

Medical students set to 'abandon' the NHS



The junior doctors' dispute may lead to the 'loss of a generation of doctors' in England as medical students consider alternative options, a survey suggests.

The survey, conducted by the British Medical Association (BMA), reports that as many as 82% of students said they would be 'less likely' than before to make their medical career in England.

A total of 1,197 students participated in the survey. Overall, 94% stated that their enthusiasm for working in the NHS waned due to the dispute and some 34.3% stated they would now be 'less likely' to continue their career in medicine.

Findings also showed that the majority of students are considering work in alternative locations e.g. taking up jobs in Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland or potentially outside of the UK.

The disappointment among students suggests that the ongoing dispute may potentially be damaging to future generations of doctors in England, resulting in further challenges to an 'already overstretched' health service that will be 'unable to cope with patient care'.

Charlie Bell, the BMA's medical student committee co-chairman, said: 'The imposition of this contract has been immensely damaging to the morale of junior doctors and medical students, and has put the future of the medical workforce at risk.'

One medical student offered her personal option, stating that people choose to study medicine because they want to 'care for people when they need it most' and that the imposition of the current contract 'would be bad for the delivery of patient care in the long term'.

She ended by saying: 'This dispute is about much more than pay – it is about wanting a contract that is fair and will ensure the NHS can recruit and retain junior doctors in the future.'

According to a representative from the Department of Health, initial figures show that a similar number of training places have been filled this year, compared to last, with more recruitment rounds to go.

He finished by saying: 'Medicine remains an attractive career proposition - the new contract is a good deal for junior doctors with an average 13.5% basic pay rise and stronger safeguards to limit the maximum number of hours worked'.