



ISLINGTON PENSIONERS FORUM

The voice of Islington's older community

May 2016 Newsletter

Charity No: 1043081

Why are junior doctors angry?

A message from the British Medical Association, the independent trade union and professional association for all doctors working in the UK.

Why are junior doctors angry?

In February, junior doctors were told that a new contract of employment would be forced on them from August 2016. The government said it wasn't prepared to negotiate any more, despite the British Medical Association putting a fully-costed proposal on the table.

Imagine how you would feel if you could only work for one employer and they told you that you had to sign the contract in front of you, with no changes

Junior doctors don't want to strike, but the government is effectively forcing them to work under a contract they believe is unfair.

- There are 53,000 junior doctors in England
- Junior doctors already work seven days a week
- Every week the NHS treats over 4 million patients
- Junior doctors care for patients in hospitals 365 days a year

What is a junior doctor?

The term junior doctor is misleading. Mostly in our late 20s and 30s, we are fully-qualified professionals and the backbone of the NHS.

Junior doctors are in training for up to 15 years. We're on our way to becoming GPs, consultants, medical researchers and lecturers for the next generation of doctors.

We are often the first doctor you see when you go to hospital.

Like you, many of us are also parents and carers, juggling our professional lives with looking after a family.

NOTE: On the day the health secretary announced the contract imposition, nearly 300 junior doctors applied to work overseas – almost ten times as many as the day before.

The new contract will not only hit today's junior doctors, but the next generation too. Medical students are already expressing concern about the future – and without them, how will the NHS carry on? The government needs to put patients before politics and come back to the negotiating table.

THIS MESSAGE FROM THE BRITISH MEDICAL ASSOCIATION CONTINUES ON PAGE 3

25th APRIL 2016, UPDATE ON JUNIOR DOCTORS/GOVERNMENT DISPUTE:

As we went to press there was news of a cross party letter from Labour's Shadow Health Secretary, Heidi Alexander and signed by Conservative Dr. Dan Poulter, Liberal Democrat Norman Lamb and the Scottish Nationalist Party's Dr. Philippa Whitford proposing that the new contract could be piloted in a number of trusts . . . and for its impact on patients, staff and the "weekend effect" to be independently evaluated. The president of the Royal College of Surgeons, Clare Marx said the College backed the cross-party proposal as a way to end the row. Health Secretary, Jeremy Hunt rejected this cross party plan as Labour's "opportunism". Senior doctors said that they would be covering emergencies during the junior doctors' strike which they support. The BMA announced again that they want to renew discussions with the Minister, but this was dependent on him withdrawing imposition of the contract. Meanwhile thousands of pounds have been donated by the public for a case challenging the legality of imposing the contract.

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

A country's leaders who tell you "we are all in this together" and then go their own way by not paying their fair share, are a disgrace and truly deserve contempt from the public.

Shouting loudest lately is the Chancellor of the Exchequer George Osborne about tax havens; his own family connection, Osborne and Little, have paid no corporation tax for years: what a fine example. The UK has leaders who preach this sermon of hypocrisy and greed, little wonder that confusion and mistrust is foremost in the public thought; the Panama Papers say it all!

Because the Pensioners Forum is a campaigning group, many present-day issues are always in our thoughts – future pensions, future care for the elderly, the constant concern about the NHS and what damage is being done to this fine service, the junior doctors' legitimate claim for a fair hearing and not Mr Hunt's dictatorship of imposing this new contract in August.

The public are with the doctors. Hunt and his cronies are wrong and I hope the action being taken on 25

and 26 April by the doctors has the required effect.

More Government interference with the crazy idea that all schools should become academies by 2020. Teachers who cannot get homes will be thrown into the private market of wage structures, trying to find homes at unaffordable rents, and mortgages which will spiral out of control – crazy of course – it's mad. London is becoming a no-go area!

Need to say something about the June referendum: In or Out of Europe? The majority of people are totally confused about this major subject, I have come to the conclusion that my background of trade union activity requires me to say stay in.

I go along with Jeremy Corbyn when he emphasises what this government would do to the trade unions if given a free hand. They hate everything the trade unions stand for, whereas the present European legislation upholds fair conditions for working people. This Government would clearly love to smash all these good conditions long fought for: on this basis alone I think my vote will be to stay in.

A new breed of villain!

