

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

Sent via email

11 March 2023

Dear Mr Barclay,

We write in reply to your letter dated 10 March which we received at 9.49pm.

We must express our disappointment at your offer of talks being made so late, and with preconditions that would be completely unacceptable to our members. When we met with you on 2 March we asked if you would enter into negotiations with us and you were clear that you could not, as you did not have a mandate from the Prime Minister.

Both you and the Prime Minister have had extensive notice of this action.

- We wrote to you on 11 August 2022 advising that we would ballot members if you continued to refuse to negotiate.
- We wrote to you again on 6 January 2023 to inform you that if you continued to refuse to negotiate meaningfully with us on pay restoration, our industrial action would begin with a full walkout of all junior doctors in England for 72 hours.
- We publicly announced the results of our ballot on 20 February 2023 and the dates of our strike action on 24 February 2023.

We have set no preconditions for negotiation and have made ourselves available on numerous occasions for discussion since October 2022. You have failed to attend all but one of these meetings.

Over a number of years your government has broken trust with junior doctors. You have imposed contract changes without agreement. You have repeatedly excluded junior doctors from pay awards despite the framework agreement that your government agreed. You have ignored warnings of the independent pay review body and you have sought to present the legitimate concerns of the vast majority of the junior doctor workforce as a fringe issue. Your actions over the last few weeks have only worsened the huge deficit in trust. Junior doctors simply do not believe what your government says.

You have now written to us, hours before the action is due to commence, offering talks with preconditions that we cannot possibly accept. Yet, again, this is a feeble attempt to stall us, to kick the can down the road, to delay an actual meaningful conversation. If you had engaged with us sooner, you would have understood before now that the preconditions you are asking for are the antithesis of our dispute and will not be acceptable to our members.

The BMA is seeking restoration of the pay that has been taken away from Junior Doctors since 2008. This amounts to a pay cut of 26.1% up to March 2022; junior doctors are not worth a quarter less

Co-chief executive officers: Neeta Major & Rachel Podolak



than they were in 2008. The cost to HM Treasury of reversing this pay cut is £1bn. To put that into perspective it is a fraction of the money which the government has wasted on faulty PPE.

We are seeking to negotiate a way forward which restores this lost pay.

We remain open to entering talks with government anytime and anywhere to bring this dispute to a swift resolution and restore the pay that junior doctors have lost. We would encourage you to reconsider the preconditions that are currently preventing talks from taking place.

As you have known for more than two weeks, our strikes will commence on Monday. And you also know, until we have a credible offer, we are not in a position to call them off. As ever, we look forward to being able to have an honest and meaningful discussion with you where you can hopefully rebuild our trust in your government.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Robert Laurenson
Co-chair BMA's Junior Doctors Committee



Dr Vivek Trivedi
Co-chair BMA's Junior Doctors Committee

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