

STATEMENT – Monday 10TH DECEMBER 2007

The Academy's response to the update from the MMC England Programme Board

The MMC England Programme Board has written to all doctors to set out how the specialty recruitment process will work in England in 2008. The letter also gives the Department of Health's initial assessment of the likely numbers of posts and the competition ratios.

The Department of Health set up the Board, working with the BMA, the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges, deaneries and employers to advise Ministers on the many complex decisions needed to help the process run smoothly. Changes have been made to the process of recruitment to avoid the disastrous failings experienced earlier this year.

However, the Academy believes the recruitment *process* is not the main issue. The Department of Health is predicting an average competition ratio of 3:1, ratios worsening at successive levels. This will heighten anxiety for many doctors who will rightly view this as a limitation to their career prospects.

The Academy regards this as a serious problem that will need to be properly addressed by all concerned. For its part the Academy will continue to work with the Royal Colleges and other professional bodies to explore practical ways to help doctors facing difficulties, but we recognise too that many of the complex workforce issues brought to focus by the MMC process, are beyond the control of the current MMC programme Board.

We will continue to work hard to ensure that patients benefit from the high level of knowledge and skills possessed by UK trained junior doctors, that these doctors have access to the training required to deliver improved patient care and that their career aspirations are not stifled by limited opportunities available in the NHS. The Academy believes it is critically important that the profession takes a leading role and has a sure voice in the ongoing debate about the shape of the medical workforce.

The declared ambition of the NHS Review is for a clinically-led, 'world class' Health Service focused on improving the quality of care, through an approach that allows a full response to the aspirations of patients, staff and the public. This must not become a hollow ambition.

For more information contact:

Max Prangnell, Communications Director, AoMRC
0207 486 0067
0773 436 1055 (m)