"Japan's prison system is being driven to budgetary crisis by demographics, a welfare shortfall and a new, pernicious breed of villain: silver-haired crooks are desperate to be behind bars" reports the *Australian Financial Times*.

Japanese crime figures reveal that about 35 per cent of shoplifting offences are committed by pensioners, and within that figure 40 per cent of repeat offenders have committed the same crime more than six times.

The number of these offenders rose 460 per cent between 1991 and 2013, and the prison system is

now trying to cope with dementia patients.

About 40 per cent of the elderly live alone, and even with a frugal diet and dirt-cheap accommodation, a single Japanese pensioner with minimal savings has living costs more than 25 per cent higher than their basic state pension.

An academic report concludes that this crime wave represents an attempt by the pensioners to end up in prison – where they can get free food, accommodation and healthcare.

Even the theft of a cheap sandwich can mean a two-year prison sentence.

FOOD BANKS.....FOOD BANKS.....FOOD BANKS.....FOOD BANKS.....FOOD BANKS

Trussell Trust which oversees 424 foodbanks in the UK, reports that it gave out enough emergency food to feed more than 1.1million people in 2015-16. The main reported reasons were problems with the welfare system, such as slow processing and payment of benefits and benefit changes including sanctions. Together they accounted for 42 per cent of all referrals. Government figures reveal that 154,309 people waited more than 10 days for their jobseeker's

allowance claim to be processed between March 2015 and February 2016, and of this group, 44,014 waited more than 16 days. Nearly a fifth of all referrals were triggered by low income, a category that includes working people in low-paid, insecure employment facing high living costs. But Trussell says its figures do not reflect the scale of food insecurity in the UK -- their network accounts for half the total number of food bank-style projects in Britain.

BMA message continued from Page 1

What do junior doctors want?

- *We want to build on the progress already made and continue with negotiations for a contract that values and respects doctors and provides a future for the NHS.*
- Although the BMA managed to secure some concessions, there are still substantial issues that the government has failed to address.
- The government believes that a shift that ends as late as 1.45 am or even a minute before 2 am does not count as a night shift – and so would not fall within the new safety limits on nights in a row.
- Junior doctors already work seven days a week, providing care in hospitals throughout the week and at weekends. The government wants to devalue that weekend work by reducing the amount junior doctors get paid for working on a Saturday.
- We want to be valued for what we do: caring for patients every hour of every day

Why are junior doctors going on strike?

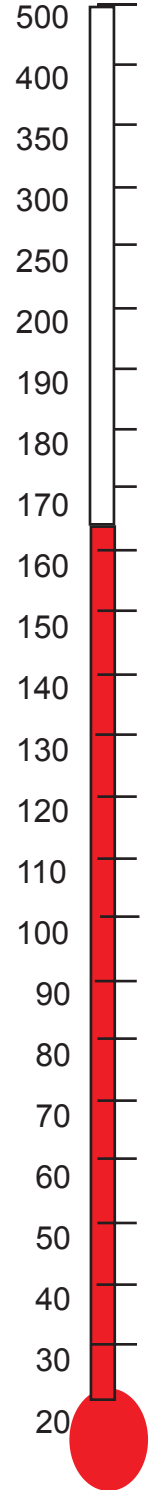
In December last year, junior doctors staged a walkout for the first time in 40 years. Strike action is continuing because the government is failing to listen to our genuine concerns.

Despite progress being made in negotiations with the BMA, the doctors' union, the government announced in February that it was calling a halt to those talks and instead would impose a new set of terms and conditions on all junior doctors from August 2016.

Because the vast majority of junior doctors who are trained with the NHS stay within the NHS, this decision essentially means that junior doctors have no choice but to accept the government's contract.

We feel ignored, undervalued and demoralised by this government's attitude. Many of us are already at breaking point, even considering leaving the medical profession altogether.

WE DO NEED YOUR £5 ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION. SO THANKS TO ALL THOSE MEMBERS WHO HAVE PAID, AND A LITTLE REMINDER TO THOSE WHO HAVEN'T.



Joan Katz proposed the following letter; it was signed by Joan and the IPF officers and sent to Jeremy Hunt and others

Most of us have grown up with the National Health Service and most of us are old enough to remember the gruesome truth about healthcare for the majority of Britons in the years before the NHS was established.

The NHS belongs to every citizen of this country and is the institution of which we are extremely proud.

We are writing to express our utter dismay at the contemptible handling of the NHS in general and the junior doctors in particular.

