



Department of Health & Social Care

Rt. Hon. Victoria Atkins MP
Secretary of State for Health and Social Care

Steve Brine MP
Chair, Health and Social Care Committee
House of Commons
[By email]

16 May 2024

Dear Steve,

I am writing to update you on negotiations between the Government and the British Medical Association's Specialist, Associate Specialist, and Specialty (SAS) doctor committee.

As you know, earlier this year, BMA SAS members rejected an offer put to them. The Government and BMA SAS committee then engaged constructively and in good faith to identify amendments to the original offer to address the important concerns of SAS doctors. I am pleased to inform you that, earlier this week, I made a revised formal offer to the BMA SAS committee on a package of reforming measures that retains the positive elements of the original offer with some adjustments to target members' concerns.

The BMA SAS committee have agreed to put the revised offer to a vote of their members, with a recommendation that they accept. No strikes will be called whilst members are voting and, if the offer is accepted, it would altogether prevent damaging strike action by a vital staff group at a crucial time for the NHS.

This offer is independent of the headline pay uplift SAS doctors received in 2023-24 through the Government's acceptance of the independent pay review body recommendations, and of any uplift they receive as a result of the 2024-25 pay review body process.

The Offer

The revised offer continues to seek to address the unintended imbalance between the old and the new contracts to ensure consistency and fairness across the workforce, help speed up the delivery of some of the key objectives of the new contracts put in place in 2021 and encourage more existing doctors to take up the new contract. However, acting on feedback from our original offer, this offer – if accepted – would mean that pay scales for those on the pre-2021 contracts would also be uplifted, by £1,400. New pay scales would take effect from 1 April 2024. The offer also includes steps to support career progression opportunities for SAS doctors.

As in the original offer, the revised offer includes a joint piece of work to consider how Locally Employed Doctors (LEDs) – doctors who are employed on local terms and conditions as opposed to national – can be better supported to progress in their careers.

The BMA SAS committee will now make arrangements to put this offer to a vote of members as soon as possible, alongside their recommendation that members accept. I will update you in due course.

Junior Doctors

I also wanted to inform you that we have agreed with the BMA Junior Doctors Committee (JDC) to explore a process of mediation, which I hope will move us towards a resolution. Both parties have mutually agreed a preferred mediator, and the BMA and my department will now begin the process of engaging with the selected mediator.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to read 'Victoria', is positioned above the printed name.

RT. HON. VICTORIA ATKINS MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE