

BMA Resident Doctors Committee rejects landmark deal

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Historic new deal for resident doctors would have seen more frequent and fairer pay rises and more training places from this year.

Resident doctors have missed out on the chance to vote on a landmark new deal for their profession, as the British Medical Association Resident Doctors Committee (BMA RDC) has rejected a historic deal put to them by the government to boost their pay, enhance their career opportunities, improve their working lives and put more money into resident doctor's pockets.

The government has already taken significant action to improve resident doctor pay and working conditions - delivering a 28.9% pay rise over three years as well as accelerating legislation to prioritise UK medical graduates and others with significant NHS experience through the Medical Training Prioritisation Act.

On top of this, since the start of this year the government has engaged in constructive talks with the BMA, culminating in a comprehensive new deal for resident doctors which was put to the BMA RDC this week.

This deal was built on extensive discussions with the leaders of the RDC, who engaged in good faith. It is deeply regrettable that the committee refused their members the chance to have their own say and vote on the deal.

Health and Social Care Secretary, Wes Streeting said:

It is enormously disappointing for NHS patients and staff, that the BMA Resident Doctors' Committee have rejected this offer.

This government has pulled every lever available lever to put forward a generous package - developed in tandem with the BMA - that would have transformed the working lives and career prospects of resident doctors.

I would like to thank the leaders of the BMA's RDC for the constructive approach they have shown to the intensive talks we have had since the turn of the year. I am only sorry that this has not resulted in an agreement. The result is that resident doctors will be worse off.

My door is always open to NHS unions that want to work with the government to improve the conditions of NHS staff. The historic deal on the table demonstrates what can be achieved when we work together, rather than be trapped in a damaging cycle of industrial action. It is for that reason that I am not giving up just yet. I've gone as far as I can and the government can afford, but it is not too late for the Committee to reconsider, and I urge them to do so.

My focus and that of leaders across the NHS will sadly now have to turn again towards protecting patients, staff and our NHS by minimising disruption from more needless strikes.

The deal would have included:

- Reform of the pay structure, so resident doctors would benefit from more frequent and fairer pay rises at each stage of their training, as they reach key competencies and enhance productivity.
- Combining pay structure reform with the DDRB uplift of 3.5%.
- Pay rises over three years baked in, linked to the independent DDRB recommendations, as requested by the BMA.
- Starting pay for new graduates entering the profession this year would have been nearly £12,000 higher than four years ago.
- Up to 4,500 more specialty training places would have been created over the next 3 years, including 1,000 for this year's applicants with the additional round of recruitment launching in April.
- Reimbursement of costly Royal College exam fees from April this year, which resident doctors currently must pay out of pocket to progress with their training, meaning resident doctors would have been thousands of pounds better off.
- Contract reform for locally employed doctors to ensure they also benefit from this new deal.

If the BMA RDC continue to reject this offer, resident doctors will still receive a 3.5% pay award this year — another above inflation increase, as recommended by the independent pay review body - but significantly less than what was on the table. The Medical Training Prioritisation Act is now law and will be implemented as planned this year.

The deal would have unlocked 4,500 new specialty training places, going far beyond the government's commitment in the 10 Year Health Plan, and brought 1,000 of these posts to this year in a new recruitment round in April.

The window to allow us to launch 1,000 posts in April is short. Once this deadline passes, given the prospect of potential further rounds of industrial action and its detrimental impact on NHS budgets, we will not be able to keep the offer on the table or make the same offer again. Systems will need to prepare for industrial action and will therefore not be able to afford delivering the 1,000 additional posts during a period of costly instability.

The government and the NHS will not again be financially or operationally able to offer as generous a deal as was on the table this week.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/bma-resident-doctors-committee-rejects-landmark-deal>