Pay Modernisation (Agenda for Change) Q&A October 2003

Job Evaluation

Q. When will a full list of nationally agreed job profiles be available to all NHS organisations?

A. Nationally agreed profiles go through a rigorous process of scrutiny by staff and management representatives working in partnership to approve each and every profile. Approximately 160 nationally agreed profiles have been developed to date and published on the DoH website at www.doh.gov.uk/agendaforchange and a significant number of profiles are in the pipeline and likely to be signed off in the near future. The process of developing profiles will continue in the lead up to national roll-out planned for October 2004 to maximise the number of staff covered by national profiles and reduce the need for time consuming local job evaluations.

Q. When will NHS organisations receive job evaluation training?

A. Staff and managers in the Early Implementers have already been trained in job evaluation. As training materials, case studies and examples of how the Early Implementers have been working become available, these will be posted on the Modernisation Agency's website. They will also be provided in master copy form to the Agenda for Change leads in each strategic health community. Strategic Health Authorities will nominate an agreed number of people who will be eligible for the "Train the Trainer in Implementation" programmes. This will be done in partnership with and will include Staff Representatives.

[In Wales we will also be training trainers and cascading this throughout employers in January, February and March 2004]

Q. Will there be a National Appeals Panel to deal with unresolved local disputes over job evaluation?

A. There is no right of appeal beyond the review by a second job evaluation panel. The postholder may pursue a grievance on the grounds that the process has been misapplied, but not against the outcome of the grading decision itself.

Q. Is there any possibility that Agenda for Change will repeat the problems associated with nurses’ clinical grading?

A. We are confident that it will not. Under Agenda for Change basic pay is determined by using the new NHS job evaluation scheme which is designed to ensure equal pay for work of equal value. Job evaluation allocates staff to the new paybands by measuring the knowledge, skills,
effort and responsibilities that staff require in post. The scheme has been developed and tested in partnership between the Health Departments, trades unions and NHS employer representatives. Nationally agreed job profiles will provide staff with greater certainty about how they will fit into the new pay structure and reduce the need for local evaluations. A large number of job profiles have already been developed and agreed in partnership with the Unions and several more will be agreed in time for national roll-out.

Knowledge and Skills Framework

Q. When will NHS organisations receive Knowledge and Skills Framework / development review training?

A. Staff and managers in the Early Implementers have already been trained in using the KSF. Nationally delivered training in implementing the KSF will be cascaded to strategic health community nominees, in partnership with the trades unions.

[Similar arrangements will take place in Wales following the job matching training]

Q. Will the Knowledge and Skills Framework guarantee all NHS staff a development review?

A. The KSF and the development review process have been developed in partnership between NHS staff and NHS employer representatives. The development review process will enable all staff and managers to identify the knowledge and skills they need to apply in post and help guide the development of individual staff.

[It is expected that all staff will have an annual development review]

Q. Aren’t the Knowledge and Skills Framework ‘gateways’ a barrier to pay progression?

A. No – the ‘gateways’ are not designed to act as a barrier to pay progression. They are designed to help ensure a stronger focus on developing the essential knowledge and skills needed for NHS jobs.

In most years, pay progression will take the form of an annual increase in pay from one pay point in a pay band to the next unless there are serious concerns about how the individual is undertaking the current role. At two points in each pay band – known as ‘gateways’ – access to higher pay points will depend on staff demonstrating the application of knowledge and skills to a defined level.

The Foundation Gateway is designed to provide assurance that staff are demonstrating the appropriate knowledge and skills that need to be
applied from the outset in a particular post coupled with planned development in the first 12 months of a post.

The Second Gateway, which is at a higher pay point, is designed to provide assurance that staff are demonstrating the knowledge and skills that need to be applied by someone fully developed in a post. Having gone through the second gateway, individuals would then progress to the top of the pay band provided they continue to apply the knowledge and skills contained in the KSF outline for the post.

**Funding**

Q. Will NHS organisations receive full funding to implement Agenda for Change?

A. Allocations to Primary Care Trusts for the next three years already include full funding for Agenda for Change. We are ensuring that NHS Local Delivery Plans properly reflect the investment needed. PCTs and local NHS employers will be able to assess the detailed financial requirements for each Trust, with the help of central guidance and support.

[Funding will be allocated in a similar way through LHBs in Wales]

Q. Will any staff lose out financially under Agenda for Change?

A. There need be no “losers” under Agenda for Change. There are a number of mechanisms built into the agreement to help prevent staff from losing out financially, both in the short and longer term.

For the majority of staff, levels of pay will be higher under ‘Agenda for Change’ than before. In some cases, where levels of pay would otherwise be lower, staff will receive a recruitment and retention premium to reflect labour market conditions. In the minority of cases where pay protection is needed, current levels of pay will be protected until October 2009 for staff in early implementer sites and April 2011 for staff in national roll-out.

As soon as possible during the period of protection, there will be a review of the skills, knowledge and role of staff subject to protection to establish whether they could be reassigned to a higher weighted job or offered development and training to fit them for a higher weighted job.

**Learning from Early Implementers**

Q. How will lessons from Early Implementer sites be incorporated into Agenda for Change?
A. Agenda for Change is founded on the principle of partnership working by NHS staff and NHS employer representatives. The learning being gathered from the Early Implementation phase will be used in two main ways. First, the Modernisation Agency and best practice facilitators will support strategic health communities in spreading learning about how to implement Agenda for Change effectively and to secure the maximum benefits for NHS patients and NHS staff.

Second, the evidence from Early Implementer sites will be used on a partnership basis to assess performance against the success criteria in Annex E of the ‘Agenda for Change’ agreement. If there is evidence in certain areas that the expected benefits are not starting to emerge, or if the risks identified are arising to a significant degree, the appropriate action will be discussed in the new NHS Staff Council. This may, for instance, include new guidance or variations to particular systems or rules within the new pay system. The Agenda for Change documentation will be revised prior to national roll-out and published on the Modernisation Agency website at www.modern.nhs.uk/agendaforchange.

Q. When will all the Agenda for Change documentation (eg. the Terms and Conditions of Service Handbook) be made available to NHS organisations?

A. Once the learning from the Early Implementers has been taken into account and the necessary amendments made, the documentation will be made available to the NHS ahead of national roll-out.

Second Ballots

Q. What will happen if either Amicus or Unison members reject Agenda for Change in their second ballots next year?

A. We welcome the high level of support indicated by the ballot results to date. Partnership working will help to ensure that any difficulties that arise before national roll-out are identified as early as possible and resolved by joint working.

Local Contracts

Q. How will staff on local contracts be affected?

A. Staff on national contracts, and other conditions of service that incorporate national agreements on pay and conditions of service, will transfer to the new system automatically. Staff on local contracts will be offered the new terms, but may retain their existing contract if they wish to do so.

[But they can’t ‘pick and choose’ bits of each]
**Timetable**

Q. Will Early Implementer sites be able to achieve the deadline for implementation?

A. Early implementer sites are continuing to aim to ensure as far as possible that staff move to the new pay system by December. However, the most important thing is to get implementation right and to learn lessons for national roll-out, rather than force things through too quickly. Both at a national and local level a lot of hard work is going on to ensure that the system is implemented in a way that provides maximum benefits for NHS patients and NHS staff.