



REASONS WHY THE LOCUM CAP ISN'T WORKING



(that's one for every day of your week, Jeremy)

Sample size of 589 Doctors.net.uk members. Survey carried out between 29th March & 7th April 2016

STAFF SHORTAGES

83% of those surveyed stated that locum caps have already led to staff shortages.

ROTA GAPS

82% of respondents are already seeing rota gaps. 37% are seeing daily rota gaps, with a further 44% experiencing rota gaps more than once a week.

COMPROMISED PATIENT CARE

69% thought that patient care has already been compromised, with hospitals competing for a diminishing number of locums willing work at the decreased rates.

FEWER DOCTORS ARE WORKING AS PART TIME LOCUMS

As part of the government consultation on the potential introduction of the agency rate cap, in October 2015 Doctors.net.uk ran a poll in its forum asking members who currently work as part-time locums (i.e. in addition to a substantive post) to see how the introduction of the locum pay cap would affect them. 37% stated that they would stop doing extra locum shifts.

The same poll was repeated last week, and found that this number had risen to 44%. At the lower rate, doctors are no longer willing to sacrifice time with friends and family to take on additional shifts, and hospitals are becoming increasingly concerned, with reports of hospitals sending text messages to their staff requesting cover for specific roles.

IT'S ACTUALLY COSTING SOME DEPARTMENTS MORE MONEY

The introduction of the pay cap was designed so that hospitals would save money by not being able to pay more than the equivalent hourly NHS pay rate for substantive staff. However, this cost saving is not materialising as financial benefits for the departments themselves, with 90% not seeing any additional funding. 30% report that the locum pay cap has actually cost their departments more, as trusts are able to pay above the capped rates in 'exceptional circumstances' for example to fill a rota gap at very short notice. This has resulted in a competitive market in some areas, with hospitals willing to exceed the capped rate attracting locums away from those who won't. Locums themselves argue that the equivalent rate is intrinsically unfair as they do not receive any of the benefits of being employed in a substantive post such a job security, sick/maternity pay, paid annual leave, attractive pension and study leave.

INCREASED WAITING TIMES

63% agreed that the locum cap introduction has led to increased waiting times, with staff rallying together to reduce the impact on patients where they can to mitigate against this.

IT'S GOING TO GET WORSE

With the pay cap being reduced further on 1st April, the situation is expected to worsen. 92% of respondents expect it to lead to further staff shortages, and 91% predict more rota gaps.