

Extra contractual rates – BMA South East pay campaign update

*Circulation – All **Consultant and SAS** BMA members in BMA South East Region – 3/12/24*

Dear BMA member,

We wanted to update you on our campaign to secure fair rates of pay for doctors undertaking extra-contractual work in the South East region. This campaign is shaped by your views, and this is a call to action.

Our Survey and Your Voices

Recently, we conducted a survey and were thrilled with the level of engagement. The key findings are:

- **85% of respondents are willing to withhold all extra-contractual work in support of our campaign,**
- 79% state that this pay is very important,
- 30% support full strike action if necessary,
- 50% support action short of a strike on this issue,

Notably, 79% reported that autonomous SAS doctors do not receive the same rate as their consultant colleagues, and 46% reported that breaks on bank shifts are not paid. The BMA is of the firm view that SAS doctors working autonomously should be paid the same as Consultant colleagues for this work and that breaks should preferably be paid but if not, these must be uninterrupted rests.

What is your time worth?

There is a significant disparity in the rates paid for extra-contractual work, indicating that many of you might be receiving far **less than you deserve**. Our survey showed that on average you think our rates should be:

- Consultant respondents expected, on average, that they would like to see rates of £182/hr for core work and £238/hr for unsocial work,
- SAS Doctors expected at least £118/hr for core work and £151/hr for evenings and weekends

We saw the highest rate published in the south east currently was as below.

Consultants and Autonomous SAS Doctors:

- £157.35/hr for core weekdays,
- £210.12/ hour for weekends and unsocial work and
- £262.89 for nights and bank holidays.

Supervised SAS grade Doctors:

- £100/hr for core weekdays and
- £150/hr for unsocial time.

We know that these are just the published rates, and our survey demonstrated many individuals negotiating far higher rates. **Are you getting less than you deserve? Is there any reason that you should be on a lesser rate than colleagues doing the same job elsewhere?**

Examples of Trusts who have already united to improve rates

Be assured that collective action works to improve rates. Here are some recent examples:

- *University Hospital Sussex* - In August 2023, the LNC secured extra contractual rates at 98% of the old (now withdrawn) BMA rate card for consultants and autonomous SAS doctors. You can [read a blog about how that was achieved here](#).
- *Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust* - Anaesthetists secured a 50% uplift for the weekday rates, and a 23% increase for weekend lists, for both surgeons and anaesthetists. You can [read more about how they did that here](#).
- *Chelsea and Westminster Hospital* - Anaesthetists did much the same thing as colleagues at Imperial
- *Royal Berkshire Hospitals (RBH)* - There was an attempted rate reduction for Consultants and SAS Doctors in this trust in October. This was quashed by local action, with national support which has led to ongoing negotiations.
- *University Hospitals Birmingham* - UHB have recently tried to drop their extracontractual rates (a common theme) and the doctors there are obviously angry. They have had an open meeting to which hundreds of doctors came at short notice. Thanks to a strong and unified BMA response the trust has already [backed down on its attempt to cut the rates](#), and there is a trust-wide meeting of BMA members next week.
- *Mid and South Essex* – Doctors are uniting against an imposed rate reduction and have withdrawn from this work from 1st December.
- BMA members across London are also coming together to oppose the long-standing rate caps in the capital.

Active disputes are ongoing, showing the power of unity in demanding fair pay.

Challenges

Despite these successes, challenges remain. NHS Trusts across the South East have formed the South East Temporary Staffing Collaborative, which aims to reduce rates across the region. This collaborative's proposed 'rate framework' is not competitive and will lead to a reduction in rates. Rate reduction has already been proposed in some organisations by collaborators.

Our survey indicated that you believe the rates should be higher, and we aspire to push towards the highest rates in the region, linking them to inflation and improving the terms under which this work is done. However, to achieve these objectives, your engagement with action is crucial. All you need to do is **say no to low rates**.

Our next steps as local leaders include strategic campaign planning, training for our LNC chairs, and sharing trust-level data to support local action. We need additional activists to create departmental networks. If you are more passionate about this issue and would like to help with organising within your department, you can [sign up as a local rates activist here](#).

What Can You Do Individually Now?

Actions You Can Take right now:

- **Value your time** – do not carry out extra contractual work if you are not being properly remunerated. Low fill rates for this type of work helps us make the case that current rates are inadequate. Contact [your BMA LNC chair](#) if you want to pursue a more proactive coordinated campaign of action with a group of colleagues in your department.
- Discuss the SE cartel [framework rates](#) with colleagues - motivate your peers, spread the word in departmental chat groups.
- Complete the [BMA SE rates survey](#) (if you haven't already done so)
- Tell your departmental/divisional leads that these rates need to increase in line with inflation.
- Support each other – there is no obligation to carry out extra work over and above your contract if the pay rate is inadequate. It is easier to refuse or register dissatisfaction as a group.
- [Register as an activist](#) on this campaign to be linked in with your local LNC.
- Join your local BMA WhatsApp groups to discuss this proposal and plan a collective response.
- Use our [reporting portal](#) to log when you are paid any rates above 'published' Trust rates as a result of any departmental activism.

Thank you for your continued engagement. Together, we can achieve fair rates for our extra-contractual work and push your rates up to those paid to colleagues across the region.

Kind regards, Hugh Townsend, Head of BMA South East.

On behalf of *BMA South East LNC Chairs & Regional Branch of Practice Chairs*