

THE ASSOCIATION OF CANCER PHYSICIANS

...representing and supporting Medical Oncologists in the UK

The Proposed Junior Doctors' Contract - Threat to cancer care in England

The recent discussions around the proposed new junior doctor contract has led to much debate about the effect it will have on the working patterns of specialty trainees and the impact it will have on patient care.

As the representative organisation for medical oncologists we feel duty-bound to highlight our concerns that this new contract will have a direct detrimental effect on the care of patients with cancer.

In the 1960s and 70s the hours of junior hospital doctors became *very* unfair and dangerous:

- A culture of 'work all hours' had arisen at a time when most acute interventions (e.g. CPR, ITU, and CCU) were not widely in use and therefore working very long hours were manageable with adequate rest periods. With advances in medical care, increasing acute interventions and close monitoring of patients, this was no longer true. Duties were continually demanding with little rest but the culture of 'work all hours' continued.
- In these early years there was a lack of support for change from consultants and healthcare providers and there were no financial or managerial disincentives to employers to avoid the 'all hours work' culture. This pattern of working was cheap and junior doctors filled many gaps in the service.

Examples of bad practice from that era included: 80 hour working weekends and continuous work from Friday through Monday, with a full set of duties. Working weeks of 128 hours were commonplace. Working patterns like this undoubtedly compromised patient outcomes through unsafe practice.

The *current contract* fostered support from consultants and put legal, financial and managerial disincentives in place to control 'all hours' working. There was change for the better with:

- Improved patient outcomes and greater patient safety
- Improved experience of young doctors and the quality of their training
- The recruitment and retention of the very best and brightest of our young people into medicine

The priority needs to remain the care of cancer patients, which requires appropriate emphasis on the training of the next generation of consultants. The new contract fails to address this fundamental role of junior doctors and instead is attempting to redistribute the already hard-pushed workforce more thinly over 7 days. The threat of imposition under the guise of improving 7-day care is based upon flawed evidence and reasoning – the current and established contract is simply not an obstacle to 24/7 care. The fear shared by trainees and consultants is that the proposed new contract carries within it the germs of a return to some of the earlier bad practices that were dangerous for patients.

Specifically in relation to cancer care the concerns are:

- ***Detrimental impact on training.*** The proposed changes to rota and pay systems will have an adverse impact on the training opportunities for junior oncology trainees. Oncology already offers 24/7 access to acute oncology services. The existing contract is not an obstacle to providing this care. However the increased out-of-hours work will reduce the cancer-specific training that junior doctors will be exposed to leading to less experienced consultants of the future.
- ***The threatened loss of priority for research and innovation.*** It is proposed that years spent in research and innovation will no longer be recognised in pay advancement in the same way as service training years. Research and innovation improve patient outcomes, save lives and maintain the standing of the United Kingdom as a leading innovator and developer in healthcare, which drives major aspects of our economy. This is particularly true in oncology, where over 90% of trainees undertake a period of postgraduate academic research, aimed at improving the understanding of and treatment for cancer patients. We are pleased by the recent assurance that pay progression will be maintained for trainees taking time out for research.

- **Increasing disparities in cancer care compared to Europe.** Medical oncology needs to attract the very best and brightest doctors to improve the care of patients with cancer. A demoralised and de-professionalised workforce, who will see a pay cut and unfair rates of remuneration for hours worked, will leave the NHS. This will put increasing pressure on already stretched services. As the number of patients with cancer increases, the grave concern is that we will be unable to train enough of the best doctors to become oncology specialists and therefore we will be unable to reduce the disparities in the outcomes of oncology patients seen when compared to those in Europe.
- **The loss of the financial and managerial disincentives and penalties for 'all hours' work,** which were effective in influencing healthcare employers away from the widely recognised unsafe 'all hours' work patterns.
- **Unfairly disadvantage those wishing to take parental leave and work less than full time.** Women make up over two thirds of the trainee workforce in medical oncology. The proposed contract will disadvantage those wanting to take parental leave or work less than full time and therefore adversely affect recruitment and retention of women trainees particularly in oncology (65% compared with 52% of the trainee workforce overall in the Royal College of Physicians).
- **Unbalanced changes of income among junior doctors.** The doctors in the most hard pressed specialties with the greatest requirements for out-of-hours work will be most disadvantaged through reductions in out-of-hours pay. This will inevitably encourage trainees into those specialties where out-of-hours work is less frequent and / or less onerous.

