

Avoid 'risky activities' on ambulance strike day, says health minister

A minister has warned people not to take part in any "risky activity" during Wednesday's [ambulance](#) strikes.

Health minister Will Quince was speaking as [nurses](#) walked out for the second time in the space of a week at 8am on Tuesday and a day before ambulance workers were set to strike.

The [Government](#) has been pressing [unions](#) and ambulance services to guarantee they will cover life threatening and emergency calls, amid concerns over what incidents will be covered.

But Mr Quince warned on BBC Breakfast: "There will be disruption to service and it is important that where people are planning any risky activity I would strongly encourage them not to do so because there will be disruption on the day.

"The key thing is for anybody who does have an emergency situation or life threatening situation to continue to call with a 999 as they would have done previously."

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The London Ambulance Service warned on Monday night that Londoners “are unlikely to get an ambulance” during the action unless their condition is life-threatening.

Category 1 incidents, such as cardiac arrests and the other most serious cases, are expected to be responded to by ambulance crews across England.

But there is a lack of clarity over whether Category 2, which includes some heart attacks and strokes, will get an ambulance response in the capital and some other regions.

Mr Quince warned health union chiefs to ensure “patient safety is the priority” as thousands of nurses and ambulance crews were set to strike.

He dismissed the industrial action as “unjustifiable and unnecessary” and refused to budge on the Government’s stance on pay, meaning a breakthrough to end the walk-outs looks unlikely.

“Our priority has and will always be ensuring patient safety.

“These strikes are unjustifiable and unnecessary.

“If strikes are to go ahead, then it’s important that patient safety is the priority for the unions as it is for the Government.

“That has got to be ensuring that the most serious call-outs for ambulances, so Cat 1 and Cat 2 for example, are covered on strike day.”

He added that talks are ongoing with unions, the Government and health trusts over the level of cover that will be provided.