

27th April 2016

Dear Constituents,

Thank you for contacting me about the latest junior doctor strike action.

The BMA has called an all-out strike on 26th and 27th April, with doctors instructed to refuse to provide life-saving care for the first time in NHS history. I believe this is a completely irresponsible course of action, putting patient lives at risk.

Through negotiation, approximately 90 per cent of the contract had been agreed with the BMA, including agreement on hours and pay. The only outstanding issue was Saturday pay.

The Government agreed that anyone working 1 Saturday out of 4, or more, should get higher premium pay rates. This is a better deal than that awarded to nurses, paramedics or other public sector workers such as police officers and fire-fighters.

It is misleading to suggest that the Government refuses to enter negotiations. Over three years, officials had more than 75 meetings with the BMA to negotiate contract reform. During this time, the union walked abruptly out of talks twice, circulated a grossly misleading pay calculator to their members when no proposals were on the table, broke a written promise to compromise on Saturday pay by refusing to discuss the issue in negotiations and rejected a final offer from the Government that independent NHS leaders judged a fair and reasonable compromise.

The Government's Chief negotiator, Sir David Dalton, advised that the NHS needs certainty and that is why the Government will proceed with introducing the new contracts, fulfilling the commitment to delivering a truly 7-day NHS that is always there for families.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



Alok Sharma MP