Junior doctors are passionately against the introduction of the changes as they have been presented and as an oncology community we support their opposition to this imposed contract. We fear for a return to a culture of 'all hours', cheap working that will damage outcomes for our patients and the patient experience. We fear the loss of opportunities to undertake research and innovation with financial penalty to trainees and their families.

This contract poses a **substantial** threat to recruitment and retention of medical trainees and specifically to medical oncology. The threatened imposition of this new contract makes junior trainees feel under-valued and 'de-professionalised'. The consequent loss of morale has already had an impact, with trainees seeking opportunities outside the NHS. The loss of these individuals would be seriously damaging not only to healthcare, but to wider aspects of society and our economy. They are hard-working, caring and talented.

Oncology, as a speciality in particular, cannot afford to lose any more trainees as this will affect patient safety and care. It needs to attract the very brightest candidates to perform world-class research and to advance the care of patients with cancer. The UK already falls behind many European countries in oncology doctor:patient ratios and outcomes are significantly worse than our European counterparts (1).

In a recent survey of our oncology trainees nearly 70% would consider leaving the profession if the proposed contract is imposed. Of the 138 (60% of total) trainees polled 98% fear the new contract will see a detrimental impact on patient care. The potential effect the new contractual changes will have on the recruitment, retention and training of oncology doctors, the development of the specialty and most importantly on the care of our patients are something we can ill afford and is of grave concern.

We support our talented and hardworking junior doctors. Their role in cancer care is paramount to maintaining and improving the care our patients expect and deserve. The proposed contract as it stands will be a step back to poorer patient care. We urge the government to recognise the sincere concerns expressed by our junior colleagues and to re-enter contract negotiations with the BMA.

1) de Azambuja E, Ameye L, Paesmans M, Zielinski CC, Piccart-Gebhart M, Preusser M. The landscape of medical oncology in Europe by 2020. *Ann Oncol.* 2014 Feb;25(2):525-8

Johnathan Joffe
Chair
Association of Cancer Physicians

Peter Selby
Honorary President
Association of Cancer Physicians

With the full support of the following 157 oncology consultants:

Professor Peter WM Johnson, Professor of Medical Oncology
Chief Clinician, Cancer Research UK

Professor David Cunningham, Consultant Medical Oncologist
Director of Clinical Research and Development at the NIHR - Royal Marsden Hospital, Chair of SAC

Professor Penella Woll, Professor of Medical Oncology, University of Sheffield
Academic Training Lead for Oncology

Professor Peter Selby CBE DSc MD FMedSci FRCR FRCP, Consultant Medical Oncologist
Professor of Cancer Medicine President of the Association of Cancer Physicians and the European Cancer Concord

Professor Johnathan Joffe, Consultant Medical Oncologist
Chair of the Association of Cancer Physicians

Professor David Cameron, Consultant Medical Oncologist
Clinical Director and Chair of Oncology

Professor Jonathan A Ledermann, Prof of Medical Oncology UCL Cancer Institute and UCL Hospitals NHS Trust
Clinical Director, UCL Cancer Institute

Professor Raoul Charles Coombes, Professor of Medical Oncology
Director of CRUK Centre Imperial College London

Professor David Miles, Consultant in Medical Oncology
Head of Systemic Systemic Therapy Services

Professor Denis Talbot, Consultant Medical Oncologist
Medical Oncology RCP Regional Representative

Professor James Spencer Malpas, Emeritus Professor Of Medical Oncology
Past President of the ACP

Professor Adrian L Harris, Professor of Medical Oncology
Professor of Medical Oncology, Oxford University

Professor Denis Talbot, Consultant Medical Oncologist
Regional Medical Oncology Representative for RCP

Professor Prof Mark Bower, Professor of Oncology
Training Programme Director

Professor Tim Meyer, Professor of Experimental Cancer Medicine and Consultant in Medical Oncology
UCL NIHR Academic Training Lead

Professor Robert Coleman, Professor of Medical Oncology
UK Representative for European Society of Medical Oncology

Professor Johann de Bono, Professor of Cancer Medicine

Professor Richard Kennedy, Professor of Medical Oncology

Professor Jeff Evans, Professor of Translational Cancer Research, Honorary Consultant in Medical Oncology

