Joint Negotiating Committee (SAS) Joint statement on SAS doctors moving to new contracts –
September 2021

On 1 April 2021, new specialty doctor and specialist contracts were introduced, and this marked the
beginning of the choice window for existing SAS doctors to decide whether they want to stay on their
existing terms and conditions or move to the new contract.

In July 2021, government announced a 3 per cent pay uplift for NHS staff who weren’t already part of
multi-year pay deals. The 2021 SAS contracts are part of such a multi-year pay deal and therefore their
pay scales were outside the scope of these arrangements. The Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC) (SAS)
recognises that the pay uplift for doctors on the 2008 specialty doctor contract has had an impact on the
perceived desirability of the 2021 contract, from a salary perspective. This may result in fewer doctors
expressing an interest in transferring to the new contract by the end of the choice window on 30
September 2021.

There have also been a number of unforeseen challenges for employers to work through locally. We have
updated NHS Employers’ guidance to support employers to work through challenges that may arise, and
the BMA has produced revised pay explainers for specialty doctors and associate specialists in England
to set out the implications of the pay award.

It remains the case for most SAS doctors that transferring to the new contract represents a benefit in
terms of their basic pay over time. This is due to agreed pay uplifts in years two and three as well as the
new flatter pay scale, which reduces the time taken to reach the top of the pay scale. The new contract
also introduces additional benefits such as increased on-call availability supplements and new safeguards
to protect against the most onerous unsocial hours working patterns.

Parties are committed to working together to find appropriate solutions to these challenges so both SAS
doctors and employers can benefit from the contracts as intended. We hope to update on this as soon as
possible.

After the choice window closes on 30 September, it is up to employer discretion to allow doctors to move
to the new contract.

It is JNC(SAS)’s intention that doctors and employers are able to benefit from the new contracts and so
the committee encourages employers to allow doctors to express an interest after the choice window
closes, taking into consideration wider benefits and local affordability. We would encourage individual
employers to take a consistent approach for all SAS doctors working across their organisation. Doctors
do not have a contractual right to transfer, but facilitating transfer wherever possible will ensure that both
doctors and employers are able to benefit from the new contractual provisions.

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