

Mr Rishi Sunak
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street

Sent via email

19 June 2024

Dear Prime Minister,

The latest NHS waiting list figures show increases for March and April even though no strikes were held during these months. We, and doctors across the country, have noted that you have cynically blamed and scapegoated doctors for your government's failure to bring down the waiting lists, as you promised the public you would. Despite this, we are writing to you today to provide you with a final chance to do the right thing and avert the upcoming strike action.

Year after year, we have seen pay cuts that have amounted to more than 26% over a 14-year period. During this dispute, your government have not once put forward a credible offer to our members, so it is no wonder that doctors are giving up and leaving in their droves, taking with them their experience and expertise. Your attitude towards our dispute makes zero financial sense. A study in 2022 showed that "new hires" are approximately 20% less productive and calculated that annual attrition costs the NHS £1.6bn. The cost of our industrial action on the NHS has been estimated at £3bn. Pay restoration would be an investment of £1.3bn, which would yield returns by addressing the retention crisis and provide a subsequent uplift in productivity.

We are not asking for the world and we do not expect pay restoration overnight. A doctor currently starts on £15.53 per hour and we are asking for that to be restored to what a doctor was worth in 2008, which would be £21.58 per hour. As we have repeatedly said, we are happy to have that restoration process occur over time – we have not called for it in one go.

The strike action starting on June 27th for 5 days can be averted if you commit in writing to a detailed pathway that will restore our pay in the form of a comprehensive deal that will be implemented if you are able to form the next Government. This does not require you to break purdah and is entirely within your gift to take this bold action and give a clear plan for the future.

Now could be your opportunity to deliver for patients and doctors.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Robert Laurenson
Co-chair, BMA Junior Doctors Committee



Dr Vivek Trivedi
Co-chair, BMA Junior Doctors Committee