PROPOSED INDUSTRIAL ACTION – 30 NOVEMBER 2011

MESSAGE TO ALL STAFF

You will be aware that a number of Unions have balloted their members for strike action on 30 November 2011. The outcome of many of these ballots is now known, with members supporting strike action. The proposed strike action is against the National planned changes to Public Services Pension Schemes including the NHS Pension Scheme (NHSPS).

Industrial action will inevitably cause operational difficulties for NHS Grampian in the day to day running of its services and it is important that all staff are aware of how this may affect them. Adequate planning needs to take place in advance of the 30 November to ensure that wherever possible continuity of care for patients and service users is maintained, and also that quality and safety is not compromised.

The overriding focus of NHS Grampian is to maintain the highest standards of patient care and patient safety during any period of industrial action, whilst recognising the individual and collective democratic right of staff to take lawful industrial action.

In order to achieve these high standards, all managers will now discuss with all staff whether they intend to participate in the proposed action on 30 November 2011. This will allow managers to plan rotas and also to cover areas of need, within the legal boundaries set for such circumstances. The information from all departments and services will be collated across Sectors and Directorates to give a pan-Grampian picture and will enable decisions to be taken about whether planned, non-urgent activity needs to be postponed.

I would ask for your cooperation in the gathering of this information to ensure that as little disruption as possible is felt by our patients and service users. In addition, there may be occasions where staff who are not involved in industrial action may be asked to cover services which are essential to patient safety and care away from their normal place of work. I would ask staff to continue to be flexible in assisting NHS Grampian to deliver its responsibilities in these circumstances.

Staff who do not attend work on 30 November because of industrial action will not receive pay for that day. On this occasion, 30 November, disciplinary action will not be taken against any employee who decides to take industrial action or who refuses to cross a picket line, but the appropriate pay will be deducted.

Due to the proposed action, it is likely that decisions on requests for leave to be taken on 30 November will need to be reviewed against service requirements on the day. This may also mean that, in certain areas, requests for leave may be turned down in order to ensure adequate cover for services to patients and service users. All efforts will be made to ensure that leave
already granted for this date will be honoured except where there may be exceptional cases of patient or service need.

NHS Grampian has been informed that some schools will be closed as a result of industrial action on 30 November. Special leave will be considered in accordance with the NHS Grampian Special Leave Policy and will only be granted in exceptional and unforeseen circumstances, as sufficient notice has been given for the intended action by schools so that childcare and carer arrangements can be made in advance.

I would like to thank you all in anticipation of your cooperation and assistance. Further information updates will be issued in due course.

Pauline Strachan
Chief Operating Officer