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15th February 2016

Dear Chief Executive,

You will have received a separate letter from Jim Mackey, CEO of NHS Improvement, in which he emphasises the importance of the consistent implementation of the new junior doctor contract across the service. I wanted to also be clear about how this impacts on training posts.

A single national approach is essential to safeguard the organisation and delivery of postgraduate medical training to ensure all doctors can secure the professional development they require to complete their training programmes. We are not prepared to see a system where a competition based on a local employer's ability to offer different terms is part of the recruitment process. The recruitment process should be based on patient and service need and quality of training as it always has been. Therefore implementation of the national contract will be a key criterion for HEE in making its decisions on our investment in training posts.

We support the suggestion that Trusts should set up a single point of contact for questions from junior doctors, and we will continue to ensure that you have the information you need to respond to your staff.

Finally, it is clear that this whole issue has been controversial and many people across the NHS have wanted to ensure their voice was heard on the matter, that is right and proper. However, I have received far too many reports of material on social media and elsewhere extending beyond fair comment into the realm of abuse. I do not believe that anyone should have put up with personal abuse because of their views on this matter. We all joined the NHS to do right by patients and their families and it is from that place, of common NHS values, that we make our case and that should be respected whether junior or senior.

Professor Ian Cumming
Chief Executive