

Health

Strike notice issued ahead of crunch pay meeting

FORMAL notice of a strike by health workers has been issued ahead of a crucial meeting aimed at averting the planned walkout.

The GMB union said it had served NHS employers in England and Northern Ireland with the necessary information about the stoppage on January 29 involving hospital and ambulance workers.

Ambulance members of the union will strike for 24 hours from 0001, while other health workers will take action for 12 hours from noon.

Members of Unison and Unite are also set to go on strike on the same day in a long-running dispute over the Government's refusal to accept a pay review body's recommendation of a 1% rise for all NHS workers.

Health Secretary Jeremy Hunt chaired a meeting of the Government's emergency Cobra committee to discuss contingency plans for the strike.

A Department of Health spokesman said: "We want to see the unions call off the industrial action planned at a time when services are under significant pressure, given that only 13% of their members voted to strike."

"We are doing everything possible to ensure vulnerable patients are not put at risk, and the Health Secretary chaired a Cobra meeting this morning on contingency plans, with a particular emphasis on patient safety."

Two rounds of talks between unions and the Health Department were held last week, with another meeting due today in a bid to head off next week's strikes.

Rehana Azam, national officer of the GMB union, said: "It has taken months to get the talks started in the NHS pay dispute."

"We are all well aware of the pressures on NHS staff who have worked tremendously hard despite the Government taking an axe to their independent pay review body recommendations."

"Should a tangible offer emerge as a result of these current talks, GMB will take that offer back to members. We are not in a position to call the strike off until we have such an offer. Notices have been served to the relevant NHS employers today."

More children have coeliac

THREE times as many children are being diagnosed with the digestive condition coeliac disease than 20 years ago, according to new research.

The study carried out at Nottingham University found diagnoses in children older than two years were 75% higher between 2008-2012 than 1993-1997. It suggested children from poor backgrounds were half as likely to be diagnosed as those from the least deprived areas.

Coeliac disease prompts an autoimmune reaction to gluten, found in wheat, flour and bread, and can lead to a range of other problems.



Parliamentary review highlights work of partnership

A GROUP of Cambridge-based consultants who specialise in the area of urology and uro-oncology have featured in the 2014 Parliamentary Review.

The review, which showcases best practice in private healthcare, featured Cambridge Urology Partnership (CUP), whose members

have all worked at Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Trust.

It focusses on several areas which are unique to CUP and the care they offer their patients.

Some of the partnership's services include overhauling its approach to prostate cancer diagnosis with its research and

offering a holistic approach for patients with urinary-tract stone disease.

Consultant urologist Oliver Wiseman the review was important in recognising the highest levels of care for their patients.

"We are delighted that the exceptional care we provide at

Cambridge Urology Partnership has been recognised by our inclusion in the Parliamentary Review," he said.

"We all feel that our model of multi-disciplinary and subspecialist private patient treatment ensures the best outcomes for our patients."

Hospital warning over winter vomiting virus

STAFF at Addenbrooke's have been working hard to keep winter vomiting at bay after the hospital was forced to close two wards last week to the public.

"Winter vomiting" – a type of diarrhoea and/or vomiting that spreads like a cold or flu – is more common in the colder, winter months and is caused by a virus called norovirus.

Outbreaks occur throughout the UK and are common in hospitals and schools where there are large groups of people gathered together.

Rachel Thaxter, lead infection control nurse, said: "Winter vomiting is quite infectious and can spread quite quickly through any close contact."

In hospitals, large numbers of patients, visitors and staff can be affected. This can disturb the normal working of the hospital and

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cause distress to those infected and their friends and families.

"When there are high levels of this infection in the community, it is very difficult to prevent patients, staff and visitors bringing the infection into hospital."

"When we have one or more patients on a ward with a suspected infection, we are careful to identify it early and take steps to prevent its spread."

People with winter vomiting will suffer from sickness and diarrhoea for about two to three days and might also have a raised temperature, headaches and aching limbs. Although it can be unpleasant for the person affected, the illness is usually mild and will get better on its own without any antibiotics.

Rachel added: "We always ask people who have an infection to 'leave it at home' by delaying coming into hospital until they are better. Anyone, including visitors, who is unwell or suffering from diarrhoea and vomiting should not visit the hospital, including the food areas, until they have been free from symptoms for 48 hours."

Meanwhile, the hospital is still urging people to seek alternatives to A&E unless they have a life-threatening injury or serious health problem that needs urgent attention.

The hospital was forced to declare a 'major incident' on January 6 due to the 'unprecedented demand' on its services.

For non-emergency problems, people are advised to seek advice from their GP, pharmacy, minor injury and illness unit or by calling

the NHS 111 phone service.

However, A&E is the right choice for emergencies and life-threatening conditions such as suspected heart attack or stroke, chest pain, unconsciousness and heavy blood loss.

For less serious problems, the Choose Well website includes more information about services in Cambridgeshire, including advice about which service to choose, a list of minor injury and illness units and walk-in centres along with information about self-care.

For details, visit cambsandpeterboroughchoosewell.co.uk.



Read all our stories about the hospital at cambridge-news.co.uk/addenbrookes