Professor Dean Fennell, Professor of Thoracic Medical Oncology

Professor John Chester, Professor of Medical Oncology

Professor Michael J Seckl, Head of GTD/germ cell tumour services

Professor John Wagstaff, Consultant Medical Oncologist

Professor Mark Middleton, Professor of Experimental Cancer Medicine

Professor Professor Justin Stebbing, Professor of Cancer Medicine and Medical Oncology

Professor Timothy John Perren, Professor of Women's Cancers and Oncology, Honorary Consultant Medical Oncologist

Professor Jeremy Whelan, Professor Cancer Medicine and Consultant Medical Oncologist

Professor Chris Twelves, Consultant Medical Oncologist and Professor

Professor Gary Middleton, Professor of Medical Oncology

Professor Anne Thomas, Professor of Cancer Therapeutics

Professor Angus Dalglish, Professor of oncology, SGUL

Professor Elizabeth Ruth Plummer, Professor of Experimental Cancer Medicine

Professor Ellen Copson, Associate Professor in Medical Oncology, University of Southampton

Professor Gordon Rustin, Consultant medical oncologist

Professor Professor John Wagstaff, Consultant Medical Oncologist

Professor Galina Velikova, Professor/honorary consultant in medical oncology

Professor Janet brown, Prof Medical Oncology

Professor Dr Valentine Macaulay, Associate Professor and Honorary Consultant in Medical Oncology

Dr Uschi Hofmann, Consultant Med Onc

Dr Helena Earl, Reader in Clinical Cancer Medicine and Honorary Consultant Medical Oncologist

Dr James D. Brenton, Honorary Consultant in Medical Oncology
Academic training lead

Dr David Fyfe, Consultant Medical Oncologist
Cancer Lead Clinician

Dr Axel Walther, Consultant Medical Oncologist, University Hospitals Bristol
Cancer Research Lead

Dr Daniel Patterson, Consultant Medical Oncologist
Chair Acute Oncology EoE SCN

Dr Maung Maung Myat Moe, Consultant Medical Oncologist

Clinical Lead for Cancer Service Group (oncology, haematology, palliative care)

Dr Daniel Smith, Consultant Clinical Oncologist
Clinical Lead for Lung Cancer, Guy's & St Thomas' NHSFT

Dr Nangi Lo, Consultant Medical Oncologist
Clinical Lead for Oncology

Dr Clive Peedell, Consultant Clinical Oncologist
Clinical supervisor

Dr Jean Abraham, Academic Consultant in Medical Oncology
Clinical Supervisor (Trainees and Medical Students)

Dr Alison Young, Consultant Medical Oncology
CMT/FY2/GP Trainee Co-ordinator

Dr Agnieszka Michael, Consultant
Co-Divisional Lead for Cancer for KSS CRN

Dr Andrew Wardley, Director of The Christie/NIHR Clinical Research Facility
Director of The Christie/NIHR Clinical Research Facility. Director of SACT for Manchester Cancer

Dr Adam Dangoor, Medical Oncologist
Educational & Clinical Supervisor

Dr Paula Scullin, Consultant Medical Oncologist
Educational Supervisor

Dr Olusola Faluyi, Consultant
Educational Supervisor

Dr Rohini sharma, Senior Lecturer & Consultant
Educational supervisor

Dr Kim Last, consultant medical oncologist
Educational Supervisor

Dr Janet Graham, Consultant Medical Oncologist
Educational Supervisor CMT and ST

Dr James Mackay, Consultant Genetic Oncologist
Expert Clinical Advisor to Myriad Genetics and CIS Oncology

Dr James Spicer, Reader and Consultant in Medical Oncology
IAT Lead

Dr Pauline Leonard, Consultant Medical Oncologist
Lead Cancer Clinician

Dr Tim Iveson, Macmillan Cancer Support Consultant Medical Oncologist
Lead Cancer Clinician University Hospital Southampton

Dr Marcia Hall, Consultant Medical Oncologist
Lead Clinician R&D

Dr Ruth Board, Consultant Medical Oncologist
Lead for Acute Oncology Lancashire Teaching Hospitals

Dr Richard Hubner, Consultant Medical Oncologist
Member of the Specialist Training Committee, Christie Hospital, Manchester

Dr Mark Hill, Consultant Medical Oncologist
Network Divisional Director

Dr David Chao, Consultant Medical Oncologist
Pathway Director for Skin Cancer Services for London Cancer

Dr Janine Mansi, Consultant Medical Oncologist
Quality lead for SAC, Honorary secretary for ACP, Chair of National Chemotherapy Board

