

Further NHS strike action announced although nurses dispute now at an end

30 June 2023

Further strike action has been announced in the NHS as consultants in England voted overwhelmingly in favour of strike action in a dispute over pay.

Over 71% of BMA members turned out to vote with over 86% backing strike action. [The BMA report](#) that consultants have seen their real term pay fall by over one third since 2008 once RPI inflation and changes to tax and pension contributions have been taken into account. In light of this the BMA have called for the government to start giving pay rises which mirror inflation.

The walkout will take place for 48 hours from 7am on 20 July 2023. However, derogations to the action have been agreed with consultants providing "Christmas Day" cover to ensure that emergency care will be maintained together with a very limited amount of routine work.

In a separate dispute over pay, junior doctors announced that they will take a further five days of action from 7am on 13 July to 7am on 18 July 2023. The junior doctors have not agreed derogations from their action, as they believe that other staff groups are able to cover emergency care.

In a separate ballot, the RCN have confirmed that the required threshold for further strike action by its members was not met. 43% of members voted and therefore the required threshold of 50% was not met. However, of those who turned out over 80% voted in favour of action, demonstrating the strength of feeling towards the pay deal which was reached.

Elsewhere, in respect of other Agenda for Change trade unions, Unite still have a valid strike mandate for further local action and The Royal College of Radiographers is still balloting its members.

This latest round of action by consultants will be of great concern for [NHS employers](#) who are still grappling with the fallout from the recent Agenda for Change employees strikes and the junior doctors strikes. In addition, as the consultants strike comes just two days after a five-day walkout by junior doctors, and as annual leave is being taken over the summer holiday period, it could create challenges with contingency planning that up until now have not been experienced especially as consultants have previously provided cover for junior doctors. Therefore, good comms and dialogue with staff will be crucial as Trusts will need to be sensitive to the strength of feeling amongst doctors (and respect their right to strike) whilst balancing the operational challenges of maintaining patient care during periods of action.

If you'd like to discuss how we can help with sensitive and appropriately worded communications, or any other issues please do get in touch.

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