

NEWS RELEASE – 26 May 2009

EUROPEAN WORKING TIME DIRECTIVE

The Academy of Medical Royal Colleges welcomes Health Secretary Alan Johnson's review of the likely impact of the introduction of the European Working Time Directive (EWTD)

The new rules, which are due to come into force on 1st August 2009 will limit a doctor's working week to 48 hours. Concern has been raised by some specialities that this legally binding cap could have a detrimental effect on junior doctors' training, particularly on the training they receive while at work.

Alan Johnson has asked Medical Education England (MEE), the independent advisory board on medical training, to commission the Post-graduate Medical Education and Training Board (PMETB), the independent regulator of standards of training, to work with stakeholders to identify areas where changes to training might be necessary as a consequence of reduced working reduced hours.

Professor Dame Carol Black, Chair of the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges said, "We are very pleased that the Secretary of State has taken this positive step. Only by carrying out a thorough audit of the likely impact of the EWTD on doctors' training, and consequently on patient safety and the quality of care, can we know what changes will need to be made to ensure that we continue to provide the highest quality training for doctors and the best possible care for patients. We must therefore gather accurate data so that we can all work towards meeting these twin objectives."

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The Academy of Medical Royal Colleges co-ordinates the work of the Medical Royal Colleges and Faculties