



Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP
Secretary of State for Health
Richmond House
79 Whitehall
London, SW1A 2NS

Dr Mark Porter
Chair of Council
British Medical Association
BMA House
Tavistock Square
London WC1H 9JP

4 April 2016

Dear Secretary of State and Dr Porter,

JUNIOR DOCTOR CONTRACT DISPUTE

We, as members of National Voices, call upon both the Government and the BMA to resume negotiations over the new junior doctors' contract.

We support the development of a seven day NHS in which the safety of healthcare does not vary according to when a person needs medical attention. We recognise the vital importance of staff morale in the NHS, and the right of trade unions to defend their members' interests, including through strike action.

However, the current stand-off, in the absence of any continuing negotiations, is not in the public interest. The further wave of proposed strikes is not in the interests of patients and their families, and the withdrawal of emergency cover would increase the risks to patient safety. We deplore the emergence of a situation where strike action in the NHS becomes normalised due to the entrenched positions of both parties. Whatever the current state of public opinion, there will be longer term damage to public trust and confidence in the NHS.

Patients and carers have not been heard in this dispute. Regardless of where their sympathies lie, they have the right to expect a concerted effort by both sides to resolve the dispute.

Our request is straightforward. We ask both sides to remove the impediments to resuming talks and to get back around the negotiating table. Patients and the public deserve no less.

Yours sincerely,

Barbara Babcock, Chair, **Transverse Myelitis Society**

David Barker, Chief Executive, **Crohn's and Colitis UK**

Ailsa Bosworth MBE, Chief Executive Officer, **National Rheumatoid Arthritis Society**

Verona Butler, Honorary President, **Action for Dystonia Diagnosis Education and Research**

Neil Cleeveley, Chief Executive, **National Association for Voluntary and Community Action**

Caroline Davey, Chief Executive, **bliss**

Paul Declé, Coordinator, **Forum Link**

Robert Dixon, Chief Executive, **Bladder and Bowel Foundation**

Paul Farmer, Chief Executive, **Mind**

Sue Farrington, Chief Executive, **Scleroderma & Raynaud's UK**

Karen Friett, Chief Executive, **Lymphoedema Support Network**

Naomi Good, Regional Development & Research Manager, **National Survivor User Network for Mental Health**

Lew Gray, Secretary, **Transverse Myelitis Society**

Tess Harris, Chief Executive Officer, **Polycystic Kidney Disease Charity**

Claire Henry, Chief Executive, **National Council for Palliative Care**

Sara Hunt, Chief Executive Officer, **ALD Life**

Valerie J Jackson, Chief Executive, **Action for Sick Children**

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Heidi Wilson, Chair, **I Have IiH Foundation**