

The Royal College of Emergency Medicine

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The Right Honorable Jeremy Hunt MP
Secretary of State for Health
Department of Health
Richmond House
79 Whitehall
London, SW1A 2NS

18th September 2015

Dear Mr Hunt

We write as presidents of our respective medical royal colleges to express our very great concern regarding the proposals for the new employment contracts of doctors in training.

The proposals represent a real and immediate threat to the current stated priorities of the NHS, namely recruitment and retention of front line staff and the provision of services across seven days.

The consequences of the recent announcements have wide ranging implications on the future of medicine and patient care as a whole. If we are to strive to deliver innovative models of care, expand the delivery of care across seven days, increase NHS efficiency and continue to lead the world in innovation and research, we must support and value the people who are going to deliver this.

As currently proposed the new contracts would regard most evening and weekend work as normal time. This would act as a disincentive to recruitment in posts that involve substantial evening and weekend shifts, as well as diminishing the morale of those doctors already working in challenging conditions.

Amongst other consequences which are surely unintended, the proposed new contract would introduce financial disincentives for doctors who seek to gain additional experience prior to entering training in diagnostic specialties. Individuals may further encounter barriers to undertaking research thereby depriving patients of the advantages inherent in such experience. This is in direct contradiction to the spirit of the Shape of Training review which seeks to introduce greater flexibility in medical training.

The ability of the NHS to recruit and especially to retain medical staff in front line services is already well documented. The proposed contract will further

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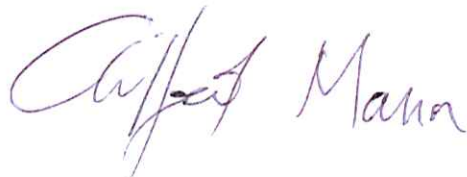
exacerbate this retention and recruitment challenge. We must find ways to attract doctors to these areas of care, not drive them away.

We would urge the government to create the conditions where both NHS Employers and the BMA can reopen dialogue and constructively work towards a contract that supports staff to deliver the best care for patients.

Whilst we recognise the current financial envelope, we would expect both parties to bring forward proposals which equitably address the needs of patients and support recruitment and retention to all medical careers.

Failure to do so will regrettably demoralise our current workforce and leave providers ever more reliant on locum and agency staff.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in purple ink that reads "Clifford Mann". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dr Clifford Mann
President of the Royal College of Emergency Medicine

Signed on behalf of:

Dr Anna Batchelor, President of the Faculty of Intensive Care Medicine
Dr Liam Brennan, President of the Royal College of Anaesthetists
Prof Jane Dacre President of the Royal College of Physicians
Dr Suzy Lishman, President of the Royal College of Pathologists
Prof Carrie MacEwen, President of the Royal College of Ophthalmologists
Dr Clifford Mann, President of the Royal College of Emergency Medicine
Dr Giles Maskell, President of the Royal College of Radiologists
Prof Neena Modi, President of the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health
Mr David Richmond, President of the Royal College of Obstetrics and Gynaecology
Sir Simon Wessely, President of the Royal College of Psychiatrists