

Resident doctors' strike - 17 – 22 December

Frequently Asked Questions

What is happening?

Resident doctors who are members of the BMA have voted to take strike action. We and other NHS employers have been formally notified of a period of strike action beginning at 7am on Wednesday 17 December until 7am on Monday 22 December.

What do strikes mean for NHS services in my area?

The strikes announced cover resident doctors across the NHS. This means action will impact every hospital in England. We are working hard to minimise the impact this action has on patients, but this will inevitably cause disruption during the strike period, and is likely to have a longer term impact on our services due to the additional resources required to keep services going safely.

What does this mean for care?

We all know that industrial action comes at a very real cost to patients and the rest of the workforce and this round of action comes as the NHS is managing the busy winter period. During these strikes, all other NHS staff (including consultants, GPs and other specialist doctors) will still be working. The NHS is working hard to minimise the impact on patients and make sure there are safe levels of staffing in key services patients need. However, we know from previous strikes that there will be significant disruption, and we will make sure patients and the local community know how this might affect them.

What if I need urgent or emergency care?

Anyone who needs urgent care should use NHS111 online or through the NHS App to be assessed and directed to the right care for them. If you do not have internet access, then the free, 24/7 111 phone line is also available.

When someone is seriously ill or injured and their life is at risk, you should seek emergency care in the normal way, by calling 999.

What does this mean for pre-planned appointments, tests and procedures?

We are working hard to minimise the impact on planned care. Patients with appointments booked on strike days will be contacted if their appointment needs to be rescheduled due to industrial action. If they have not been contacted, they should attend their appointment as planned.

Can the NHS provide safe services during strikes?

The NHS is working hard to minimise the risk to patient safety. It's important that patients do not put off seeking urgent care, or not attend planned appointments unless they have been told otherwise.

When will I find out if my appointment is rescheduled?

The NHS will contact you if your appointment needs to be rescheduled due to strike action. This is likely to be a text, phone call or a letter and you should be offered an alternative date for your appointment.

We will be doing everything possible to minimise the number of patients who have planned care disrupted, so it may be the case that you do not receive very much notice of a postponement. We apologise for this unavoidable inconvenience. If we have not contacted you, please attend your appointment as planned.

If my appointment is rescheduled, will I be put back to the bottom of the waiting list?

Any appointments that need to be rescheduled will be done so as a priority.

Should I cancel my appointment on the day of strikes?

No, if we have not contacted you, please attend your appointment as planned.

Is there anything I should do now?

Please order any prescriptions you might need in good time to avoid delays in getting your medicines or the risk of running out of medicines during strikes.

I have a loved one who will be a hospital inpatient on strike day – how will their care be affected?

All hospital inpatients will be informed of how their care will be impacted on a ward-by-ward basis by the staff involved in delivering their care.

Will GP services be affected on strike days?

GP practices will continue to be open during the resident doctors strikes. Resident doctors who train in GP practices, known as GP registrars, may take strike action. While they are an important part of the practice team, the effective running of the practice is not dependent on them. Please continue to attend your GP and dental appointments, unless you are contacted and told otherwise.

Will dentists be impacted?

Please continue to attend any dental appointments unless you are contacted and told otherwise.

What is considered an emergency?

Patients should only call 999 if seriously ill or injured, and there is risk to life. Ambulances will be dispatched where clinically appropriate. For more information on [when to call 999](#) and [when to go to A&E](#), you can visit the NHS UK website.