

**HC/58/04**

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**To: All Health Branches**

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Dear Colleague

### **AGENDA FOR CHANGE UPDATE**

The Health Care Service Group Executive met on 27 July to discuss the latest developments in the Agenda for Change discussions. It was originally anticipated that at this meeting, the SGE would receive a copy of the NHS Shadow Executive's report of the joint review of the Early Implementer process and its outcomes, along with the final package of AFC pay and conditions proposals.

Also, in order to comply with UNISON's consultation timetable, the SGE needed to agree a motion setting out its recommendation on the Agenda for Change proposals for debate at the Special Conference on 7 October 2004.

It was reported that it had not yet been possible to complete the joint review and the anticipated documents were therefore unavailable. UNISON's lead negotiator gave a report of the latest developments in the Agenda for Change discussions, and the main points are set out in the attached Appendix.

Faced with the delay to the publication of the review, the Service Group Executive recognised that at this stage, it was not able to reach a decision on a recommendation to the special conference. The following interim position was therefore agreed in order to fulfil the requirements of the conference timetable:

### **SGE Motion(s) to Special Conference**

It was agreed to issue the following statement to branches:

"At the closing date for agreeing a formal motion to convene the Agenda for Change Special Conference, Service Group Executive members saw it as essential to have the necessary information to enable them to make a recommendation on the Agenda for Change proposals.

For this reason, and in order to comply with the conference timetable, the Service Group Executive agreed to make a decision on its recommendation nearer the time of conference.

The Service Group Executive therefore agreed to submit two alternative motions to reflect this position and to enable branches, regional health committees and sectors to submit appropriate amendments within the defined timetable for the special conference.

Conference resolves to recommend (acceptance) (rejection) of the Agenda for Change proposals.”

Therefore, for the purposes of the Special Conference, the two alternative SGE motions are as follows:

1. Conference resolves to recommend **acceptance** of the Agenda for Change proposals.
2. Conference resolves to recommend **rejection** of the Agenda for Change proposals.

The timetable for the Special Conference was outlined in the General Secretary’s letter to branches dated 12 July 2004 and is as follows:

Circulation of motion (above)	4 August
Deadline for submission of amendments	3 September
Publication of Special Conference Agenda	16 September
Special Conference	7 October

The Service Group Executive will be meeting again on 8 September and is intending to agree a recommendation on Agenda for Change in the light of sufficient information being available on which to base its decision. This will lead to one of the motions being withdrawn, although the special conference will provide for motions to accept or reject to be debated.

### **SOC ADVICE**

Advice from the Standing Orders Committee is set out in HC/59/04 (enclosed with this mailing) which provides clear guidance on how the motions may be amended using the attached form H6.

### **BRANCH CONSULTATION**

A review and analysis of outcomes in the Early Implementer sites is in preparation. This will be forwarded to branches. Officers from UNISON’s national office will be visiting regional health committees over the late summer to explore the review in full and to discuss its implications.

Yours sincerely

**PAUL MARKS**  
**NATIONAL SECRETARY (AGENDA FOR CHANGE)**

**SUMMARY OF MAIN POINTS OF REPORT  
TO THE SERVICE GROUP EXECUTIVE ON 27<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2004**

1. The sample of individual records of assimilation to Agenda for change in the Early Implementers that have been analysed has now increased from 9,000 to 16,000.
2. The analysis is showing that around 15% of those assimilated are requiring pay protection. The most common reason for the protection is a loss of unsocial hours payments. This is adversely affecting the lower paid and those who work at weekends or on nights. However, about 50% of those requiring protection will move out within 2 years due to incremental progression and annual pay increases.
3. Additionally, the management side have discovered that their estimates of the cost of unsocial hours payments have been grossly exceeded. As unsocial hours % payments are in bands, there is a built-in incentive to work hours that just get you into a higher band. There is some evidence that staff and first line managers have traded hours to maximise unsocial hours payments. The management side therefore wants the review to focus on reducing the costs of unsocial hours pay.
4. The review of the Early Implementers has therefore meant that we have needed to revisit the unsocial hours arrangements.
5. So far the management side have made several propositions:
  - To narrow the bands so that 1 hour = 1% addition to pay up to 25 hours = 25%
  - Payments would be based retrospectively on the previous rolling 12 weeks unsocial hours worked
  - Bank holidays would be 'incentivised' by a lump-sum payment of an additional £30
  - Band 1 to be increased by one increment (approx. £300)
  - Staff requiring protection could assimilate to a higher incremental point and then stay on that point until their correct rate of pay caught up
  - There is some indication that the management side may increase the 25% cap on unsocial hours payments.

6. Clearly this is their position and we have yet to respond. However, it raises questions as to how quickly any change could be introduced, how and over what period they would be tested and what impact this would have on the timetable given that the Review was supposed to be completed by 26<sup>th</sup> July.
7. Other issues within the review have been easier to deal with. The Job Evaluation Working Party (JEWP) has successfully revised the Job Evaluation Handbook. The Revised Version is now available. Similarly Version 7 of the Knowledge & Skills Framework Handbook is also available.
8. The High Cost Area Supplement has been a major concern to the two London Early Implementers. However, it has emerged that Guys & St. Thomas's were paying £240 p.a. extra to Whitley on London Weighting. South West London had problems over protection due to HCA's and also because their Trust straddled two zones – inner and outer HCA's.
9. The HCA's issue can be dealt with by allowing assimilation to a higher pay point. South West London will be allowed to agree a local single HCA for the whole Trust. We will meet with both Trusts to discuss this.
10. We have not been able to review the working of the new on-call arrangements as no Early Implementer Trust has yet fully introduced the new system. We will therefore allow Trusts to pay either Whitley, local on-call or AFC on-call in the interim.
11. On Recruitment & Retention Premia (RRP) there are as yet few local agreements although we are in the process of agreeing some national RRP's e.g. Dental Hygienists.
12. The new Terms & Conditions Handbook that will include all the sectors being moved over from the General Whitley Council will be available within the next two weeks.

**Note:** Having discussed this report, the SGE decided to stick with the existing timetable for consulting members.