RESOLVING SIGNIFICANT LOCAL DIFFICULTIES ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AGENDA FOR CHANGE DURING NATIONAL ROLLOUT

AGREED PROTOCOL FOR SHAs TO ACCESS AN EXTERNAL SUPPORT TEAM WHERE APPROPRIATE

1. The Department for Health, NHS Employers and the national staff organisations are working together to promote progress on achieving a successful national roll out of Agenda for Change between December 2004 and September 2005

2. There has also been substantial planning work locally (led by SHAs) to ensure the best possible implementation is achieved in all Trusts and PCT's

3. However, it is recognised that significant difficulties could emerge locally in some places after 1 December. Normally these will be tackled and resolved by SHAs and Trusts working in partnership with the staff organisations and possibly with third parties such as ACAS or the TUC Partnership Institute. Where third parties are involved local partners should inform the Executive

4. There could be exceptional circumstances where an external support team would be useful to help broker solutions if there was an apparent failure to agree locally on the best way forward

5. In these exceptional circumstances, The Department of Health, NHS Employers, NHS Staff Council and the National Staff Organisations would facilitate the establishment of a joint support team. The role of the team would be to provide an objective assessment of the further action that could be taken locally and to advise the SHA accordingly

6. The composition of the external support team would be flexible in order to address the particular local problem but it would consist of both management and staff side nominees and possibly representatives of organisations such as ACAs and the TUC Partnership Institute

7. These arrangements will start from January 2005

8. The decision to seek help from an external support team would normally be made by the relevant SHA (after considering advice from employers and the staff organisation locally). In exceptional circumstances the staff organisation could request the activation of an external support team