

Motion title: Solidarity with the BMA and our doctors

Proposer: Mikey Umney, (MED Convenor)

Seconder: Alice Drake, (UEA Paediatric Society UC Rep)

Summary: Newly qualified doctors, who have studied for five years at university with over £90,000 in debt, have taken real terms pay cut of more than 25% since 2008. Doctors are leaving in their droves, either because of mental burnout or to other countries for better working conditions. This leaves to longer waiting lists and piling on the workload for doctors already stressed. This motion calls for council and the SU to support medical students, newly qualified doctors, and consultants in their fight for better pay and working conditions which has been ignored by the UK government.

Union Notes:

1. The British Medical Association (BMA) is the trade union for doctors. Since 2022, the BMA has been balloting for junior doctors to walk out in response to the UK government ignoring demands of pay restoration to basic pay rates aligning with levels prior to 2008.
2. Basic pay rates for junior doctors have decreased when in line with inflation by 26.1% since 2008. Basic pay for a junior doctor is currently situated at £29,000 a year. This is the basic pay for a group of newly qualified people who are responsible for life and death decisions with patients and who work 12-hour shifts, quite often finishing late due to the heavy burden of work expected for them to complete. Junior doctors are leaving the profession due to a 'crippling cost of living crisis, burnout and well below inflation pay'. This means the NHS, and the patients it serves, will suffer.
3. The UK government have refused to meet with the BMA. They have proposed a 6% pay rise plus £1,250 a year, which is way below what the BMA has asked for, which is 35%. This would not be a pay rise but a pay restoration to pre-2008 levels. Ministers have said they will no longer talk to the BMA as this was their final settlement. The most recent strike ballot for the strikes in October had a 71% turnout, 98% voting in favour of industrial action. The most recent dispute had both junior doctors and consultants striking at the same time.

Union Believes:

1. Junior doctors deserve a pay rise of what the BMA are proposing. This is to retain the workforce who are currently leaving in large numbers leaving the NHS dangerously understaffed and increasing the workload of junior doctors who are emotionally and mentally burnt out. Junior doctors are not worth 26% less now than they did before 2008.
2. A large proportion of medical students, both at UEA and at other universities, are contemplating on whether they want to continue their careers due to poor pay and dire working conditions. This is easily observable when students are on their clinical placements at hospitals across the East of England.
3. The government have been deliberately negligent in needlessly prolonging this dispute by not engaging in any talks with BMA delegates.

Union Resolves:

1. UEASU gives their full solidarity to striking doctors, and the medical students who will make up the future workforce.

2. UEASU gives full support to the BMA and will support the campaign for the government to get back to the table to discuss a better and more meaningful pay resolution.

3. UEASU will provide spaces on campus for doctors who are striking, as well as medical students who support the strikes, for them to campaign and protest for pay restoration and better working conditions.

References:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-63561305>

<https://www.bma.org.uk/our-campaigns/junior-doctor-campaigns/pay/payrestoration>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-66674058>