



## NHS partners

18 December 2020

Dear Colleagues

### **Yorkshire Ambulance Service; Industrial Action – summary of actions for 21 and 28 December 2022**

As you will be aware, national ambulance and NHS trade unions have announced two days of strike action. For Yorkshire Ambulance Service, YAS, the industrial action will take place by GMB members on Wednesday 21 December and Wednesday 28 December, for 24 hours, between midnight and midnight. GMB is calling out all members for action including A&E Operations, covering frontline services and our 999 emergency operations centres, as well as NHS 111 and our non-emergency Patient Transport Service (PTS). Unison members will be taking action on Wednesday 21 December, for 12 hours from midday to midnight, and have called out members in A&E Operations only.

As a result, we anticipate a large proportion of our workforce will take strike action. We are taking steps to minimise the impact on the public and ensure we can respond to life-threatening emergencies during the periods of action. However, we anticipate that there will be a significant and noticeable difference in the way we operate on the 21 and 28 December. We expect operational challenges to last for a further 48 hours, so our advice is to plan for 72 hours of disruption.

We have already been operating at REAP (Resource Escalation Action Plan) level 4 since October 2022, our highest level of escalation, as we continue to face significant operational pressures. In addition, our command structure will be in place to ensure all available resources are used efficiently on the days of industrial action and prioritise the safety of our patients.

Discussions with unions are still underway and exemptions and derogations are not yet finalised. However, we expect that staff taking industrial action will respond to life-threatening illnesses or injuries only. We are undertaking contingency planning based on this scenario and any further updates will be shared via system leads.

Senior clinicians will be based in all our control rooms overseeing incoming 999 calls and making decisions on a response, based on clinical need. However, they must adhere to the agreed exemptions and derogations.

Following Friday's letter from NHS England on considerations for the forthcoming industrial action, we have summarised additional key points to take into consideration as part of your planning. These are to help guide your planning but may be subject to further change when final derogations are agreed.

- Staff will respond to all **confirmed cardiac arrests** and immediate **threats to life**. This will be via the usual process of calls to 999. Patients will be attended in any setting.
- Confirmed **obstetric emergencies** will continue to be responded to, but there are likely to be delays in response.
- If **Emergency Department admission** is required, immediate self-conveyance or taxi conveyance will be advised when calling 999.
- **Transfers from care homes** will not be supported, unless it is a category 1 call or clinically assessed as a life threatening emergency.
- **Inter-facility transfers**, IFTs, for category 1 and clinically validated category 2 patients will be undertaken but other IFTs won't be accommodated under derogations; response times to IFT category 1 and 2 incidents are likely to be delayed.
- **Patient Transport Services** will operate as normal and additional providers are being secured. It is recommended that organisations consider stepping up alternative providers to support discharge and other patients who may need transport for appointments e.g., volunteer drivers, taxis and private ambulance providers.
- Consideration should be given to stepping up all **mental health** crisis lines, **falls** and **urgent community response** services and advise YAS if any services are not available, as there is likely to be a significant delay to these categories of calls.
- In line with the guidance from NHS England, PTS will support the **discharge** of all patients who are clinically fit for discharge in advance of strike action.
- In line with the NHSE guidance, all **ambulances are expected to clear** no later than 15 minutes after arrival and YAS staff will be instructed accordingly. Please consider additional wheelchairs/hospital trolleys to support 15-minute handovers.
- In addition, as part of our escalation procedures, will we consider the use of our **emergency clear policy** at emergency departments, where no ambulances are available to respond to life threatening calls in the community.
- Our **healthcare professional line**, 0300 3300 295, will be advising of no ambulance provision.

The Trust will maintain a robust capability to respond to major incidents through derogations agreed with trade unions.

We will continue to keep you updated on developments and will be co-ordinating with regional ICB and NHS England colleagues. In addition, public and patient communications will be following the national guidance.

Thank you for your support in prioritising patient care.

Yours sincerely



Nick Smith  
**Executive Director of Operations**