# Junior Doctors and Government Mediate Pay Dispute as BMA Criticizes NHS Whistleblowing Handling



**Junior Doctors in England Enter Talks with Government Over Pay Dispute**

Junior doctors in England have initiated mediated talks with the Government to resolve a prolonged pay dispute. The British Medical Association (BMA) announced its junior doctors' committee had commenced an intensive phase of discussions facilitated by an external mediator. This comes after a year of strikes orchestrated by junior doctors advocating for pay restoration to 2008 levels.

In a joint statement, committee co-chairs Dr. Robert Laurenson and Dr. Vivek Trivedi expressed hope in reaching a credible solution promptly, highlighting efforts to restore trust through mediation. NHS England reported significant disruptions due to the strikes, including the rescheduling of over 1.4 million outpatient appointments since December 2022. The latest strike in February 2023 resulted in the postponement of 91,048 appointments, operations, and procedures.

Despite a recent ballot where 98% of junior doctors voted to continue strike action, both the BMA and the Department of Health and Social Care appear optimistic about mediation's potential to resolve the pay dispute.

**BMA Chairman Criticizes 'Terrible Way' NHS Handles Whistleblowing**

Professor Phil Banfield, chairman of the British Medical Association (BMA) council, criticized the NHS for its treatment of whistleblowers. In a Telegraph article, Banfield discussed the "appalling persistence" of poor attitudes towards whistleblowing, noting that doctors who raise concerns often face hostility and career risks.

Data from the BMA indicates nearly 60% of surveyed doctors raised patient safety concerns within the past year, but fewer than 6% felt these were satisfactorily resolved. Banfield emphasized that whistleblowing is a required part of a doctor's duty per the General Medical Council (GMC) but is not welcomed by NHS management.

Health Secretary Victoria Atkins and an NHS England spokesman reiterated the importance of staff feeling able to speak up, noting existing protections and initiatives for whistleblowers.

**Key Figures:**

* Junior Doctors: Represented by British Medical Association's junior doctors' committee.
* Mediators: External, facilitating discussions.
* Government Representatives: Including Health Secretary Victoria Atkins.
* Impact: Over 1.4 million appointments rescheduled; significant impact on patient care and operations.

**Timeline:**

* Strikes Started: December 2022.
* Previous Strike: February 24-28, 2023.
* Current Talks: Ongoing as announced in October 2023.

The ongoing discussions and efforts to resolve the dispute aim to alleviate the strain on the NHS and improve working conditions for junior doctors.