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Attn: NEWSDESKS

HEALTH CORRESPONDENTS  
POLITICAL CORRESPONDENTS

**Agreement reached to introduce recovery periods after night shifts for junior doctors**

New measures to better support Scotland’s junior doctors in their working lives will see new rules introduced creating a mandatory recovery period of 46 hours after a run of night-shifts before that doctor can return to work.

The move, which will take full effect by August 2019, is a result of ongoing ‘Improving Junior Doctors Working Lives’ discussions between the BMA, Scottish Government and NHS boards on practical measures that can improve the safety of doctors and patients and make Scotland’s NHS a better working environment.

Additionally, plans to move to a ‘single lead employer’ model for junior doctors will also be introduced, meaning that all junior doctors will be employed by one of four health boards, determined by their region or national training programme. Junior doctors move post regularly throughout their training and this currently results in unnecessary duplication of paperwork and administration, incorrect pay and tax bills, and makes it harder for junior doctors to apply for mortgages, or establish and maintain adaptations based on health needs.

Having a single lead employer throughout a junior doctor’s training will simplify this process, provide longer contracts of employment and ensure that their information is carried with the doctor from post to post.

Welcoming the changes, chair of BMA Scotland’s Junior Doctors Committee Dr Adam Collins said:

“I am delighted that we have been able to reach agreement on implementing these measures that will make a tangible difference to the working lives of junior doctors.

“Evidence shows that moving from night shifts to day shifts is one of the biggest causes of exhaustion we face in our working patterns. Fatigue is a risk to junior doctors and a risk to our patients, which is why securing a safer approach to rostering doctors has been my highest priority as chair.

“Having a single lead employer during a junior doctor’s training will help to simplify the process of moving post once it is fully implemented, reducing the paperwork involved and avoiding the mistakes that often get made. It will also make working as a doctor more accessible for all.

“Our discussions with the Scottish Government and NHS boards have made good progress and I hope that in due course we will see agreement on further improvements to the working lives of junior doctors emerge from them.”

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