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Chief Executives
NHS Scotland Health Boards

21 November 2025

Dear Colleagues,

Planning for Possible Industrial Action – Resident Doctors

With the possibility of Industrial Action (IA) resulting from the dispute between the British Medical Association (Scottish Resident Doctor Committee) and Scottish Government, I am writing to request that you confirm that planning and contingency arrangements are in place in your Boards should action be taken.

We must ensure minimal possible impact on services, by maintaining protected and critical services and, as far as is possible, maintain trajectories, including on Waiting Times.

Pre-IA Assurance

NHS Boards have established the Employers Reference Group (ERG) to support Boards in their operational planning and readiness. Scottish Government Health and Social Care colleagues will continue to work with ERG as planning develops.

I am aware that the ERG issued guidance to all Health Boards as part of preparations for potential IA. I am now asking that you complete the attached assurance template (Attachment A) to confirm that you have established planning and response arrangements in line with the guidance. This should be signed-off by you as Chief Executive of your Board.

Please can you return your completed templates to Health Emergency Preparedness, Resilience, and Response (Health EPRR: Health.EPRR@gov.scot) **no later than 15:00 on Friday 5 December.**

Board Reporting During any confirmed period of IA

I recognise the resource challenges that IA will place on Boards. To minimise the reporting burden during any action, Boards are requested to report by exception only. This should be done using the extant Health EPRR SITREP template (Attachment B) and by following the current reporting process to Health.EPRR@gov.scot and On-Call Duty Officer system if reporting out-of-hours. We will also continue to review routinely collected data during any IA.

Board Reporting Following IA Period

Following the period of IA, Health EPRR will commission a return (Attachment C) to understand the participation levels in IA, any derogations, and the impacts on services.

I am grateful for the work you and your Boards are doing. Please contact me or the Health EPRR team if you have any further questions.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. McLaughlin'.

Christine McLaughlin

Chief Operating Officer & Deputy Chief Executive, NHS Scotland

List of Attachments

- A. Industrial Action Assurance Return
- B. Health EPRR SITREP Template
- C. Post-Industrial Action SITREP