

English junior doctors reject new contract in long-running row

July 5 2016

Junior doctors in England on Tuesday rejected a new government contract, ramping up a long-running row that has already led to an all-out strike.

Physicians voted 58 to 42 percent in favour of rejecting a proposed package on work and pay conditions, a move that Health Secretary Jeremy Hunt described as "extremely disappointing."

He said the deal had been agreed after weeks of talks with the British Medical Association (BMA) and that the government would now "consider the outcome".

"It is extremely disappointing that [junior doctors](#) have voted against this contract, which was agreed with and endorsed by the leader of the BMA junior doctors' committee and supported by senior NHS leaders," he said.

Junior doctors—roughly equivalent to interns in North American medicine—are graduates with years of experience but who have yet to complete their training, and work notoriously long hours.

There are 53,000 of them in England's National Health Service (NHS), of whom around 37,000 took part in the vote.

While it has been shielded from austerity cuts to public services, experts warn the NHS faces increasing financial strain due to factors like rising

treatment costs and an ageing population.

The government argues that reforms to junior doctors' contracts are necessary to ensure that the quality of care for patients is as high at weekends as it is during the week.

Johann Malawana, chairman of the BMA's junior doctors' committee, announced his resignation following the result, saying it "would be dishonourable and untenable" to continue.

"I believe the fundamental breakdown in trust caused by the government's actions over the last five years has resulted in a situation where no solution is possible," he added.

Junior doctors have staged six strikes across England during the dispute, which erupted late last year, leaving hundreds of thousands of patients with cancelled appointments.

© 2016 AFP

Citation: English junior doctors reject new contract in long-running row (2016, July 5) retrieved 27 April 2024 from

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2016-07-english-junior-doctors-long-running-row.html>

<p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p>
--