Nurses have pledged to pull together for patients as the NHS braces itself for another series of strikes by junior doctors.

A series of walkouts are scheduled for October to December in England over a controversial new contract.

The government and British Medical Association (BMA) remain at loggerheads over the contract, which the Department for Health says will provide a 7-day NHS.

The BMA suspended action due to take place on September 5-16 to ensure the NHS had the ‘necessary time’ to prepare.

The move comes as the General Medical Council warned that patients would suffer because of cancelled operations and lost outpatient appointments.

**Complete support**

Nurses have told Nursing Standard they will work together for patients while the junior doctors are out on strike.

‘I support the junior doctors 100%,’ Hazel Douglas wrote on Facebook. ‘The staff will cope (as they always do) when the strikes are on. We will pull together and go the extra mile. Remember that our consultant colleagues will be there too.’

Jade Blackburn added: ‘Completely support, the whole NHS is at risk and we have to pull together to save it.’ Nurse Matthew Alders tweeted: ‘We should support junior doctor colleagues. ‘If they are subdued then other healthcare professionals will be next.’

**Action timetable**

The strikes are scheduled to take place from 8am to 5pm on:

- 5-7 October
- 10-11 October
- 14-18 November
- 5-9 December.

Six strikes have already taken place across England during the lengthy dispute. In May

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Nursing students from the University of Wolverhampton took part in a lamp procession to celebrate the end of their degree programme.

A student carried a Florence Nightingale-style lamp during the event at St Peter’s church in Wolverhampton last week.

An enamel university badge was also presented to all students. Gemma Nicholls (pictured fourth from left), who organised the event, said: ‘After working so hard for 3 years, the badge ceremony is a fabulous opportunity for students to celebrate and share our achievements with family, friends and university staff.’
Nurses to ‘go extra mile’ during junior doctors strike

it looked as though a breakthrough had been reached in the dispute after both sides agreed to a new deal.

Then in July, the government announced that it would impose a new contract after junior doctors and medical students voted to reject the contract brokered between health leaders and the BMA.

The BMA said it will call off the strikes if the government agrees to stop the imposition.

Practical guidance

The RCN has encouraged nurses to read its guidance on what to do when other unions take industrial action.

The guidance outlines what rights nursing staff have in taking on increased workloads while avoiding undermining lawful industrial action.

It advises nurses not to undertake work that is outside of their professional competency, act within the NMC Code at all times, and report any difficulties or concerns in delivering care to their manager immediately.

Members may wish to support the action of colleagues by attending demonstrations or signing petitions in their own time, the guidance adds.

For more information, go to tinyurl.com/RCN-industrial-guide

Greater leadership, autonomy and flexibility predicted for nurse of the future

Future generations of nurses will need to be more autonomous, work across care boundaries and understand global issues such as antimicrobial resistance, a new report states.

This vision from the Council of Deans of Health (CoDH), which represents UK universities offering nursing courses, calls for debate on how pre-registration nursing education can best prepare students to be nurses of the future.

The Nursing and Midwifery Council began work last year on new pre-registration standards that should be ready for institutions to use from September 2019. The first nurses to qualify from programmes developed using these standards will graduate in 2022 and could still be in the workforce in 2065.

RCN head of education Anne Corrin said in the future most nurses will not work in acute settings, but will be expected to work across settings. She highlighted the report’s emphasis on leadership, as well as what can be expected of nurses at the point of registration.

‘Employers want them to hit the ground running, but is that realistic? Everyone should have access to a top quality preceptorship.’

The report’s vision also includes:

► Emphasis on enabling patient self-care and management.
► ‘Social prescribing’ – bringing together housing, health care and benefits for patients.
► Increased knowledge and skills in health IT and informatics.
► A comprehensive understanding of mental and physical health.

Head of nursing at the Open University and CoDH future nurse advisory group chair Jan Draper said the review ‘presents a strong opportunity to stimulate debate on the direction of nurse education’.