

Agenda for change



Agenda for Change The Agenda for Change (AfC) is a new system for pay, conditions of service and career development forwarded to replace the General Whitley Council (GWC). It is a comprehensive and dynamic package designed to improve working lives and create the means for members to be recognised for role development and provide for a realistic and comprehensive career structure. Agenda for Change was implemented in the NHS, across the UK on 1 December 2004, with pay terms and conditions backdated to 1 October 2004.

The AfC allocates the staff to pay bands 1-8. Under this new policy, staff on pay bands will work a 37.5 hour week excluding meal breaks and will be eligible for overtime payments for work in excess of the standard 37.5 hours working week. Unsocial hours will be paid at a rate of time and a half and the 8 general public holidays double time. Within each pay band, there will be a number of pay points. Progression from point to point, up to the maximum in a pay band, will normally take place annually. At two defined points, called gateways in each pay band, progression will be based on demonstrating the agreed knowledge and skills appropriate to that part of the pay band.

However, there are widespread concerns about the class called "unsocial hours". For staff in the pay bands 1-7, "unsocial hours" implies any time worked before 7.00am or after 7.00pm from Monday to Friday, and any time worked on Saturdays, Sundays or Bank Holidays. For the staff in the pay band 8, any time before 7.00am or after 10.00pm from Monday to Friday, and any time worked before 9.00am or after 10.00pm on Saturdays and Sundays, and any time worked on Bank Holidays are classified as "unsocial hours".

Although this favours the patients and tend to reduce waiting time to a great

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extent, the staff members perceive it as a detrimental to their interests. This is because the AfC increases the working week from 35 hours to 37.5 hours- this is generally considered as a loss in income. As a result, a majority of the radiographers have rejected this proposal. It is claimed that overall earnings through advancement through the pay spine will give more money than can be achieved under the existing system.

Under this new system, emphasis is laid on job evaluation and basic pay. Jobs are to be evaluated using a Job Evaluation Scheme. Jobs will be given a weighting, which will determine where each job slots into the new pay bands. Job weight will be assessed using a number of criteria including knowledge and skills required to perform the job, responsibilities involved, physical, mental or emotional effort and any extra demands imposed by the working environment. This will certainly ensure better services for patients, as radiographers and other staff members will continuously strive for perfection under this new scheme.

Under AfC, qualified professional staff joining band 5 as new entrants will have accelerated progression through the first two points in six months steps, providing those responsible for the relevant professional standards in the organisation are satisfied with standard of practice. This 12-month period will be referred to as "preceptorship". The AfC will not replace the Pay Review Board, but it will tie the radiographers into a 3-year pay deal. April 2003, April 2004, and April 2005- all these radiographers will receive 3.225 percent pay deal.