

## Information for patients about the public service strike on Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> November 2011

On Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> November, several trades unions will be striking over pensions. This is expected to have a significant impact on the public sector, including schools and hospitals.

**If you have an appointment and have not been contacted, please come into the hospital as normal.**

Our hospitals will be protecting the safety of services, keep key services running and work to minimise the impact on patients wherever possible. Patients and their families should be confident that we will continue to provide urgent care, and make sure that all patients staying in the hospital or coming into the hospital as emergencies will be given a high standard of care.

However, there will be disruption to some services. Scans, physiotherapy, pharmacy and some outpatient clinics and routine surgery are likely to be affected. There may also be disruption to administration, for example, with staff taking longer to answer phone calls.

We are sorry for any inconvenience or delay this causes to you. Our priority is to keep our services safe, and enable staff working to focus on emergency patients, critical care, patients with urgent clinical need and inpatients.

We are not cancelling all clinics or routine surgery. However, we may need to make further cancellations on the day, if this is necessary to ensure we can provide safe care to emergency patients. We are contacting people who have appointments that may not go ahead.

If you have a question that is not answered below, please ask a member of staff.

### Outpatient clinics

Some clinics are being postponed. We are calling all patients affected to let them know about this. These appointments will be rearranged for a date as soon as possible after 30<sup>th</sup> November. **Further details can be found at the end of this message.**

If you have not been contacted, please come into the hospital as planned.

If your doctor wants you to have a non-urgent test or scan, it is possible you may have to come back for this on another day.



**Surgery**

All emergency, urgent and cancer surgery will operate as normal. We are calling other patients with surgery planned for 30<sup>th</sup> November to ask them to be on 'standby'. This means that we will ask you to plan for your surgery as normal, fasting from the time stated on your letter and be ready to come into the hospital. We will contact you on the day, and let you know whether we can go ahead with your surgery. We will not go ahead with your operation if there is any question about whether we have enough staff to provide you with safe care.

**Pharmacy**

Most outpatients are already given a prescription to take to a community pharmacist rather than having to wait in the hospital pharmacy, so will not be affected. For patients who need a hospital-only medicine, the pharmacy will be operating reduced opening hours to dispense prescriptions.

**Blood tests**

We will provide a reduced walk-in service from Queen's and King George Hospital. We will also run a blood test service from Loxford, Brentwood and Victoria clinics and collect blood samples from GP surgeries as usual. There may be longer delays than normal.

**Cancer care**

All cancer care will go ahead as planned. This includes radiotherapy, chemotherapy, outpatient clinics and surgery.

**Scans and breast screening**

We have not booked patients for routine scans on 30<sup>th</sup> November.

The walk-in chest clinic will operate as normal.

The breast screening service will operate as normal.

**Emergency department**

We will be providing a normal service to emergency patients. However, there may be longer delays in being seen, especially for patients with less serious health problems or in waiting for a bed for admission. We will do everything we can to keep any delays to a minimum.

If you are not seriously ill, you can help by first asking your GP about your health needs before coming into the hospital.

**Maternity**

A normal service will operate.

**Hospital transport**

We have not been informed of any expected problems with the hospital transport provider.

### Physiotherapy

The routine physiotherapy service will not run. However, we will be providing care for patients with urgent clinical need, for example, to those needing respiratory physiotherapy.

### Sexual health

A normal service will operate from Queen's and Barking Hospital, although there may be delays.

### Calling the hospital

Some staff will be diverted from answering the phones to other duties to help patients. This means that phones may not be answered or that there may be a longer delay. You can help by not calling the hospital to check on your appointment – we will call you if your appointment is affected.

### Getting into the hospital

There will be people picketing outside the hospital but we have been assured these will not block access to the hospitals.

### Our services on Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> December

There may be some disruption to services after the strike and longer delays in some areas, but we will work to get our services back to normal as quickly as possible. We are not planning to cancel any clinics or surgery, so please come into the hospital for your appointment as planned.

### Outpatient clinic postponements

The following will be postponed and rearranged:

#### King George Hospital:

ETR4A	AM	Dr Roussou	Rheumatology
AJO3F and AJO3N	PM	Mr Ojo	Surgery
MGD3H	PM	Dr Dabrera	Rheumatology

#### Queen's:

MAS4B	AM	Dr Smith	Care of the elderly
LCW4B	AM	Dr Wickes	Care of the elderly
GLS4C	AM	Mr Sayer	Vascular Clinic
TRC4D	AM	Mr Cheatle	Vascular Clinic
MU5C	PM	Dr Uddin	Care of the elderly

Please accept our apologies for any inconvenience this industrial action will cause you.