

PO/17/23

To: All Health Branches
Health Central Panel
HSC Strike Committee

25 July 2023

Dear Member,

HSC INDUSTRIAL ACTION UPDATE

The Fight Continues!!

I write to update you in relation to the ongoing Industrial Action Dispute in Health and ongoing Industrial Action around Pay, Safe Staffing and Travel.

Why is Action Needed More Than Ever?

Northern Ireland is the only country in the UK with No Pay Offer

Coming to a facility near you NOW!

Health Cuts are happening - Daisy Hill, loss of Stroke Services, SWA Enniskillen, loss of Emergency Services, Causeway Hospital, loss of Maternity Hospital.

What are NIPSA doing?

NIPSA is extending and enhancing its Industrial Action on Pay, Safe Staffing and Mileage! NIPSA continues to work collaboratively with other Health Trade Unions to bring effective action and lobby Political Parties for effective change.

What Can NIPSA Members do?

Follow the Industrial Action Short of Strike as notified to your employer.
Keep in touch with your Branch Representatives for the latest information.
Provide feedback to NIPSA on what action works well and what could be better.

The Cost of Living Crisis continues what does this mean for me and my family?

Food inflation 14%, Overall inflation 11.1%, Mortgage Rates rising, No resolution on Pay 2022/2023, No Pay Offer 2023/2024, NI. Health and Public Services Being Cut.

What Industrial Action Should I take?

NIPSA represents over 40,000 members in the Northern Ireland Civil Service, Education Authority, Health and Social Services Boards and Trusts, the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, Local Government and a number of other public bodies and voluntary organisations.

Carmel Gates General Secretary

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Follow us



Follow the notified action for your employer specified below.

Continuous Action Short of Strike for NIPSA Members Northern Trust

- All NIPSA members whose employment contract does not include providing statistical returns as a core function are instructed to cease all additional routine tasks associated with the provision of statistical returns to employers
- All NIPSA Members to withdraw use of personal mobiles for work related activity and withdraw telephone cover for calls associated with other teams or absent colleagues outside of their substantive role
- All NIPSA Members not directly employed by Encompass or whose contract of employment includes Encompass as a core Job requirement to withdraw from Encompass Training and Encompass related work
- Hours of work will be strictly within normal paid hours
- No unpaid work
- No coverage provided for vacant posts
- No coverage for long term sick or maternity leave
- Take all normal breaks
- Ensure Employer adheres strictly to health and safety protocols
- Refusing to cover the work of other workers taking industrial action (except in life and limb emergencies).

Additional Selective Action Short of Strike (ASOS) extended 1 August to 31 August (inclusive) 2023.

All Staff

Action consists of Working to rule:

- Withdrawal from all union/management/department of health engagement except regional meetings on dispute resolution.
- All members do not engage, with any activity, which is reviewing their work practices/duties, unless required to do so, for professional registration purposes.

All NIPSA Social Work Staff

Action consists of:

- Ban on using personal phones for work related calls
- No answering calls, texts, whatsapp, and emails outside working hours
- Not entering into any projects for the use of digital services
- Only undertaking mandatory training
- Staff to remain in own location and not move to cover gaps in service
- No conducting of handovers outside of contracted hours
- Compensatory rest should be taken as soon after the event as possible in order to comply with the working time regulations and health and safety legislation.

Approved Social Workers

- NHSCT ASWs will provide cover for the main rota only. No emergency 1 and 2 ASW shifts will be worked for the duration of industrial action
- ASW reports to be completed within 5 working days after day of admission. ASWs will continue to provide MHO A reports at point of admission. In the event of extreme circumstances, completion of ASW MHO B report will require additional time.
- ASWs to complete one assessment per ASW shift. Additional referrals are the employer responsibility
- Referrals from GPs to the day rota will only be accepted from GPs able to complete assessments before 5pm. Referrals from GPs who are not available until after 5 should contact RESWS
- ASWs will not accept any new requests for assessment after 4pm
- All ASW referrals will be risk assessed and 2 ASWs will respond in the event of concerns about patient and staff safety.

