

19th February 2024

PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL

All Consultant and SAS Doctors Blackpool Teaching Hospitals

Executive Medical Director
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Dear Colleagues

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

You will be aware of the forthcoming junior doctors' industrial action in response to the UK Government's position around junior doctor pay. As a result, Junior doctors in all NHS Trusts across England hold a full walkout starting with shifts commencing on Saturday 24th February 2024 at 07:00h and concluding at 23:59 on Wednesday 28th February 2024. We, as we know you too, understand that this action is not against Blackpool Teaching Hospitals (BTH) specifically and we have acknowledged this in our letter to our Junior Doctor colleagues.

I would also like to take this opportunity to emphasise that the Trust fully supports the rights of any of our staff to take lawful industrial action.

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

Withdrawal of this care will result in a hugely significant impact across all of our services. As senior doctors we all recognise this because we know that our junior doctor workforce is indispensable; when the industrial action goes ahead, the whole country will know it too.

Our junior doctors are highly conscientious professionals and they do not want to see patient harm due to industrial action – therefore we believe it is our professional duty as senior doctors to support them and our non-medical colleagues by ensuring patient safety during the strike action – hence we are asking for your help in providing cover. This will take a massive effort, which is why we are now accelerating our planning. Across all our divisions, we need to create 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 seniors and planning what activity will be able to go ahead.

As we plan, our 'ask' of you please, is that you work with your clinical and operational directors to ensure rotas are in place. We attach more detailed FAQs which will continue to be updated.

I would like to make a personal request to you all. It is really important that we, the doctors of the BTH, utilise our strong professional bonds to work together in support of patient safety, in collaboration with our junior doctors and other colleagues at BTH. We need to 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 your 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