

Strike breakthrough: Junior doctors agree to pay deal, ending prolonged industrial action

25 September 2024  Katie Williams

The BMA has voted in favour of accepting the pay deal offered by the Government.

Background

A topic that has been frequently in the news over the past 18 months is junior doctors strikes over pay. The strikes began in March 2023, representing the longest industrial dispute in the NHS's history. The strikes have had a significant impact, costing the tax payer almost £1.7 billion since April 2023 and leading to over 1.5 million cancelled appointments. It is therefore welcome news that the strikes have been brought to an end as an agreement has been reached between the BMA and the Government.

What has been agreed?

The BMA has agreed a deal which will give junior doctors an additional 4.05% uplift to their 2023/2024 pay rise, with an 8% average increase in 2024/2025. In practice, this means that the basic pay for a doctor starting foundation training in the NHS will now receive basic pay of £36,600 (previously £32,400).

In addition to this, a number of other measures have been agreed:

- 'Junior doctors' will now be called 'resident doctors'.
- The government will also be working with NHS England on a review of training numbers, to address training bottlenecks and the planned expansion of medical school places.
- A separate group will also be formed, led by the Department of Health and Social Care, to review the training model concerning the number and frequency of rotations. This is following the recognition of the disruption the current system of rotations can be for resident doctors. The review is intended to reform the number and frequency of rotations.
- The government has committed to streamline the way resident doctors report additional hours.
- The BMA will withdraw the rate card, for doctors training in England, with immediate effect.

What does this mean for healthcare employers?

This news will no doubt be welcomed by healthcare employers as it ends the longstanding dispute and provides more stability in the workforce, particularly as they gear up for winter pressures. The deal comes following the publication of the Darzi report this month and a commitment from the government to "build an NHS that is truly fit for the future".

NHS Employers are working on an updated pay circular and therefore NHS organisations should look out for this.

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