Hospital Social Work

- NIPSA members in Hospital Social Work are instructed not to accept discharge referrals after 3.30pm to enable proper response to service user's needs and safe discharge.

All NIPSA Administrative, Clerical and Support Staff:

Action consists of:

- All NIPSA members whose employment contract does not include providing statistical returns as a core function are instructed to cease all additional routine tasks associated with the provision of statistical returns to employers.
- Ban on using personal phones for work related calls
- No answering calls, texts, whatsapp, and emails outside working hours
- Only undertaking mandatory training
- Staff to remain in own location and not move to cover gaps in service
- No job stacking – 1 job, 1 person
- Where a pool exists, workers will remain in the pool at their substantive area.
- Not collecting or delivering non-urgent blood
- Bus/freight drivers not to undertake any additional duties – no non-urgent requests or movement of equipment
- Catering staff no transportation of goods
- Post room staff will not handle medical records/patient notes
- Post room staff will not sort out pre-paid mail

NIPSA Homecare workers including: Health Care Assistants, Domiciliary care staff all grades

Action consists of:

- Ban on using personal phones for work related calls
- No answering calls, texts, whatsapp, and emails outside working hours
- Commencing from and completing duty on time to contractual hours

- Not entering into any projects for the use of digital services
- Not to undertake any duties which are not clearly identified on care plan or schedule
- Not taking home trust issued ipad – collect from base each day and return to base to charge at the beginning of each shift.
- Only undertaking mandatory training
- No carrying equipment or personnel in own vehicle
- No conducting of handovers outside of contracted hours

Nursing Staff including:

Registered nurses, Nursing assistants, Senior Nursing assistants, Domiciliary care staff, Reablement staff, Rehabilitation staff,

Also including Care Assistants, Senior Day Care Workers, Day Care workers Band 3 and Band 5

Action consists of:

- Working to rule
- Remain on designated ward except in cases of emergency/ exceptional circumstances or health and wellbeing clinic (community staff) working in a geographical area
- Commencing from and completing duty on time to contractual hours
- Not completing paperwork other than individual patient records
- Not carrying out duties of other staff due to shortages including housekeeping, cleaning, portering or environmental teams etc
- Not accompanying patients to tests and investigations unless there is an identified clinical requirement
- Not undertaking non clinical administrative tasks
- Not collecting prescriptions from Pharmacy or Pharmacy in the community except in exceptional circumstances
- Not collecting or delivering non-urgent blood samples in the community
- No bank or overtime shifts on days of industrial action
- No carrying equipment
- Not attending meetings including bed management or bed co-ordination
- Not attending any meetings, conferences or training organised by employers or the Department of Health
- No conducting handovers outside of contracted hours
- Remaining in own designated ward/area unless in an emergency situation

What NIPSA is Campaigning For

- An inflation busting pay rise for all health service staff
- Safe Staffing levels in all areas of the health services
- Appropriate mileage rates
- Defending Public Services.

NIPSA will continue to ensure our Member's voice is heard in regards to settling the disputes now ranging from 2022/23 and 2023/24.

Nor will NIPSA accept Health being used as a Political football while our members and those they serve continue to suffer.

To this end all NIPSA Representative bodies in Health will be seeking to reinforce the Industrial Action Strategy to date and consider all further measures for escalation.

To inform this process local Health Branches will continue to liaise with members to discuss all the potential options and inform the Industrial Action going forwards.

The NIPSA Health Panel commends members who have been engaged in the industrial action to date which has taken us to this important point but would emphasise that the Dispute continues, and Industrial Action Short of Strike continues.

Patient safety remains very important for health staff who will take industrial action. Discussions are ongoing to ensure the employers take the necessary steps to protect patients during the dispute.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. Thomas', written in a cursive style.

TERRY THOMAS
Assistant Secretary