Junior doctors and dentists – new strike dates announced

As you may already have seen in the national media this week, the British Medical Association (BMA) and the British Dental Association (BDA) have announced three days of industrial action for junior doctors and dentists on the following dates:

- **12 January 2016** - Emergency care only between 8am on Tuesday 12 January and 8am on Wednesday 13 January (24 hours)
- **26 January 2016** - Emergency care only between 8am on Tuesday 26 January and 8am on Thursday 28 January (48 hours)
- **10 February 2016** - Full withdrawal of labour between 8am and 5pm

As with the previously planned strike action which was cancelled in December, this is a national dispute between unions and the Government, rather than any local or particular dispute with the trust. However we do recognise and respect an individual’s right to be a member of a trade union and their right to strike and express their opinion.

The trust’s overriding statutory obligation is to provide high quality safe services to patients during any periods of industrial action. Our focus has to be on developing plans to mitigate the impact of industrial action on our patients and managers are currently working on contingency plans for their directorates.

In order to ensure the impact on patient services is minimised and patient safety is not compromised, we are trying to anticipate the impact the industrial action may have on staffing numbers.

While respecting each junior doctor’s and dentists’ right to take industrial action, we are asking them to let their managers know whether they are intending to take strike action, however, we understand that they are not obliged to do this.

Colleagues are reminded to ensure that they have access to all systems to ensure continuous patient flow (e.g. E-Discharge and Webice).

Anyone who requires a password reset should contact the IT Helpdesk in the first instance on extension 52525. Refresher training in the form of e-learning for the E-Discharge and E-Discharge Lite systems can be found on the “industrial action” page on the intranet.
The agreed standard approach being taken to sickness absence, annual leave, study leave and other absences on the days of the proposed strike action is summarised below:

- **Annual leave or time off in lieu** - Any new requests for annual leave or time off in lieu, which covers the dates of the proposed action, should not be authorised.

- **Study leave** - Any new requests for study leave covering the dates of proposed action should not be authorised.

- **Sickness absence** - Except in cases of recognised continuing sickness absence, any employees taking sick leave during the period of industrial action will be required to supply evidence of their medical incapacity for this period. Private sick notes can be obtained from all GP practices, however, GPs will charge a fee, the cost of which will vary. Where employees incur a cost for a certificate, the cost of this will not be reimbursed. Failure to produce a medical certificate will result in the loss of pay for the hours lost during any period of industrial action. All staff will be expected to have a return to work interview in accordance with the trust's sickness absence policy.

- **Carers/special leave** – The special leave policy should be followed and is at the discretion of the line manager. Such leave should only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.

- **Unauthorised absence** – Any employee who is scheduled to work on the day(s) of the industrial action but who does not attend work without appropriate authorisation will be considered to be on strike and will not receive any pay for that period.

Talks are ongoing with Government officials, the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (Acas) and the BMA and we will continue to keep staff updated.

More details, systems refresher training and frequently asked questions can be found on the staff intranet under “industrial action” at [http://stas16/intranet/servicesa-z/human-resources/industrial-action/](http://stas16/intranet/servicesa-z/human-resources/industrial-action/)

**Richard Wight – Medical Director**