

The truth about the junior doctors' dispute

The Government is threatening the future of the NHS.

They want to remove safety measures that stop junior doctors from working excessive hours.

They want to force through a contract on junior doctors which threatens the quality of care patients receive.

Junior doctors don't want to strike, but the Government has left us with no alternative.



What is a junior doctor?

The term junior doctor is misleading. Mostly in our late 20s and 30s, we are fully-qualified professionals and the backbone of the NHS.

Junior doctors are in training for up to 15 years. We're on our way to becoming GPs, consultants, medical researchers and lecturers for the next generation of doctors.

We are often the first doctor you see when you go to hospital.

Like you, many of us are also parents and carers, juggling our professional lives with looking after a family.

Why are junior doctors going on strike?

This is the first time in 40 years that junior doctors have staged a walkout. It's a last resort – but we genuinely feel we have no choice.

Junior doctors are angry at the way in which the Government is riding roughshod over the genuine concerns doctors are raising about patient safety and doctors' wellbeing. We are fed up of hearing Government ministers undervalue our work and undermine patients' trust in us. Many of us are already at breaking point, looking to work overseas or even leaving the medical profession altogether.

Junior doctors believe that the Government's plans will harm the next generation of doctors – and the future of the NHS itself.

Nothing the Government has said has given us any hope that they are prepared to negotiate properly and listen to our concerns.

What do junior doctors want?

First and foremost, we want to negotiate a contract that is fair for doctors, safe for patients and provides a future for the NHS.

However, to be able to get back round the table, we want the Government to remove the threat to impose a new, unnegotiated contract on us.

We want a contract which:

- pays us fairly for the hours we work
- ensures that the hours we work are safe
- provides cover at weekends and at night, but also recognises our right to family life
- doesn't disadvantage those doctors who work less than full time or who take parental leave

In numbers: junior doctors and the NHS

- There are 53,000 junior doctors in England
- Junior doctors already work seven days a week
- Every week, the NHS treats over 4 million patients
- Junior doctors care for patients in hospitals 365 days a year

The BMA is the independent trade union and professional association for all doctors working in the UK.

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