full pay restoration. Without such a commitment by the end of September 2022, we would anticipate balloting our members shortly thereafter and entering formal dispute.

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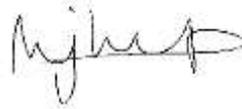


As you have rightly highlighted, the NHS cannot wait for the new Prime Minister for action to address the critical challenges it is facing, including pay erosion, declining wellbeing and chronic workforce shortages. You have the opportunity to make this right. We therefore urge you to meet with us as a matter of urgency to discuss this escalating situation, and to agree a programme of pay restoration.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Sarah Hallett
Co-chair BMA's Junior Doctors Committee



Dr Mike Kemp
Co-chair BMA's Junior Doctors Committee