



Industrial Action FAQ's

What will be expected from these members on the day with regards life and limb cover that UNISON is obliged to support?

UNISON members will be requested to work from the picket lines. The picket line will be set up at station, and will require members to effectively work from there rather than from inside the station. There will be placards provided to show the public that this is an official picket line and that UNISON is taking action.

After discussions with the Trust, it is expected that between midday and midnight on the day of action our members will have the vehicles they will run parked on the front of station, or on the station driveway (we cannot block or disrupt the public highway). Crews will then be passed jobs that the trust cannot cover by a Trust official who will be stationed on the picket line at the request of the Trust. Currently the only jobs agreed to be covered are Cat 1 calls and Cat 2 calls in a public place or outside.

If you are passed a job on the picket line you should respond as normal, complete the job and return to the picket line BEFORE calling clear.

1. Which grades of member are affected by the action?

ECA (not LAT) / AAP

EMT 1 /EMT 2/AEMT/AP

Paramedic/NQP

HART Tech/Para/TL

OPs Team Leaders

SPUC/SPCC/

Paramedic Urgent Care (old SP)

Aspirant SPUC/CC

ECP/UCP

3. What does going on strike mean?

It means withdrawing your labour. It is a legal and legitimate action where the members of the unions balloted have voted in favour of strike action and reached relevant legal thresholds. Even if your employer tells you that you are in breach of your contract for taking strike action, if you have been instructed to do so by your Union you are entitled to and cannot be victimised by your employer for doing so.

4. What do I do if I am instructed by my union to take strike action?

You will be informed in advance of what action your union is taking and if your area of the service is included. If you are instructed to strike this means you will be withdrawing your labour during the times stated for industrial action and you may not get paid. UNISON will have discussions with the trust around what is known as 'life and limb cover', however it is the Trusts responsibility to provide cover, and any support given by UNISON members will be from the picket line. The employer does not have to pay anyone for the period of industrial action.

5. What do I do if I am booked onto a shift which starts before the strike action commences but finishes during the strike?

You finish that shift at the start time of the action and join the picket line. Similarly, if industrial action finishes before the end of your shift, you would return to normal duties at the end of the industrial action period.

6. What about industrial action short of strike action?

This is also an option open to UNISON and we are discussing ways in which we could take this forward. You know your work areas best, please forward any suggestions as to what sort of action short of strike would be effective in your areas. Email your suggestions to yas.unison@nhs.net

7. I am a manager can I go on strike?

Yes – UNISON balloted all grades of members and the mandates for strike action covers all grades of members.

8. Do I have to tell my managers if I am going on strike? I have been asked.

You do not have to tell your manager that you are taking industrial action. UNISON will inform the service of the grade and workplaces of who we are calling to take action. If on the day of action, the strike starts during your shift, you should inform the Trust that you will now be taking part in industrial action and only responding from the picket line.

9. Can apprentices take industrial action?

Yes – members who are apprentices were balloted and are covered by the vote. If any manager tells apprentice members that they are not allowed to take industrial action, this is incorrect, and you should inform your union rep.

10. Can staff on their probation period take industrial action?

Yes – UNISON members who are on their probation period were balloted and are covered by the vote. If any manager tells apprentice members that they are not allowed to take industrial action, this is incorrect, and you should inform your union rep.

11. Will there be picket lines during any strike action?

Yes – we will be organising picket lines on stations on days that strike action is called. Your support with this will be vital for our action's success. On your stations start planning now for the picket lines. The picket lines are a symbol of our action and should always be peaceful protest. It's going to be cold, so please start the preparation now for your station, any support UNISON can give let us know.

12. What do I do if I am booked onto a training course which is due to take place when industrial action is scheduled?

If on a normal day you would be included in the members taking industrial action and your training course is during the period industrial action falls do not attend the course, we would encourage you to join your stations picket line.

