Academy Trainee Doctors Group Statement Regarding
Decision for Further Industrial Action 31/08/2016

It Is Worth Waiting for a Better Outcome

It is with great regret that the BMA and Department of Health are once more in a position where industrial action has been deemed necessary. This is the outcome no one wants, yet we continue to come back to it.

It is a saddening characteristic of this long running dispute that talks of mandates and claims of playing politics dominate, whilst little makes the headlines of the real problems: the increasing scale of the work the NHS is being asked to undertake and the dwindling resources to deliver patient care, both in terms of financial resources and the availability of appropriately trained and qualified personnel. Whilst there is more investment, it does not keep pace with what is demanded.

The principle of imposition remains as abhorrent to Junior Doctors on this occasion as it was on the last. The concept of 7 day services without an increase in resources is not realistic or achievable, and no coherent plan for funding or delivery has been put forward. The government is continuing with contract imposition against warnings from patient safety groups, senior members of the medical profession and its own MPs and civil servants that the NHS is under resourced, under staffed and over stretched.

The NHS is ill prepared to deliver imposition, and junior doctors remain united against an imposed solution to the contractual dispute. The BMA has identified 4 domains that have contributed to the vote against the contract in July:

- Whistle blowing protection
- Guardian of safe working hours
- Less than full time working
- Weekend pay

Whilst there is some evidence of progress in some of these domains, the solutions remain untested: with imposition just a month away, some trusts still do not have a Guardian of safe working in place. Trainees will be left on an imposed contract that cannot be fully implemented; a farcical position to be in as an employee and a clear risk to patients. As doctors, and as patients, we all need better solutions to these problems. It is surely possible to improve on a contract acceptable to a significant minority to produce a contract that is acceptable to the majority.

The rush to deliver contractual change cannot be justified in the context of patient safety. Contract imposition will not create more doctors or free up resources; nor will days of strike action. The Academy and ATDG support 7 day services that are delivered in an adequately resourced and staffed system. The ATDG cannot support diluting 5 days’ workforce over 7 days to claim a pyrrhic victory whilst the battle for the future of the NHS is lost.
A fully 7 day, free at the point of care health service does not exist in any country on Earth. If the UK is to lead the way, as it did with the founding of the NHS in 1948, it is more important that changes are negotiated and agreed rather than carried out hastily and without consensus. Both the BMA and Department of Health must once again *de-escalate and find a mutually agreeable way forward*, or patients will face the consequences.

Signed:

[Signature]

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