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House of Lords,  
London,  
SW1A 0PW

17 December 2025

To Noble Lords

On Tuesday 2 December I answered a private notice question on NHS Industrial Action.

Lord Porter of Spalding asked me how much the Government has saved on pension contributions that are not being made to pensions forgone by the strike, and on employers' contributions in relation to holiday pay. I agreed to write to him to give the details requested.

Absences for strikes are termed 'disallowed days' where there is no pay (and therefore no contributions payable). Disallowed days do not count towards a member's pension. NHS Business Services Authority, who administer pensions, rely on employers to both notify them of disallowed days and to adjust the member's pensionable pay accordingly. The NHS Electronic Staff Record will record disallowed days, possibly as unauthorised absences. However, we do not hold estimates of the total impact on contributions forgone due to disallowed days. To understand the total amount of employee pension contributions not made would require extensive modelling. Furthermore, the value of future pensions forgone would require modelling potential impacts of small changes to early career pension values over time and therefore would not be easy to produce.

Regarding employer contributions on holiday pay, there is no built-in retrospective removal of additional holiday beyond the statutory minimums based on the number of 'disallowed days' taken.

Further, I would like to clarify a couple of my remarks. I stated, in response to Lord Harris of Haringey, that 'Resident doctors make up about 50% of the workforce of around 150,000 NHS doctors in England.' I meant to say that Resident doctors make up about 50% of the medical workforce. I also stated, in response to Baroness Butler-Sloss, that 'the initial offer would have increased the number of training places by 1,000 over three years. The offer has since gone up to 2,000.' To clarify, the 1,000 places over three years were a commitment originally made in the 10-year health plan (not as part of an offer) and that the offer made to resident doctors would have increased this to 2,000 over the same timeframe while making 1,000 posts available for this coming application round.

The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care updated the House on 10 December that he made an offer to the British Medical Association Resident Doctors Committee (BMA RDC) to avert the upcoming planned strike action in December and to resolve the disputes. A repeat of the statement was made by Baroness Merron on 15 December. The offer builds on the average 28.9% pay rise which resident doctors have already received over the past three years and included:

- Introducing emergency legislation in the new year to prioritise UK medical graduates and other doctors with significant experience working in the NHS for specialty training posts.

- Increasing the number of training posts over the next three years from the 1,000 announced in the 10 Year Health Plan to 4,000. Bringing forward 1,000 of these training posts to start in 2026. **The previous offer in November was for 2,000 training places over the next three years.**
- Introducing an Alternative Core Training programme, with 650 roles also starting in 2026, which would enable current Locally Employed Doctors (LEDs) to demonstrate the competences needed to complete their core training and apply successfully for higher specialty training.
- Funding mandatory Royal College examination fees backdated to include this year's fees.
- Funding mandatory Royal College membership fees and portfolio fees
- Expanding the scope and value of the national relocation framework.
- Increasing the allowance for less than full-time doctors by 50% to £1,500, providing additional support to many resident doctors who are parents and carers, helping to reduce the gender pay gap.
- Ensuring that there is consistent implementation of existing contractual entitlements, learning from current best practices for processes like arranging study leave and annual leave.

The Secretary of State also offered to extend their mandate to allow time for a formal referendum however this was rejected by the BMA RDC.

The BMA RDC opened a short survey over the weekend to ask members if they wished to cancel strikes and formally hold a referendum on the offer or to continue with December strikes as planned. 29,215 doctors (83.2% of votes cast) voted against calling off industrial action, based on a turnout of 65.3%. This means that the BMA RDC's planned strike action in December will be going ahead. The Government offer has been rejected so that is not going ahead. The Government will consider its next steps, but our first priority is dealing with strikes.

I will deposit this letter in the libraries of both Houses.

Yours sincerely,



**BARONESS BLAKE OF LEEDS, CBE**