

Q1. What is happening in the Early Implementer sites?

A. Most Early Implementer sites have transferred the majority of their staff on to the new Agenda for Change pay bands. It has taken the Early Implementers longer than originally anticipated but the really important thing is to get the pay of NHS staff right rather than to be overly prescriptive about the implementation timetable. Lots of good practice has emerged from the Early Implementers and been published on the Modernisation Agency website at www.modern.nhs.uk/agendaforchange.

Q2. What has been learnt from Early Implementer Sites and will there be changes to Agenda for Change as a result?

Staff and management representatives are currently in the process of reviewing the experience in Early Implementer sites in partnership. The review should be completed by the end of July and the results published soon after. The lessons that they generate will inform national roll-out.

Q3. How can the NHS prepare for national roll-out?

A. Staff and management representatives agreed to the publication of a Joint Statement on 20 April. This can be found on the Modernisation Agency website and some of the key messages are:

- Agenda for Change must be implemented in partnership by staff and management representatives working together
- Staff should have up to date job descriptions to support the job evaluation process
- Employers should communicate to staff what is going on, how they will be affected and how they can become involved in the process

Q4. What is the timetable for roll-out?

A. National roll out was scheduled for 1 October 2004. It has now been moved back to 1 December 2004 with the collective agreement of all the NHS trade unions involved in the negotiations on Agenda for Change. However, as before, all Agenda for Change pay increases will be backdated to 1 October 2004. The change to the implementation date is sensible because it:

- Gives employers an extra two months to prepare for implementation and to accommodate the outcomes of the review process.
- Gives those trade unions who are balloting again time to complete their democratic process.
- Means that the members of those trade union organisations that have already approved Agenda for Change are not disadvantaged.
- Will not diminish in any way the urgency of the task of preparation for national roll-out and the shared commitment by all parties to ensure that there is no further slippage.

Q5. Why am I unable to find a Job Evaluation profile for my post?

A. Approximately 250 profiles have been agreed by staff and management representatives working in partnership. The process of developing profiles in the lead up to national roll-out is continuing. At the end of the day some local job evaluations will be necessary because jobs of a specialist nature will not necessarily be covered by a nationally agreed generic profile. In the meantime you should keep an eye on the Department of Health Agenda for Change website, www.dh.gov.uk/PolicyAndGuidance/HumanResourcesAndTraining/ModernisingPay/AgendaForChange, where all newly agreed job profiles are published.

Q6. How will you judge whether Agenda for Change has been a success in the EI sites?

A. The Agenda for Change success criteria have been published in Annex E of the 'Proposed Agreement' which can be found on the Department of Health website. The criteria include the following:

- More patients being treated more quickly
- Higher quality care
- Better pay
- Better career development
- Implementation within available funding

Q7. The Society of Radiographers voted against Agenda for Change last year. Is there any good news for radiographers ahead of their second ballot?

A. At one of the Early Implementer sites most radiographers have been matched against national job evaluation profiles and moved on to the Agenda for Change pay bands. The good news is that all these staff are gaining financially from the new pay system and that none of them has required pay protection.

Radiographers still have some concern about their contracted hours being increased from 35 to 37.5 per week. However this change is being phased in over seven years. This should allow sufficient time for both radiographers and their managers to carefully consider their roles and the most appropriate balance between different parts of their work.

Q8. I work in the Administrative and Clerical group and it seems to me that the Job Evaluation Scheme is slanted to clinical posts?

A. This has been discussed at a national level and NHS staff and management representatives have found no evidence of clinical bias in the job evaluation scheme. There is a possibility however that bias might creep into the way in which the scheme is applied by individual staff and managers on the ground. To ensure this does not happen the Agenda for Change negotiators have recently issued some additional guidance to the service.

Q9. The unsocial hours payments are acting as a disincentive for some staff to work nights and weekends. What are you going to do about this?

Staff representatives are sitting down with NHS employer representatives and Department of Health officials to formally review the practical experience of all the Early Implementer sites and to consider whether any aspects of the new pay system need to be modified ahead of national roll-out. Unsocial hours pay is one area currently under review.

For ambulance staff the unsocial hours payment arrangements are definitely good news. Under the current Whitley pay system ambulance staff do not receive any additional recognition for the out-of-hours component of their work. Agenda for Change will harmonise out-of-hours payments for all NHS staff groups, therefore providing significant gains for most ambulance staff.

Q10. Recent guidance on job descriptions advised that they should be jointly agreed. How might this best be achieved?

Where the job description is already up to date and relevant to the post, agreement should be manageable within a reasonable time scale. However, if updates to job descriptions are necessary, then it would be sensible to ensure that management and staff deal with this as soon as possible but in a way that gives adequate time to get this right.

Q11. Where can I obtain more information?

A. Information about the Agenda for Change terms and conditions of employment can be found on the DH website at:

www.dh.gov.uk/PolicyAndGuidance/HumanResourcesAndTraining/ModernisingPay/AgendaForChange

Information about the learning that is being generated by the Early Implementer sites can be found on the Modernisation Agency website at:

www.modern.nhs.uk/agendaforchange.