

GPs Employed Under ARRS

At the beginning of August 2024, the new Government announced that it would be expanding the ARRS scheme to include recently qualified GPs, in order to address the GP employment crisis in general practice in England and 'improve patient access to GPs'. While the BMA supports any efforts to tackle the lack of opportunities for sessional GPs in England, we assert that this is not a long-term solution: **this is a temporary sticking plaster which fails to address the issue of the lack of appropriate uplift to core funding.** These roles must have certain protections and entitlements, in order to make them safe, attractive and rewarding; and to retain these GPs longterm in the workforce.

- 1. The recently qualified GPs employed by this scheme must be employed on the BMA salaried GP model contract,** including one session per week in Continuing Professional Development. The salaried GP model contract will provide the necessary protections GPs need to work under this scheme.
- 2. Mutually agreed, contractual job plans which enshrine the principles of the BMA Safe Working Guidance:** 15 minute appointments and 25 patient consultations per day will enable the newly qualified GPs to develop their skills while delivering safe patient care.
- 3. Mentorship delivered by a nominated practice:** support delivered by experienced GPs embedded in general practice will help with the ARRS GP's development and prevent isolation.
- 4. Roles only to be within core hours (8.00am-6.30pm):** the GPs employed through the expanded ARRS scheme should only be required to work during core hours, and to avoid lone working, without the support of other more experienced GPs.
- 5. A salary which falls within the BMA salaried GP recommended pay range (£83,225-£120,444).** The salary for these roles must reflect the fact that this is likely to be a fixed-term position which provides little in the way of long term security, whilst also recognising that the DDRB salaried GP pay range is outdated and is not representative of actual GP salaries (as outlined by the BMA indicative pay range) and that salaried GP pay has seen a more than 32% real-terms reduction in England since 2008/09. The BMA salaried GP recommended pay range reflects market rates, as found by the Sessional GPs Committee survey 2022, uplifted by the DDRB recommendation for 2024/25. It is imperative that these short-term roles have a competitive salary, particularly in light of the 32% pay erosion salaried GPs have faced in England since 2008/09.
- 6. Limits on the number of practices ARRS GPs can work across:** patients deserve continuity of care. This can only be provided if the GP employed on the scheme have dedicated places of work. We recommend no more than two practices per contract.
- 7. GPs employed through the scheme must have access to the NHS Pension Scheme.**
- 8. The Government and NHS England must develop a plan with the BMA which transitions the ARRS scheme GPs into practice based employment when the fixed-term scheme comes to an end.** We do not want to find ourselves in the same situation in the future with recently qualified GPs facing unemployment and practices without the funding to hire them substantially, despite patients wanting and needing to see GPs. There needs to be a long-term, sustainable plan for employing these GPs in the core practice-based workforce, with an appropriately funded transition period which brings the scheme to an end.

