**Frequently Asked Questions**

**What is happening?**

Trade unions representing NHS staff are in dispute with the Government over the 2022/23 pay award. Several unions have balloted their NHS members to take part in industrial action. Members of the Royal College of Nursing (RCN) are striking on 20 December 2022, and members of the GMB, Unite and Unison (ambulance staff) are striking on 21 December 2022.

The NHS wants to see a resolution as soon as possible, but pay is a matter for the Government and the trade unions.

**NHS services**

Will GP services be affected on strike days?

GP services will be running as normal on strike days. Please continue to attend scheduled GP appointments unless you are contacted and told otherwise.

What do strikes mean for NHS services in my area?

Not every hospital and ambulance service will be affected by strike action. You can check which services are affected in your area [on the NHS England website](https://www.england.nhs.uk/briefing-industrial-action-winter-2022/#what-do-strikes-mean-for-nhs-services-in-my-area).

How long will services be impacted?

The nurses strike on 20 December will last for 12 hours and the ambulance strikes on 21 December will last for 24 hours. However patients should be aware that it may take slightly longer for services to return to normal.

However patients should be aware that it may take slightly longer for services to return to normal following any strike action.

**Appointments**

What if I have an appointment on a strike day?

Everyone who has an appointment should attend as planned, unless your local NHS provider has contacted you to reschedule. If you have not been contacted, please attend your appointment even if your hospital is affected by strikes.

Should I cancel my appointment on the day of strikes?

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

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 letter or phone call, and you should be offered an alternative date for your appointment. If you have not been contacted, please attend your appointment as planned.

Is there anything I should do now?

No, the NHS will contact you if your appointment needs to be rescheduled due to strike action.

**Urgent and emergency care**

What if I need urgent or emergency care?

Anyone who needs urgent care should use [NHS111 online](https://111.nhs.uk/) or call NHS 111 to be assessed and directed to the right care for them*.* 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 or attending A&E.

Will emergency care be affected on strike days?

Emergency care will continue to be available across all parts of the country. It is really important that in emergency and life-threatening cases – when someone is seriously ill or their life is at risk – patients continue to come forward as normal.

What should I do if I need an ambulance?

On strike days, patients should only call 999 if seriously ill or injured, and there is a risk to life. Ambulances will be dispatched where clinically appropriate.

For all other healthcare needs support will be available through [NHS111 online](https://111.nhs.uk/), via the NHS 111 helpline or at your local GP or pharmacy.

What is considered an emergency?

Patients should only call 999 if seriously ill or injured, or there is risk to life. Ambulances will be dispatched where clinically appropriate.