



Thousands of U.K. Doctors to Strike Over Cost-of-living Woes

Tens of thousands of doctors in England organizing a four-day strike could cause a quarter-million medical appointments to be postponed, National Health Service (NHS) official Dr. Layla McCay, policy director at the NHS Confederation, said Saturday.

In an interview with BBC Radio 4, McCay declared that the ramifications of the intended walk-out are poised to be greater than a three-day strike in March this year by junior doctors that resulted in the postponement of 175,000 appointments and procedures.



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“The impact is going to be so significant that this one is likely to have an impact on patient safety, and that is a huge concern for every health care leader,” McCay said.

“In terms of the disruption that we’re anticipating this time, we reckon it could be up to about a quarter of a million, so that is a huge amount of impact for patients up and down the country,” McCay highlighted, alluding to “health leaders across the whole system,” whom she claimed “are more concerned about this than they have been about any other strike.”

McCay pointed out that “they think that the impact is going to be so significant that this one is likely to have an impact on patient safety, and that is a huge concern for every healthcare leader.”

Warning that disruptions could last up to 10 or 11 days, with the strike spilling over from the Easter bank holiday to another weekend, McCay noted, “What we expect to see is really significantly diminished capacity within the health service with these junior doctors being out.”

Likewise, NHS England National Medical Director Stephen Powis cautioned of “unparalleled levels of disruption” due to the Easter week strike, which is scheduled to last at least four days.

In a statement, Powis said that the NHS is “very concerned about the potential severity of [the strike’s] impact on patients and services across the country.”

This round of strikes would immediately follow a four-day bank holiday weekend, which would be challenging and more extensive than ever before “with hospitals facing nearly 100 hours without up to half of the NHS medical workforce,” Powis added.

The planned Easter strike comes as the British Medical Association (BMA), the trade union for doctors and medical students in the U.K., insisted on a 35-percent pay increase. The BMA said that junior doctors have lost more than 26 percent in pay in real terms over the past 15 years. In a letter to Health Secretary Steve Barclay, the union elucidated that the strikes could be called off if the government gives a “credible” pay offer.

Mike Greenhalgh, a deputy chair of the BMA’s junior doctors’ committee, revealed to a U.K. news network that “it’s hard to negotiate when only one side is doing it, and we’re not getting anything back



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from the government.”

Elaborating, Greenhalgh stated, “We’re happy to meet at any time. We would still meet him [Barclay] over the bank holiday weekend before the industrial action next week. And if he was to bring a credible offer to us, it could still, even at this late stage, avert action.”

In response, the Department of Health and Social Care demanded that the BMA cancel the strike for any talks to happen.

For months, the U.K.’s NHS has been feeling the pinch from a shortage of healthcare workers, with more people leaving the profession owing to factors such as intense work pressures and soaring costs of living. With steep food and energy price increases, many are struggling to pay bills amid falling union wages.

Healthcare workers such as nurses, physical therapists, paramedics, and their assistants have participated in strikes demanding better working conditions.

Throughout the country, tens of thousands of ambulance workers have frequently organized demonstrations calling for higher wages amid escalating inflationary woes.

The British government has formally requested that the country’s military keep medical facilities in operation during the strikes.

Last week, passport office workers began a five-week strike, and security officers at Heathrow Airport walked off the job for 10 days. Strikes by train and bus drivers, postal workers, ambulance drivers, and nurses have created havoc for Britons.

The debilitating effects of inflation and escalating living costs have gone beyond the U.K.’s health sector. Recently, around 1,400 staff at London’s Heathrow airport decided to strike after their employer, Heathrow Airports Ltd (HAL), dismissed super-union Unite’s offer of a 10-percent pay rise and a £1,150 lump-sum payment in prior talks.

These staff include security officers at the airport’s Terminal Five as well as other guards who check cargo entering the airport.

In turn, British Airways, Heathrow’s biggest airline customer that has exclusive use of Terminal Five, announced that it had canceled five percent of flights and stopped selling tickets for remaining flights during the period of the strike.

“Heathrow Airport has thrown away the opportunity to avoid strikes,” said Unite regional coordinating officer Wayne King. “Unite went into today’s meeting looking for an offer our members could accept. Unfortunately it seems HAL went in with no intention of avoiding industrial action.”

While Kings admitted that consequences of the strike entailed “severe delays and disruption to passengers across the airport,” he slammed Heathrow for its “stubborn refusal to pay its workers fairly.”

Meanwhile, a survey for “La Tablée des chefs” in neighboring France revealed that 42 percent of France’s poorest have begun forgoing meals, while over half of respondents admitted that they have reduced meal portion sizes to tackle escalating food inflation exceeding 15 percent in the year to March.

Based on the survey results, a notable 79 percent of respondents limited their food purchases in some way due to increased prices, reports from the *La Depeche* newspaper indicated.



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Alluding to the findings, the director of the public opinion department at Ifop (French Institute of Public Opinion), Jérôme Fouquet, said, “They do not necessarily reduce the quantities of food at all meals but it comes back regularly.”

“There, it is an even more modest population that has exhausted all arbitrations and is forced to reduce commodities,” he admitted.

This survey came in wake of labor-union strikes and massive protests plaguing France over the past month after French President Emmanuel Macron’s government leveraged a constitutional loophole to pass controversial pension reforms through the National Assembly without a vote.

While at first glance it may seem that Macron’s unpopular decision to raise France’s retirement age from 62 to 64 years old was the root of the current widespread chaos, Macron’s move merely catalyzed the outburst of public anger that was bottling up after years of Covid-19 lockdowns imposed by his globalist government at the Élysée Palace. Adding salt to the wound was the Russo-Ukraine conflict and subsequent Western sanctions on Russia that have exacerbated France’s economic headaches.

In France, resentment against Macron has been piling up. The French president, who is an ally of Klaus Schwab of the elitist World Economic Forum (WEF) as well as a previous Rothschild banker, has been blasted for bulldozing his pension policy through Parliament instead of addressing the economic struggles of millions of French.



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