13. Will I lose money if I take industrial action?

YAS is not obliged to pay anyone who is involved in withdrawing labour on the days of industrial action. However, one of the key reasons we balloted members is because of the years of below inflation pay that has effectively inflicted pay cuts for our members as the cost-of-living increases year on year. This is the root cause of why our members are now struggling financially. If action isn't taken now this will

only get worse, already the government are muting just 2% next year, with inflation currently hitting 11%, this means another massive pay cut.

14. If I take industrial action, can this be used against me by my employer in the future?

It is illegal for employers to victimise workers for taking industrial action.

15. My colleague joined the UNISON after the ballot closed, can they still take part in industrial action?

Yes – If the individual is a UNISON member by the time any industrial action is scheduled, they are able to take part in the action.

16. Does UNISON have a guide to what members are lawfully allowed to do so they avoid being targeted by the service for disciplinary action? For instance, in relation to GDPR and the use of social media?

Members are advised to be very cautious about what they post on social media that may be critical towards the service or any of its employees. Social media platforms are public forums, and we have examples of members being disciplined for comments they have made on the grounds of bringing the company into disrepute, irrelevant of how unfair or unjustified we believe those charges were.

Remember picket lines are lawful action as long as they remain peaceful and respectful of others who may not be taking action. Any intimidation or threatening behaviour could be deemed unlawful and may even result in police action.

17. Will meal breaks apply on strike days?

You are withdrawing your labour for that part of the shift, so no meal break policy applies. If you are on shift prior to the strike action or after it ends and are within your meal break window, you should be allocated a break by the trust as normal.

18. Can I choose not to respond from the picket line?

Yes. You are taking strike action so should not expect to be paid, it is your decision as to respond or not should you be asked if asked. After further discussions with the trust more information will be available, however it is the trusts responsibility to provide life and limb cover. It is worth noting that UNISON has a legal and moral obligation to respond and has always said that it wishes to limit impact on patients as much as possible in these situations and so after talks with the trust will be advising members that UNISON members would respond to Cat 1 calls as well as Cat 2 calls in a public place or outside that the Trust is unable to cover through the plans that they should have in place.

19. What will I do if I am working with a non-union member on the day of the strike?

As a member of a union taking action at the start of the strike (or at first available point if on a job with a patient) you will join the picket line. It is the trust responsibility to organise your non-union members shift from then on. As always, we encourage anyone who isn't a trade union member to join one so they can legally be involved in the action. As a union we cannot advise anyone not to cross the picket line, but neither can the Trust force someone to cross. The individual will need to make the decision on the day.

20. If a different union is picketing at my station, or I am not involved in the particular day of action with my own union, do I have to cross the picket line?

As a union we cannot instruct you to not cross the picket line, there are strict rules around what we can or can't advise when it comes to pickets, however the Trust

cannot force you to cross the picket line either. If you attend work and are faced with the situation, please contact your line manager in the first instance to discuss what alternatives the trust has put in place, also speak to your union rep.

There are ways through depending on how comfortable you are with the situation, an example would be if working on PTS you could collect your vehicle and join colleagues on the picket line to show support, you would be expected to work normally however could park your vehicle with others on the picket line whilst on a meal break for instance.

21. Can I be forced to work with the army?

No, members cannot be forced to work with the army on industrial action days.

22. I am an SPUC, what will I be covering?

You would be expected to work from the picket line and respond to Cat 1 details

23. If I am not being paid do, I still have to come into work?

You are withdrawing your labour, so long as you inform the Trust at the start of your shift that you will be taking part in the legal industrial action as someone who is affected by the industrial action you can do as you wish. UNISON requests that you join the picket line to respond to life and limb cover for the duration of what would have been your shift but ultimately the choice is yours. If the action splits your shift, once the action finishes you would be expected to return to your normal shift.

24. I am PTS, can I be made to do jobs outside my scope?

No, PTS members cannot, and should not be forced to work outside their scope of practice. Please contact the Unison contact for the area which will be released prior. The Trust has agreed to not ask anybody to work outside their scope of practice.

25. How will I get updates about the dispute?

We are sending out information almost daily to keep members informed, look on our website www.uyab.co.uk

See our Facebook page UNISON Yorkshire Ambulance Branch

Or look out for our OneYAS posts