Yesterday was a brilliant start to the first of three planned 48-hour strikes. Junior doctors are absolutely right to stand strong to defend our NHS from Hunt’s dangerous contract.

During the February strike, Hunt lost the argument. He was exposed lying again, this time about NHS Trusts he claimed supported his plan to impose the contract. One by one they denied it.

Despite his smear campaign to vilify junior doctors, the polls showed again the growing support for the campaign.

There’s a reason the public are so strongly behind the junior doctors.

They know that it’s the Tories who spent the last six years trying to destroy our NHS with privatisation, cuts and closures and can see that junior doctors are fighting to defend it.

The BMA rightly fought this campaign politically, laying out that this is about protecting the safety of our health service.

The Tory attacks on our NHS have been at the centre of a broader agenda of cutting services, jobs and pay. Meanwhile the rich get richer and billions is wasted on Trident and wars. Now the junior doctors are in the forefront of taking on this government and its austerity attacks.

Everyone’s fight

The BMA are right that this is everyone’s fight. That means we all have to do what we can to turn the widespread sympathy for the junior doctors into real solidarity.

At UCLH in London, nurses inside the hospital organised a solidarity rally at 1pm, where trade unionists from other unions-postal workers, transport workers, teachers, council workers, HMRC workers, NHS students and other health workers-joined the junior doctors with banners and speeches in support. With up to 200, they marched from the hospital to join a ‘meet the doctors’ event at the BBC HQ.

This is a good example and should be developed in every area. It shows the Tories that the junior doctors are not alone.

BMA activists should reach out from their hospital to the local union movement for support. Junior doctors should demand that the TUC calls a national demonstration and that the Labour party comes out clearly in their support.

How can doctors win?

It’s good that the BMA escalated by calling three 48-hour strikes. These planned strikes can be a good base to build up the momentum.

But many junior doctors were frustrated with the gap from Hunt’s announcement to when strikes were called, and thought there should be a higher level of action, including an indefinite strike.

Hunt has been so vicious because he understands that the BMA can win.

A strike of four days or a week would have a catastrophic political impact for the Tories. The public are fully behind junior doctors and Hunt knows it.

The quicker this dispute is won, the quicker our NHS is safe from this contract.

The best way to build pressure for harder hitting action that could defeat Hunt and his contract is to organise during these strikes for big turnouts on picket lines, reach out for solidarity, and call on BMA leaders to announce more, longer duration strikes to win.

Stand Up To Racism national demonstration

SAT 19 MARCH: 12 NOON, LONDON: JOIN THE NHS BLOC

Junior doctors and other NHS workers are organising to turn out in force to oppose racism.

DOCTORS’ APPOINTMENTS

Sat 12 March, 1pm

Open meeting called by NHS workers
Junior Doctors can win: How can we take the fight in the NHS forward?

@ SOAS, Brunel Gallery,
Thornhaugh Street, London WC1H 0XG
Discussion introduced by
BMA junior doctors,
NHS bursary students who led walkouts
Plus a nurse from Unison Health executive (pc)

Join other junior doctors, NHS students and NHS workers to discuss how best to support the strikes and build united action across the health service to defend our NHS.

I would like to get Socialist Worker regularly
I want to join the Socialist Workers Party

Name ..............................................................................................................
Address .........................................................................................................
Phone ...........................................................................................................
Email ............................................................................................................

Follow @SocialistWorker and Socialistworker.co.uk for reports and pictures from today’s strike.
Return to Membership, PO Box 71327, London SE11 9BW or email membership@swp.org.uk
Have you got a story for us? Please use the email address above, or call 020 7840 5605