# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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| **TITLE**  | **2023-24 pay award offers to junior doctors, SAS doctors and consultants to stop the strikes**  |
| **DATE**  | **07 June 2024** |
| **BY** | **First Minister, Vaughan Gething MSEluned Morgan MS, Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care** |

We have today made a formal pay award offer to each of the three BMA branches of practices – junior doctors, SAS doctors and consultants – for 2023-24, following successful negotiations over the last two months.

We would like to thank members of the BMA’s negotiating teams and NHS Employers for the constructive nature of the talks, which have enabled us to make these formal offers, which will now be put to the BMA membership for consideration. Each of the three BMA elected representative committees are recommending members accept the offers.

While strike action has been paused during negotiations, if these offers are accepted, it will end this dispute and industrial action, meaning doctors will return to work in Wales for the benefit of patients and NHS services.

The negotiations have been robust and while the aim was to end the 2023-24 dispute and prevent further disruptive strike action, these offers also ensure the additional investment in doctors’ pay is balanced against commitments towards operational reforms, which seek to address productivity and efficiency and achieving future contract reform. These pay awards, if accepted, will also help to address inequalities in the senior NHS medical workforce.

These offers are at the limit of our affordability. We have been open and transparent about our financial constraints with our social partners during negotiations.

**Junior doctors**

The offer consists of a 12.4% pay uplift, backdated to 1 April 2023. This includes the 5% pay lift for 2023-24, which has already been paid. If agreed, this offer is outside of the Doctor and Dentists Review Body (DDRB) recommendation for 2023-24. This offer is in line with the pay award accepted by junior doctors in Scotland.

All parties will commit to re-entering contract negotiations as soon as practicable once a new BMA junior doctors committee is elected this year with the ambition of reaching an agreement that, subject to approval by BMA members, would begin implementation in 2025-26. The contract negotiations will build on the contract rejected in 2022, while recognising that significant changes will be required.

**Consultants**

The Welsh Government and the BMA Welsh consultant committee have agreed the time is right to reform the current pay structure, which is more than 20 years old. A modern pay structure will better support recruitment and retention, better reward performance, address the gender pay gap, and support progression through the career of consultants in Wales. The new pay structure will be backdated to 1 January 2024. If this offer is agreed, it will be outside the DDRB recommendation for 2023-24.

The BMA rate card will be withdrawn if the offer is accepted with immediate effect at both local and national levels in Wales.

All parties have agreed to an all-Wales job planning policy being developed and implemented during 2024-25 along with an NHS Wales recruitment template for newly-recruited consultants in Wales.

It has also been agreed that scoping work will be undertaken during 2024-25 in preparation for contract reform talks. Any reformed contract will need to be fully modernised against current and future requirements of the NHS Wales for the benefit of patients and the wellbeing of consultants.

**SAS doctors**

Specialty Doctor 2021 contract

In 2021, a new specialty doctor contract was agreed in social partnership and implemented as part of a multi-year pay deal. This offer addresses the unintended imbalances in the pay scale for doctors on the 2021 contract and the 2008 contract to ensure consistency and fairness across the specialty doctor workforce.

This investment will encourage more doctors to take up the new contracts, which offer modernised terms and conditions to ensure that doctors and patients benefit from the reformed contract and working conditions.

Specialist Doctor 2021 Contract

In 2021, a new specialist doctor contract was agreed in social partnership and implemented as part of a multi-year pay deal. This offer addresses the unintended imbalances between the specialty doctor and specialist pay scales to ensure a career progression pathway is maintained across the workforce. It will resolve the current issue that exists where the top pay point of the 2008 specialty doctor pay scale is higher than the starting salary for the specialist grade.

Associate Specialist (2008 contract)

The Welsh Government has listened to the BMA Welsh SAS committee and while recognising this is a closed grade, recognises the rationale for associate specialists to receiving comparable levels of pay against the consultant pay scale, given the skills and experience of associate specialists working on consultant rotas.

The offer includes uplifting the 2022-23 pay scales by a further 4%, making a total of 9% for 2023-24 backdated to 1 January 2024 for associate specialists.

The BMA rate card will be withdrawn if the offer is accepted with immediate effect at both local and national levels in Wales.

Full details of each pay offer will be communicated through BMA Wales to their members.

We would like to take this opportunity to encourage doctors who have any questions about the offer to speak to their BMA representatives as this is a fair offer to address the pay dispute.

We look forward to working in social partnership with all NHS and health trade unions to discuss the 2024-25 pay award.