

What am I being asked?

This is a statutory industrial action ballot, which means that if enough members vote **in favour of taking action** then the RCN will be in a position to initiate this.

Your ballot paper will ask you whether you are prepared to take industrial action which means going on strike. It will be a simple yes or no question.

Your ballot paper will be posted to you – the law requires a statutory industrial action ballot to be postal and not electronic.



You will receive your ballot paper and a return envelope from 6 October and must be returned by 2 November 2022. Ballot papers received after this date will not be counted.

What is strike action?

Strike action involves a complete withdrawal of labour from the workplace. This could be for half a day, a day or even longer, depending on the dispute. Strike action will almost certainly result in disruption to NHS services.

The Welsh Government's pay award for 2022 (2022-23) leaves an experienced nurse over **£1,000 worse off** in real terms.



What about patient safety?

The nursing profession has always and will always put its patients first. Patient safety is always paramount.

Any RCN industrial action will follow the life preserving care model. Life preserving services include emergency interventions, maintenance of therapeutic services and urgent diagnostic procedures where any of these contribute to preservation of life or prevention of permanent disability.

Derogations

One important way to maintain safe staffing levels is through derogations. A derogation is an exemption provided to a member or service from taking part in industrial action so that patient safety can be preserved.

This means in places like emergency departments, RCN members who support strike action may still be working to maintain services as they are derogated.

The RCN will work with employers to ensure they understand it is their responsibility to maintain appropriate staffing levels during any period of action.

During any industrial action, patients would be protected and life-preserving services would be provided.

Read the industrial action handbook at
rcn.org.uk/IAHandbook



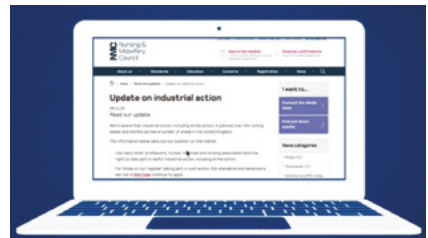
Does this compromise your NMC registration?

The Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) has issued a statement confirming that it recognises registrants are entitled to participate in lawful industrial action. Whilst participating in industrial action the code will of course continue to apply and members must be mindful of that.

Is there a financial impact?

The below RPI inflation pay award announced by the Welsh Government for the current year will be paid and your vote for strike action will not jeopardise that. Voting for strike action will make it clear that you are not willing to accept another below inflation pay rise that does not recognise the value of your nursing role or the profession.

Your employer is entitled to withhold payment for each day of strike action. The RCN has set up a £50 million fund to cover 'strike benefit' payments to members. An amount, currently set at £50 a day, will be paid to members entitled to receive it from the first day of action and this is payable after action has taken place. The rate is always under review.



What do you need to do now?

This industrial action ballot can only happen by post, not online. Therefore, it is essential that the RCN has the correct postal address for you.

It is also essential that the RCN can verify you are eligible to vote. You are eligible to vote if you are employed in the NHS on Agenda for Change terms and conditions.

Check your details are up to date today – **especially if you have moved home or changed employer but haven't recorded this in MyRCN** – and encourage your colleagues to do the same.

The postal ballot will open on 6 October 2022.

You will receive a return envelope which you will use to return your ballot paper to Civica Election Services, who conduct the ballot on behalf of the RCN.

Confirm your details are correct and encourage colleagues to do the same.

rcn.org.uk/MyRCN



The journey to Wales's Industrial Action Strike Ballot

Last year, members working in the NHS in Wales made clear that the 3% pay award for 2021/22 was far from good enough and RCN Wales entered into a trade dispute with the Welsh government on the issue. In an indicative ballot, those who voted showed clear desire to take industrial action.

This year, the cost-of-living crisis is hitting the profession hard and staff shortages are more widespread than ever. The RCN made a clear case to the NHS Pay Review Body who recommend NHS pay levels to the Welsh Government – that the profession must see a pay award in 2022/23 which goes 5% above inflation. This will not only ensure that those at the heart of health and care services can afford to live, but start to make up for a decade of real-terms pay cuts.

The Welsh Government have chosen not to listen, awarding members in Wales an extra £1,400, which will be enhanced for members at the top of band 6 and band 7 so that their pay award equates to 4%. When making this award, inflation was 11.7%.

This pay award is another real terms pay cut.

There are chronic staff shortages and a clear impact on the quality of care to our patients. Your elected Council members have decided that enough is enough. Members will now vote in an industrial action ballot. This is legally binding and can authorise industrial action if enough of you choose to vote yes.



Is it the right time?

It has never been more urgent to demand better pay for the nursing profession.

On average, the value of Agenda for Change pay bands has **declined by 10%** over the past decade.



In 2021, **1,400 left** the NMC register and there are 1,800 known vacancies in nursing already.



Staff shortages cost lives. For each **additional patient per nurse, the risk of death increases by 7%**.



Only **50 to 74% of shifts** have the planned number of nurses on them.



Nursing staff are using foodbanks, undergoing bankruptcy and sleeping in their cars to avoid petrol costs.



It is a national disgrace that the profession has been devalued to this degree.

Vote for change

There has never been a more important time to stand up for the nursing profession. Years of being understaffed, undervalued and underfunded need to end. It is patients, our loved ones, who are set to lose out.

Vote for change – you and your patients deserve it.



Find out more about the
#FairPayForNursing campaign
rcn.org.uk/pay



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