

Frequently Asked Questions for AHCPs Members about Industrial Action and Work to Rule

1. What should I do during the industrial action?

A detailed union instruction has issued to members working in the Civil Service. It outlines the work to rule and non-cooperation actions you should follow as part of this industrial action. It is very important that you are familiar with the instruction and understand it.

This FAQ is considered a guide to help with general queries and will be updated as a live document over the coming weeks.

If a manager asks you to carry out any task or action covered by the withdrawal instruction, explain that you are following the union instruction and that the matter should be raised at national level.

2. What does this FAQ document cover?

This document covers questions asked to date regarding the work to rule industrial action commencing on Wednesday 30th September 2026. If necessary, a separate strike FAQ document will be issued in early October in advance of the proposed national strike day on Wednesday 14th October 2026.

3. Will there be engagement with Branches in advance?

Yes. Meetings are ongoing with Branches and anyone who cannot attend is asked to contact their AHCPs fulltime official with any queries they may have.

4. What does “work to rule” mean ?

For industrial action, ‘work to rule’ means adhering strictly to the agreed terms and conditions your employment. This means that you only do work that is appropriate to your grade.

You should check the links below in advance of the beginning of the industrial action on Wednesday 30th September, so that you know what tasks are appropriate for your grade. The below job descriptions are for Assistant Principal and Principal Officer. The functions you perform in your department can vary greatly to that of a union member of the same grade in a different department. Therefore, what you have stated in your PMDS role description should be referred to confirm what is appropriate for your role.

We advise all members to link in with their local branch or attend one of the information sessions if they still have clarifications regarding what they need to do.

To help you check this information we have included the following job descriptions. After you check the appropriate link.

[Assistant Principal Officer](#)

[Principal Officer](#)

5. Will specific guidance be issued for grades

No. You are not to perform additional duties or attend different offices to facilitate vacancies not filled. You are not to perform the work of a higher grade or volunteer for unscheduled additional attendance.

6. Can you give guidance on covering a vacancy in my team

You are not to cover the work or responsibilities of any vacancy during the work to rule. If a colleague is out sick, on annual leave, etc that work should not be covered. Think: One Person, One Job

7. Should I cover the work of a higher grade if they are on sick leave?

No. You should not be covering work that is not routinely your responsibility.

8. If work belongs to a colleague who is absent (sick leave, annual leave, etc.), should it remain undone and be reassigned when they return?

Yes, the work is to remain undone.

9. Can a member on probation refuse requests to cover work in another section?

Yes. If you are on probation and a union member you are protected by the 1990 Industrial Relations Act. Therefore, a member on probation can, and should, take part in the industrial action.

10. Where vacancies require staff to be borrowed from other teams to keep a building open, can that cover continue from the start of work to rule?

No. Vacancies cannot be covered while industrial action is ongoing.

11. What does adhere to your contractual hours mean

The Organisation of Working Time Act outlines what entitlements and obligations you have in relation to working hours. It still applies during the industrial action. All members are advised that they are entitled to regular breaks throughout the day. This needs to be strictly adhered to regardless of staff cover. All members should only work 7 hours per day. They should not be conducting work remotely after business has closed for the day.

12. I am on long term leave, what should I do?

If you are not at work during the work-to-rule period, you cannot participate. This includes maternity leave, long-term sick leave, parental leave, parents' leave, carers' leave, a career break or any other protected leave. If you are on shorter working year that has been approved long in advance and off during the action you do not participate.

13. I am on annual leave during the work to rule – what do I do?

As this is pre-approved annual leave you should maintain your leave and commence the work to rule when you return to work.

14. I receive an allowance or shift premium – what do I do during the work to rule?

If you receive an additional payment for working irregular hours which is outlined in your contract then you should continue to adhere to your contract, and the additional payment is unaffected.

15. What about staff travel? Should I continue attending customer clinics, audits, site visits, appointments, conferences, etc. during the work to rule?

Travel to and from your usual work base location should continue as normal. However, travel to and from meetings not in your work base location should not occur outside of your contracted hours during the work to rule (eg. conferences, seminars, inspections, audits, etc). All travel and work should take place during your contracted working hours.

16. Should staff attend a conference scheduled during the work to rule?

Yes, you can still attend. However, travel to and from the conference should occur during your working hours as it is not in your usual work base location.

EU Presidency

17. What guidance applies to Delegate Liaison Officers supporting the EU Presidency during the industrial action?

You should not attend any EU presidency related events outside of your contracted work hours.

18. I am currently working on the EU Presidency which involves a lot of out of hours work what should I do?

You are not to perform this additional work. While we recognise that the EU Presidency is an important event, for industrial action to be effective, it is essential that everyone participates and follows the work to rule instruction.

19. My question isn't answered here – how do I receive guidance about what to do from Wednesday 30th September?

Send in your question to info@ahcps.ie

20. I don't know who my local rep is – how do I find this out?

Send in your question to info@ahcps.ie with the subject line 'Who is my rep' and stating your department and workplace location.