It is a deeply worrying signal to the nation that you do not desire to maintain the covenant that was made with the British people just after World War Two: publicly owned, publicly accountable, nationally organised healthcare free to all at the point of delivery promised equality to all.

Since the 2014 Health and Social Care Act you have made swingeing cuts and privatisation and wasted millions on an unnecessary top-down reorganisation. Instead of backtracking you are now furthering your mistakes by the arbitrary selection of a seven-day service while determined to ignore the lack of staff and proper funding.

Furthermore you scapegoat and besmirch some of our most gifted and selfless youth – the junior doctors – driving them away from an already under-staffed profession.

We, the pensioners of Islington, do not support your dangerous approach. We urge you to change course. Your actions are not in accordance with the principles and spirit of the National Health Service conceived in the post war consensus.

The Annual General Meeting of Islington Pensioners Forum will take place on Thursday 21 July, 10.30 am in Committee Room 1, Islington Town Hall. This is the 30th Anniversary of the Forum and we will want to mark it as a special occasion -- so watch this space!

IPF Greater London Assembly Hustings Islington Town Hall : 11 April 2016



Left to right:; Jennette Arnold, Caroline Russell, Kristina Glenn, Terry Stacey, Sam Malik, George Durack

Around 60 pensioners attended the hustings, and on behalf of IPF, our chair George Durack thanked them for taking part and he welcomed the guest chair, Kristina Glenn (director Cripplegate Foundation) and panel: Jennette Arnold (Labour), Sam Malik (Conservative), Terry Stacy (LibDem) -- GLA candidates for NE London, and Caroline Russell (Green) -- a GLA list candidate.

Concern about housing and the impact of “the market” were the main issues in the Q&A session; although each candidate assured the meeting that theirs was a policy of more housing “what is meant by affordable?” remained ambiguous

It was with some surprise that we heard Sam Malik say that he was living in a rented home, had had to move three times due to short-term rental agreements and was finding it difficult to save for a mortgage because of high rents, and then tell us that he defends “the market”!

Janet Shapiro, secretary of Haringey Pensioners Action Group introduced the National Pensioners Convention London Region’s GLA election manifesto for an “Age-friendly London” with “equal life-chances for all” and adequate staff for policing and road crossings, accessible buses, rail and assisted

transport, safe and warm homes with sheltered-housing options for independent living, and defence of libraries, day centres, green spaces and public toilets. She particularly stressed the need for young people and all those workers relied on to provide public services to have affordable living costs, particularly rents.

These issues came up again in questions and discussion, with all candidates expressing their agreement with this “age friendly” manifesto.

But the underlying problem of public service cuts and privatisation was reflected in all the questions raised, and as pensioners make up their minds about where to put their X on the ballot papers, it is clear that active members of the pensioners’ movement place great emphasis on defence of public ownership and the need for regulation of the housing market.

Finally, IPF announced their invitation to the other forums and action groups to initiate a North London Pensioners’ association or federation to co-ordinate campaigns and establish firm links to enable issues of common concern to be raised collectively with the future London mayor and GLA members.

Dot Gibson

**Judy Downey of Relatives & Residents Association says:
“People are not a collection of disabilities! Identity is important!”**

You could have heard a pin drop at the Forum meeting on 21 April as everybody listened intently to Judy Downey, Chair of the Relatives and Residents Association talking about the crisis in care.

The R&R Association was started by Dorothy White, who had had a distinguished career in the Ministry of Health during Nye Bevan’s time and was a staunch Labour and NHS supporter.

Dorothy became concerned about nursing homes when her frail elderly mother entered one because of her arthritis, diabetes and fear; she realised that it was difficult for frail, elderly and disabled people to get a good relationship with the system, especially as 80 per cent have dementia. Therefore she linked relatives and residents, and, with grants from the Thatcher government, set up about 30 local groups around the country with the aim: “quality of life for older people in care”.

Today there is no government funding and so the local groups are no more; but there is individual membership and the R&R Association maintains a helpline (020 7359 8136) and produces information.

Importantly there are the “Keys to Care”, which open up insights on topics ranging from the practicalities of the Care Plan and Continence Care to the deeply sensitive issues of Dementia and End of Life Care. These are 12 laminated cards on a key ring at a cost of £6.50, and there are free 2-page papers on the

website underpinning these topics. Now “Keys to Care” are available for Apple/Android mobile/tablet.

