

19th February 2024

PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL

All Junior Doctors – Blackpool Teaching Hospitals

Executive Medical Director

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Dear Colleagues

RE: Doctors' Industrial Action – request for support in planning cover for strike action

You will be aware of the forthcoming doctors' industrial action in response to the UK Government's position around junior doctor pay. We understand that this action is not taken against Blackpool Teaching Hospitals (BTH) as your employer or post graduate training placement Trust, and we are keen to work with you in planning for this period of industrial action.

We have been notified by the BMA and the HCSA that Junior doctors in England will begin their action with a full walkout starting for shifts commencing from Saturday 24th February 2024 at 07:00h and concluding at 23:59 on Wednesday 28th February 2024.

Blackpool Teaching Hospitals fully supports the rights of any of our staff to take lawful industrial action.

As your employer, we will always recognise and value the tremendous contribution made by you, our junior doctors – both those employed directly by BTH and those hosted here during their postgraduate training. We know you are highly skilled and expert professionals who deliver significant urgent and emergency care across BTH, as well as a vast amount of elective care, working with our senior doctors.

This period of industrial action will result in a significant impact across many of our services. As senior doctors we all recognise this because we know that you, our junior doctor colleagues, are indispensable; when the industrial action goes ahead, the whole country will know it too.

Our junior doctors are highly conscientious professionals, and we know you do not want to see patient harm due to industrial action – therefore we believe it is our duty as senior doctors to support you and our non-medical colleagues by ensuring patient safety during the strike action. This will take a massive effort, which is why we are now accelerating our planning by asking our senior staff for their help to provide cover. Across all our divisions, we are creating rotas of senior doctors to cover junior doctor duties working alongside other healthcare professionals whose support is greatly valued; we will be arranging refresher training for senior doctors and planning what activity will need to be stood down. We attach more detailed FAQs which will continue to be updated.

Senior colleagues will be working with their Head of Department and operational directors to ensure plans are in place. As we plan, we will value your advice and guidance to ensure we have taken account of the full scope of the junior doctor roles. Providing such advice and guidance would be purely voluntary and there is no obligation for you to do so. We hope that some of you will be able to support us in this way to ensure we

do the very best for our patients. When we issue the detailed plans for cover, we will also ask for your support with handover at the start and end of the full industrial action period in line with the BMA expectations.

We would like to make a personal request to you all. It is really important that we, the doctors of BTH, employ our strong professional bonds to work together in support of patient safety, in collaboration across all grades and our clinical colleagues from other professional groups across BTH. We must all respect the rights of individuals to take strike action or not, understanding that personal circumstances will influence those choices; we need to be compassionate towards one another at a time of great challenge; and we need to uphold both our professional integrity and the BTH values at all times.

We appreciate that this may be a stressful time for colleagues, so the Trust wants to outline support that remains available to you, should you need it, which includes:

Occupational Health – you can either self-refer or speak to you manager to make a referral

You can also contact Katy Coope, Executive Director of People & Culture, by MS Teams or katy.coope@nhs.net

Thank you very much for your great support and professionalism, as always.

Yours sincerely



Chris Barben
Executive Medical Director