



Department
of Health

*From the Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP
Secretary of State for Health*

Richmond House
79 Whitehall
London
SW1A 2NS

Mb-sofs@dh.gsi.gov.uk

POC_1009667

Dr Mark Porter
BMA Council Chair
BMA House
Tavistock Square
London
WC1H 9JP

4 January 2016

Dear Mark,

I was very disappointed to hear of the decision by the BMA to initiate strike action. In particular, it is extraordinary that you have done so without fully considering the revised offer that my negotiators presented to you this morning which you refused to talk about during negotiations today.

I believe we made good progress in the negotiations and given the many areas of common ground it cannot be appropriate to put patient safety at risk with a series of potentially damaging strikes without seeing these negotiations through in full.

As you know, we had resolved 15 of the 16 issues we agreed to discuss in the memorandum of understanding agreed with ACAS on 30 November and that you raised during the negotiations. These included safety issues such as maximum working hours as well as measures to improve the quality and experience of training for junior doctors. On the final unresolved issue of pay for weekend working, we remain willing to show flexibility and negotiate in good faith. It is therefore highly unfortunate that your team were not willing to discuss any compromise on this issue even though we have made clear that pay will be protected for all doctors working within contracted maximum hours.



Department
of Health

*From the Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP
Secretary of State for Health*

Any strike action risks serious harm to patients so I am grateful that you have accepted our proposal to return to ACAS. To facilitate further constructive discussion, I have appointed one of our most respected Trust Chief Executives, Sir David Dalton, to take negotiations forward with ACAS on behalf of the NHS and the Government.

You will know that Sir David has a strong track record in the field of quality improvement with a focus on patient safety. He has transformed Salford Royal into one of only two CQC-rated 'outstanding' trusts. Not only does Salford Royal have agreed standards for 7 day services for urgent and emergency care, it also has one of the highest staff satisfaction rates in the country. In the negotiations he will partner with NHS Employers and be assisted by a wider group of Trust Chief Executives and Medical Directors. He has a reputation for engaging with staff and stands ready to work with you to agree a fair settlement for doctors and patients.

I hope you will therefore consider our offer carefully and consider suspending strike action so that we can conclude negotiations quickly without further risk to patient safety.

JEREMY HUNT