

## **NHS plea to only use A&E for life threatening emergencies**

**NHS leaders are reminding the public to only call 999 for an ambulance or attend A&E for life-threatening conditions or injuries only, as the region's health services plan for further strike action this week.**

The British Medical Association (BMA) has announced that junior doctors will take part in four days of industrial action from 7am Friday 11 August until 7am Tuesday 15 August 2023.

The strike will affect NHS services across the North East and North Cumbria and patients should expect disruption and potential long waits during the strike, and over the following immediate days when patient attendance often peaks.

Dr Alexandra Kent, medical director, North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board said: "The public can expect long delays and more disruption to NHS services during this latest period of industrial action. It has been even more challenging to plan for this strike action due to staff summer holiday leave, meaning there are fewer staff to help cover essential services."

NHS teams across the region have plans in place to ensure emergency and urgent care services are prioritised and remain open during this time. The NHS is also reminding the public to keep their appointments unless they hear otherwise and for urgent health needs, which are not life threatening, to use 111 online or by phone which is available 24/7.

Dr Kent added: "We are prioritising emergency and urgent care services, and we really need the public's help to only call 999 and attend emergency departments if it is a genuine life-threatening injury or illness.

"Some hospital treatments and appointments will need to be rescheduled. However patients will be contacted directly to inform them of any changes and should assume their scheduled appointment or treatment will go ahead unless they have heard otherwise, there is no need to contact the NHS.

"GP practices and local pharmacies will also be open as usual during the industrial action to help with advice and treatments."

Public are reminded for urgent health needs, which are not life-threatening, [www.111.nhs.uk](http://www.111.nhs.uk) and NHS 111 are available 24 hours a day. A symptom checker can be used to assess symptoms and it will re-direct to a health professional if people need to be seen by someone. Also, self-care advice is available on-line from the [NHS](http://NHS).

Parents, carers and young people can also use the [Healthier Together app](#) or [website](#) which provides NHS healthcare advice and top tips on a range of child related illnesses along with information on local services.

Anyone needing urgent mental health support should continue to seek it via their local Crisis Team. People can put their postcode in here to find their local crisis line [here](#).

ENDS

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