Dr Astrid Mayer, Consultant
Service Line Lead

Dr Michael Braun, Consultant in Medical Oncology
TPD North Western

Dr Nicola levitt, Consultant medical oncologist
TPD Oxford

Dr John A Green, Consultant Medical Oncologist
Trainee Programme Director Mersey Region 2002-2009

Dr Joanne Hornbuckle, Consultant Medical Oncologist
Training Programme Director

Dr Joanne Hornbuckle, Consultant Medical Oncologist
Training Programme Director (Humber and Yorkshire)

Dr Ashita Waterston, Consultant Medical Oncologist
Training Programme Director Scottish Deanery

Dr Kumar Rohit Lal, Consultant in Medical Oncology
Training Programme Director, Clinical Lead

Dr Cheryl Palmet, Medical Oncology
Trust Clinical Lead for Oncology

Dr Guy Faust, Consultant Medical Oncology
Undergraduate Cancer Block Lead

Dr Susanna Alexander, Consultant Medical Oncologist

University lead for oncology UEA

**Dr Ruth Pettengell, Haemato-Oncology,
Research Lead**

**Dr Sanjay Popat, Consultant Medical Oncologist,
Dr Alicia Okines, Locum Consultant Medical Oncologist,
Dr Jennifer Pascoe, Consultant Medical Oncologist,
Dr Tim Yap, Consultant Medical Oncologist,
Dr Fharat Rajs, Consultant medical oncologist
Dr Charlotte Rees, Consultant in Medical Oncology
Dr Debashis Sarker, Consultant and Senior Lecturer in Medical Oncology,
Dr Muireann Kelleher, Consultant medical Oncologist,
Dr Charlotte Thomson, Consultant medical Oncologist,
Dr Caroline Michie, Consultant Medical Oncologist
Dr Simon Pacey, Academic Consultant in Medical Oncology
Dr Ivo Hennig, Consultant Medical Oncologist
Dr Jonathan Shamash, Consultant medical oncologist/Honorary senior lecturer
Dr Jurjees Hasan, Consultant Medical Oncologist
Dr Louise Li, Consultant Medical Oncologist
Dr Rob Stein, Consultant Medical Oncologist
Dr Ursula McGovern, Consultant Medical Oncologist
Dr Judith Carser, Consultant Medical Oncologist
Dr Michelle Lockley, Clinical senior lecturer /honorary consultant
Dr Andreas Polychronis, Consultant Medical Oncologist
Dr David Farrugia, Consultant Medical Oncologist
Dr Naveen Vasudev, Consultant Oncologist
Dr Amy Ford, Medical Oncology Consultant
Dr Ayman Madi, Consultant Medical Oncologist
Dr Rosalind Glasspool, Consultant Medical Oncologist
Dr Yvette Drew, Senior Lecturer and Consultant Medical Oncologist
Dr Stefan Symeonides, Clinical Lecturer in Medical Oncology
Dr Radha Todd, Consultant Medical Oncologist
Dr Madhumita Bhattacharyya, Consultant Medical Oncologist
Dr Rebecca Herbertson, Consultant medical oncologist
Dr Jane Hook, Locum Consultant
Dr Bryoy Eccles, Medical Oncologist
Dr Dan Stark, Consultant oncologist
Dr Lisa Pickering, Consultant Medical Oncologist
Dr Simon Waters, Consultant Medical Oncologist
Dr Joseph Sacco, Clinical Senior Lecturer in Medical Oncology
Dr Fharat Rajs, Consultant medical oncologist
Dr Sarah ngan, Consultant medical oncologist
Dr Anne Armstrong, Consultant Medical Oncologist
Dr Helena Earl, Reader in Clinical Cancer Medicine
Dr Eliyaz ahmed, Consultant
Dr Mark Henry Tuthill, Consultant Medical Oncologist
Dr Peter Stephens, Consultant Medical Oncologist
Dr Tony Dhillon, Consultant medical oncologist
Dr Laura Assersohn, Consultant Medical Oncologist
Dr Sarah moon, Medical oncology consultant
Dr Laura Kenny, Consultant Medical Oncologist
Dr Harpreet Wasan, Consultant Medical Oncologist
Dr Kate Young, Clinical research fellow
Dr Matthew Wheeler, Consultant Medical Oncologist
Dr Charlotte Benson, Consultant Medical Oncologist
Dr Tom Newsom-Davis, Consultant Medical Oncologist
Dr Eileen Parkes, Clinical Research Fellow
Dr Michael Angelo Gonzalez, Consultant in Medical Oncology
Dr Jacqueline Newby, Medical Oncology Consultant
Dr Hayley McKenzie, Medical Oncology Registrar
Dr David Church, Clinician Scientist Fellow
Dr Jenny Seligmann, Clinical lecturer, medical oncology
Dr Sarah Payne, CCST
Dr Joanna wood, ACL medical oncology
Dr Debra Josephs, Academic Clinical Lecturer in Medical Oncology
Dr Sophie Papa, MRC CSF and Honorary Consultant Medical Oncologist
Dr Paul J Ross, Consultant Medical Oncologist
Dr Eleni Karapanagiotou, Consultant Medical Oncologist
Dr Sarah welsh, Academic clinical lecturer**

