

Nursing union sets out list of services protected from strike action

The [Royal College of Nursing](#) has set out a list of services that will be protected from strike action in the build-up to Christmas.

The services are chemotherapy, dialysis, critical care units such as intensive care and high dependency, and neonatal and paediatric intensive care.

Other services will be reduced to Christmas day or night duty levels, the union said.

Members of the Royal College of Nursing (RCN) in [England](#), [Wales](#) and [Northern Ireland](#) are set to take industrial action on December 15 and 20 after voting in favour in a ballot.

[Nurses](#) and other nursing staff will take action at half of the locations in England where the legal mandate was reached for strikes, every NHS employer except one in Wales and throughout Northern Ireland. The strike will include up to 100,000 nurses.

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A separate pay offer has been made in Scotland.

CN general secretary and chief executive Pat Cullen said that the list of exemptions shows how seriously nurses take their commitment to their jobs.

“Every nurse feels a heavy weight of responsibility to make this strike safe. Patients are already at great risk and we will not add to it,” she said.

“This list of exemptions shows how seriously we take our commitment and it should put patients’ minds at ease.

“Nursing staff do not want to take this action but ministers have chosen strikes over negotiations. They can stop this at any point.”

The RCN has previously said that despite this year’s pay award of £1,400, experienced nurses are worse off by 20% in real terms due to successive below-inflation awards since 2010.

It is calling for a pay rise of 5% above RPI inflation, saying the economic argument for paying nursing staff fairly is clear when billions of pounds are being spent on agency staff to plug workforce gaps.

The RCN has also pointed out that 25,000 nursing staff around the UK left the Nursing and Midwifery Council register in the last year, which explains why there are 47,000 unfilled registered nurse posts in the NHS in England.