

## Impact of industrial action (IA)

Recent IA by resident doctors has led to widespread service disruption, increased costs, and strained workforce morale. Despite efforts to manage the impact, ongoing strikes and upcoming legislative changes are reshaping the industrial relations landscape, requiring continued contingency planning and strategic workforce support.



## Pay disparity

The 2025/26 NHS pay round offered differing awards to staff groups, raising concerns about fairness, morale, and the perception of a unified workforce. To address this, employers are calling for better coordination between pay review bodies.



## Digital and workforce transformation

As the 10 Year Health Plan drives digital transformation and demands a tech-ready workforce, mounting pressures on medical staffing teams, exacerbated by cost-cutting directives, are limiting employers' capacity to implement new policies and reforms swiftly.



## Doctors and dentists in training

Reforms to exception reporting and updated terms and conditions have been introduced alongside NHS England's 10-point plan, which mandates urgent improvements to resident doctors' working conditions. While industrial action is currently paused, ongoing negotiations reflect broader concerns beyond pay.



## Specialty and associate specialist (SAs)

The SAS pay deal has accelerated contract reform and boosted uptake of the 2021 terms, though disparities with older contracts still pose challenges for career progression. Employers are being urged to integrate SAS doctors into strategic workforce planning and senior clinical positions.



## Consultants

The final phase of the 2024 consultant pay agreement has introduced reforms to pay progression and local clinical excellence awards, with updated terms and guidance now in place. While no immediate funding is expected for further contract reform, work is underway to build an evidence base for future changes aligned with modern working patterns and employer priorities.



## Salaried dentists

Recruitment challenges persist across entry-level dental posts, with concerns about pay competitiveness and career appeal. Rising reports of abuse toward salaried dentists are compounding stress and undermining retention, reinforcing the urgent need for targeted workforce support.



## Locally employed doctors (LEDs)

LEDs are the fastest-growing group in the medical workforce, often performing similar roles to doctors in training and helping fill rota gaps. However, inconsistencies in training access and workforce data remain. Employers support equal pay principles and standardised contracts, while calling for central funding to enhance LED development and improve patient care.