Dr Fiona J Lofts, Consultant Oncologist
Dr Jenny Bradbury, Consultant Medical Oncologist
Dr Charlotte Moss, Consultant medical oncologist
Dr Robert Stuart, Consultant Oncologist
Dr Katherine Hyde, Consultant in Clinical Oncology
Dr Dr Sue Cheeseman, Consultant Medical Oncologist
Dr Clare Jacobs, Consultant Clinical Oncologist
Dr Dr Angela Darby, Consultant in Medical Oncology
Dr Julie O'Hagan, Consultant Medical Oncologist
Dr Susannah Stanway, Consultant Medical Oncologist
Dr Hiliary Williams, Consultant Medical Oncologist
Dr Nick Brown, Consultant Medical Oncologist

With further support from these trainees:

Dr Adam Januszewski, Academic Clinical Fellow
ACP Trainee Representative
Dr Samantha Turnbull, Medical Oncology SpR
ACP Trainee Representative
Dr CHINENYE O. O. IWUJI, SPECIALIST REGISTRAR
Dr Joanne Evans, SpR (NIHR ACF)
Dr Tom Waddell, ST6 Medical Oncology
Dr MH Ruhe Chowdhury, Clinical Research Fellow & SpR Medical Oncology
SAC Trainee Representative, Clinical Advisor Kings College London Medical School
Dr Mariam Jamal-Hanjani, Medical Oncology SpR
Dr Jessica Suzanne Brown, ST5 Medical Oncology
Dr David J. Pinato, SpR and Academic Clinical Lecturer in Medical Oncology
Dr Rebecca Lee, Specialist registrar
Dr Fiona Kyle, SpR
Dr Lucy McAvan, ST5
Dr Shobha Silva, SpR/Clinical Research Fellow
Dr Sebastian Trainor, ST6 Specialty Registrar in Medical Oncology
Dr Rowan Miller, SpR Medical Oncology
Dr Lucy Gossage, OOPC
Dr Avani Athauda, Spr medical oncology
Dr Anand Sharma, Specialist Registrar Medical Oncology
Dr Ailsa Sita-Lumsden, Clinical research fellow
Dr Katy Herring, SpR medical oncology
Dr Panagiotis Papanastasopoulos, Spr in medical oncology
Dr Shairoz Merchant, SpR Medical Oncology
Dr Christopher Coyle, Medical Oncology Registrar
Dr Dr Anna Minchom, Specialist Registrar/ Research Fellow
Dr Kate Smith, Medical Oncology SpR
Dr Louise Hancock, SpR
Dr Deborah Enting, SpR Medical Oncology
Dr Amit Samani, Medical Oncology ST3
Dr Andrea Biondo, Clinical research fellow
Dr Yin Wu, NIHR Academic Clinical Fellow in Medical Oncology
Dr Nawa Amin, Locum SpR
Dr Andrew J.S. Furness, SpR Medical Oncology and Clinical Research Fellow
Dr Avinash Gupta, Medical Oncology ST6 Registrar
Dr Meera Chauhan, SpR medical Oncology
Dr Kathryn Hawkesford, Clinical Research Fellow/ST6 Medical Oncology
Dr Jennifer Harrington, ST6
Dr Sarah Benafif, Clinical Research Fellow
Dr Daniel Holyoake, Honorary Specialty Registrar, Clinical Oncology
Dr Amanda Fitzpatrick, Specialist Registrar in Medical Oncology
Dr Matthew Howell, Medical Oncology Registrar,