

Union Council
8 December 2015

MOTION TO OPPOSE THE IMPOSITION OF CHANGES TO JUNIOR DOCTOR CONTRACTS

Proposed by Maredudd Harris - ICSMSU President
Seconded by Jennie Watson - Deputy President (Welfare)

This Union notes the ongoing dispute between the British Medical Association Junior Doctors' Committee and NHS Employers regarding a new contract for junior doctors working in the NHS.

It notes the proposals made by the Doctors' and Dentists' Review Board (DDRB) for the changes to the junior doctors contracts.

The Union notes that the Department of Health has agreed for NHS Employers to re-enter negotiations with the BMA through ACAS. This period of negotiation will last until 13th January 2016.

Finally, this Union also notes that all current and future medical students at Imperial College London are likely to be affected by these proposals.

This Union believes that the proposals made by the DDRB are both unfair and unsafe.

1. The proposed contract changes remove safeguards on hours. The current system guarantees that doctors are paid when a shift overruns and that trust are financially penalised. This provides employers with an effective financial penalty against inappropriate rostering of staff. This Union believes that the end to this system, without the introduction of any alternative measures, will increase the likelihood of staffing levels becoming unsafe. This will increase the chance of clinical errors and directly harm patient safety.

2. The proposed contract changes end automatic pay progression in recognition of experience. This Union believes that this could detrimentally impact those who wish to take time out of their training, for example as maternity leave, because of sickness or for academic study. This Union believes that any new contract must not penalise those who take time out as compared to current arrangements. Furthermore, this Union believes that such proposed changes could serve to increase the gender pay-gap.

3. The proposed contract changes increase the number of hours that are considered "standard time" from 60 hours a week to 90 hours a week. This Union notes that the NHS and junior doctors are committed to providing safe, high quality care 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. However, this Union believes that the pay of junior doctors should reflect that weekends and evenings are precious. Furthermore, it believes that this will result in a substantial pay cut for those who currently work more non-standard hours (for example those working in front line services such as Accident and Emergency).

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4. The proposed contract changes do not increase the London weighting cash supplement. The London weighting has not changed since 2005 despite a 25% increase in the Consumer Price Index. This has a strong negative effect on morale and directly harms junior doctors working in London.

5. The proposed contract changes remove the premium currently paid to GP trainees due to their reduced ability to work “non-standard” hours. This Union believes that this change will harm GP recruitment and only serve to exacerbate the current GP shortage.

6. Importantly, this Union believes that the proposed contract changes do not adequately reflect the hard work and commitment that all doctors have made to join the medical profession. This Union believes that this contract proposal may dissuade prospective students from applying to medical school, deter current medical students from continuing their studies and increase the numbers of students choosing an alternative career path on completion of their degree.

1 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-34555822> 2.

2. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/contract-reform-for-consultants-and-doctors-and-2-dentists-in-training-supporting-healthcare-services-seven-days-a-week>

This Union resolves to add its support in the strongest terms to the BMA in their negotiations for a fairer and safer contract. In doing so, we are adding our voice to those of The United Hospitals MedGroup, The British Medical Association and twenty Presidents of the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges and associated Faculties.

This Union mandates the Union Council representatives to act to increase awareness of this issue across Imperial, support student Campaigns in support of the BMA and to produce a written statement to be published on Imperial College Union’s website.