Judy said: “People are not a collection of disabilities! Identity is important. They have interests, they have done many things in their lives, and they need conversation, stimulation and they need to go out! HM prisoners have the right to go out into the daylight, but people in nursing homes do not have that right. Also the regulation stating that residents must have choice of food and drink has gone! In fact the Regulator has stopped dealing with complaints.”

She explained the Association’s watchword: RICE standing for: Regulation with standards, Inspections that maintain standards, Complaints (to respond with logic, love and care), Enforcement (“hit them in their pocket!”). The Association’s latest publication is entitled “Your rights in a care home”.

Importantly Judy emphasised the need for care workers to be paid properly and to recognise there is a proper qualification for this important job dealing with the most sensitive hands-on care for vulnerable people.

The meeting agreed to take out an individual membership for £24 and suggested there could be an affiliation fee for organisations.

Relative and Residents Association

1 The Ivories, 6-18 Northampton Street, N1 2HY
email: info@relres.org website: www.relres.org

Drovers: “It is important that the voice of older people is heard”

Many IPF members go to Drovers in North Road (N7) on a regular basis. Islington Council commissions Age UK to run this day centre on its behalf, and now its future is in doubt.

Irma Gomez raised this at our Forum meeting on 21 April because Drovers is important to her and lots of other people of her age. She said: “It is important that the voice of older people is heard”.

Irma explained: “At Drovers we make friends; we can dance, do exercises, poetry and art classes. There is an advice centre, outings, films and soup and a roll for £1.50 every day. So when we heard that Drovers would close in August we were sad and angry.”

Councillor Janet Burgess was at the Forum meeting

and she told us that the Drovers’ building is in a bad state; it would cost more than £100,000 to repair and it also gets its heating from the NHS surgery next door. For these reasons the Council officers decided on closure. However, the elected Councillors said that it must be kept open until another building is found.

In the meantime Highbury Round House in Ronalds Road (N5) is being rebuilt, and there is the Southeby Mews Day Centre off Blackstock Road (N5).

The problem with the Round House is that it is quite a walk from any of the bus stops; this would be a problem for many older people, and so perhaps TfL could be persuaded to have one of those small pick-up and drop-off buses between 10 am and 4 pm?

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• **Highbury View Tenants Association invites you to a Garden Party on Saturday 18 June,** •
• **entrance at the Highbury Fields end of Ronalds Road, N5. No better way to spend a** •
• **summer afternoon -- good company, good food and drink plus the obligatory raffle!** •
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INFORMATION

Every Monday BINGO	1pm at IPF Hall, 1a Providence Court, Providence Place, N1 0RN
Wednesday 11May, 1.30-4.30 pm Resource Centre, 356 Holloway Rd, N7 6PA (FREE EVENT)	London Older People's Strategies Group "Ageing in a Digital World" (registration & light refreshments from 1.30 pm). To book: Gulnaheer on 020 8907 8920 OR asmina@asmina.plus.com
Thursday 19 May, 10.30 a.m. Islington Town Hall, Cttee Room 1	FORUM meeting. Claude Moraes, Member of European Parliament, invited.

We want to hear from you.

- Write to Islington Pensioners Forum, 1a Providence Court, Providence Place, N1 0RN
- Call us on: 020 7226 7687 Email us at: ipf@talk-talkbusiness.net
- Office open from 10.30 a.m. -- 2.30 p.m., Monday and Wednesday, but please call first.
- Sign up for our online newsletter on our website: www.islingtonpensionersforum.co.uk

Presidents:

Jeremy Corbyn MP & Lord Smith of Finsbury

Chair: George Durack **Secretary:** Dot Gibson

Assistant Secretary: Annette Thomas

Treasurer: Eric Hill

Charity No: 1043081

Supported by Cripplegate Foundation & Islington Council



Dot Gibson, Secretary and Neil Duncan-Jordan, National Officer of the NPC with the banner on 16 April march and rally of Peoples Assembly Against Austerity. The event was attended by 150,000 people and speakers included representatives of the Port Talbot steel workers, the junior doctors and teachers.

Islington Pensioners Forum £5 annual subscription

STANDING ORDER FORM : please send the completed form to:

Islington Pensioners Forum, 1a Providence Court, Providence Place, N1 0RN

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Bank address/post code.....

From: (your name and address).....

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or hand in at the Forum meeting