



Quarry House
Quarry Hill
Leeds LS2 7UE
Tel. 0113 254 5000

The attached joint statement is issued by the Shadow Executive of the Shadow NHS Staff Council on 11 June 2004.

Signed

Mike Evershed
Acting Head of Pay Branch
(Department of Health)

Paul Marks
Staff Representatives Secretary
(On behalf of NHS Unions)

Joint Statement

The joint statement on preparation for the national rollout of Agenda for Change, issued in April, said that further joint guidance would be provided on the sequence of events leading up to national roll out, taking account of the size of the task and the further ballots planned by some of the NHS Trades Unions.

The Shadow Executive of the NHS Staff Council has discussed how the timetable can best be managed in order to avoid uncertainty, giving the NHS the time it needs to prepare whilst also respecting the democratic processes of the NHS Trades unions. The Shadow Executive are agreed that the key milestones are:

- (i) Completion of the review of experience in the early implementer sites, leading to publication of any agreed clarifications, guidance or amendments during July;
- (ii) Confirmation of the collective position of the NHS Trades union partners on national roll-out before the end of November.

The Shadow Executive has decided that provided these key dates can be met, the operational date for moving the first staff onto the new terms and conditions outside the early implementer sites will be 1 December, with an effective date for pay and conditions of 1 October.

The Shadow Executive recognises that this decision to move the operational date to 1 December is difficult for those organisations who have already approved an operational date of 1 October. It therefore stresses its commitment to ensure that there is no further slippage and that all those staff who would otherwise have assimilated before December can do so in December. It notes that if this can be achieved, the effect of the delay on the overall assimilation process will be limited.

Completion of the review

To help ensure that the effect of the delay on the overall assimilation process is limited, the review will run to the original timetable and the results will be published in July.

The partners are agreed that the main issues which the review has identified which need resolution are an apparent misapplication of the job evaluation scheme which has led to some non clinical jobs being matched or evaluated lower than expected and the rules on out of hours payments which at present appear to be creating a higher level of staff needing protection than was initially envisaged.

Good progress has already been made on the first of these issues and subject to monitoring of the results of improved guidance on application of the job evaluation scheme, the Shadow Executive is confident that the problem can be resolved. The initial discussions on out of hours payments also suggest that appropriate

amendments can be identified which will significantly reduce the numbers of staff needing pay protection.

The review is also taking evidence on the financial impact of the new system in the early implementer sites. Although this part of the review is at an early stage, all parties are agreed that the review and implementation of Agenda for Change will be conducted in a manner which keeps within the available funding envelope and which is informed by cost impact assessments from the early implementer and pilot sites.

Confirmation of the collective position of the NHS Trades unions

The Trade Union partners to the review have confirmed that they will be able to deliver a collective position before the end of November.

Meeting the timetable

On the analysis set out above, the Shadow Executive is confident that the milestones for the review and the confirmation of a collective position by the trades unions can be met.

The management partners have made clear however that if the review is not completed in time to communicate the final package to the service in July, or there is no collective agreement to national roll-out by 30 November, the effective and/or operational dates for implementation will be reviewed.

Conclusion

The Shadow Executive believes that the decision to change the operational date for implementation to 1 December represents the best way forward for the NHS on the basis that -:

- While no major problems which cannot be dealt with have emerged in Early Implementer sites, it gives the NHS an extra two months to accommodate the outcomes of the review process.
- This gives those Trade Unions who are balloting again time to complete their democratic process.
- It also means that the members of those Trade Union organisations that have already approved Agenda for Change are not disadvantaged.

This decision does not however diminish in any way the urgency of the task of preparation. The Shadow Executive stresses its commitment to ensure that there is no further slippage.