



PREPARING FOR STRIKE ACTION: A CHECKLIST FOR ACTIVISTS





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This document outlines how activists can prepare for the junior doctors' strike action.

1. **Keep talking:** Build on the momentum of the ballot results by talking to colleagues about the action in your workplace.
2. **Involve others:** Building a team of active members and asking them to take on small tasks will help them feel more connected to the action.
3. **Distribute materials:** Work with colleagues to get BMA campaign materials in the workplace. If you need more, visit the [BMA website](#).
4. **Prepare placards:** Run lunchtime mess meetings to create placards and come up with slogans
5. **Be ready for questions:** On the picket line you may be asked questions, prepare concise and clear answers. The messaging section of the [Pay Restoration activist guide](#) (page 7 and 8) is a good place to start along with the [strike advice FAQs](#).
6. **Plan your picketing/demonstration for maximum impact:** Think about targeting main workplace entrances and morning start times.
7. **Recruiting for pickets and demonstrations:** You will need to convince some of your colleagues to join pickets and demonstrations. It is worth reminding them that attendance will be used as a measure of strength of feeling by management, the Government, and the media.
8. **Create a rota for picketing:** Consider creating a rota so you don't burn out your volunteers too early! Free time should also be built in.
9. **Don't forget to plan a demonstration:** Aim to get a bigger group to turn up for a demonstration. Aim for one demonstration at lunchtime on the first day of action at the very least. Demonstrations are a good way of bringing doctors together in the middle of the day and lifting morale. Also look out for opportunities to attend demonstrations with other unions.
10. **Consider speakers for demonstrations:** Is this something you could do? Sharing personal stories about how pay losses have affected you or wider political messages can be powerful ways of generating support.
11. **Social activities:** Socialising after a demonstration or picket can be a great way to build morale. Also don't forget to run a snack/cake/drinks rota to keep yourselves fuelled on the picket line.
12. **Inoculation against negativity:** Prepare members to respond to negative stories, untrue assertions, and challenges on the ground and on social media to avoid them becoming demoralised. You can find some [good examples](#) in this Twitter thread from BMA deputy council chair Emma Runswick.
13. **Fact checking:** When you see incorrect stories, challenge them and fact check. Encourage members to raise examples with IROs, so they can respond and keep members informed.

- 14. Using WhatsApp groups:** Encourage colleagues to join workplace WhatsApp groups. They will become critical for the dissemination of strike information when you are out of the workplace. Keep sharing and don't assume important information has been seen or heard, not all members follow news and info as closely as you.
- 15. Advise colleagues not to reveal strike intentions:** Let your colleagues know that they do not need to share information on whether they plan to strike. The more they do, the less the trust will plan and pay for senior cover. Colleagues can simply say, I have been advised by the BMA not to answer.
- 16. Don't forget non-members:** Inform non-members that they are legally part of the dispute and can join the strike. Even better encourage them to join the BMA for protection.
- 17. Locally employed doctors (LEDs):** Remind this group that they are included in the dispute and can also take strike action.
- 18. International medical graduates (IMGs):** Let IMGs know that they have a right to participate in the action and that the BMA has prepared **specific guidance** to address their concerns.
- 19. Consultants:** Speak to your consultant colleagues and remind them that if they are asked to cover for junior doctors taking strike action, it is likely to be extra-contractual. They can support the action by making sure that any work they pick up is for at least the **BMA rate** with time of in lieu (TOIL).
- 20. Plan extra locum shifts now:** This will ensure if you require notice to cancel locum shifts you can do so in advance and save money. Employers will offer locum shifts for the strike days, if you can, we suggest you do not cover these days as it could undermine the action. Instead plan locum shifts elsewhere in the month and perhaps just before and after the strike days when there will be plenty of work to do.
- 21. Agency/Locum workers:** You should attend work as usual if you are employed directly by an agency to avoid breaching your contract with them. If you are able to give notice within the 1- or 2-week window, then we would encourage you to do so. If you work as a locum in a self-employed capacity, then you can choose whether you work or not. Check your contract and if you can cancel your shifts, please consider doing so.
- 22. Don't feel guilty about the action:** The fault lies with the Government who can stop this strike from going ahead by agreeing to pay restoration. Employers and Government must know that we are committed to the action. We must demonstrate our resolve if we want to win the fight for pay restoration.

Dealing with your employer

1. **Strike committee arrangements:**

Your employer should be talking to the main junior doctor representatives about preparations and plans, your LNC chair may also be involved, and senior doctors will be discussing cover and remuneration. You should be involved in these discussions. If they have not happened yet – prompt your employer and tell your BMA industrial relations officer (IRO).

2. **Sites for picketing:** Agree with your employer where these will be. Legally the employer should agree. Technically pickets are for up to 6 employees with a designated supervisor. Picket guidelines are being released by the BMA.

3. **Site for demonstration:** Notify the employer of this, it is normally near-by on public land off site, in front of the hospital, near a road, somewhere where passers-by will notice and beep.

4. **Using facilities:** Check whether you can use Trust toilets/café/car park etc – usually they will agree but technically you need agreement.

5. **Annual leave/Sick leave:** How are the Trust going to deal with these issues? Our view is A/L should be honoured and sick leave should be treated in line with current policies. Some employers will try and introduce a new requirement for sick certificates on day 1— our view is, this is unwarranted and an unnecessary drain on GP resources and outside of agreed policies.

6. **Don't share plans:** Tell the employer that the BMA will be advising doctors not to answer questions about whether they intend to strike. In any event they can legally change their mind on the day. The only safe plan is the one that assumes no junior doctors will be at work. There are plenty of senior doctors available to cover and they need to arrange rates with them.

7. **Emergencies:** Clarify that there will be no derogations or discussions. Some employers still don't understand this and will try to discuss emergency criteria. You cannot do this, inform your employer that there is a clear national process for them to make a request if there is an unprecedented local emergency (not critical incident).

Good luck! if you have any queries, as ever keep in touch with your industrial relations officer.