

**November 2015**

**NHS pay and 7 Day services – a quick briefing for Agenda for Change staff**

* The ‘7 day NHS’ featured heavily in David Cameron’s manifesto commitments earlier this year.  Since the election both he and Jeremy Hunt have restated these promises to extend services, adding in a strong consumer choice element (extending hours based on what patients want rather than just where evidence shows this could help to reduce the number of deaths).  They have not committed extra money to fund these  promises and in any case do not know how much more the extended services would cost
* The Prime Minister’s challenge fund was set up so that some GPs can extend their opening hours
* 13 Early Adapter sites in the NHS in England are testing the introduction of 10 clinical standards for round the clock services – these sites will hopefully show how much more money these extended services may cost
* Both of these projects will take a long time to bed in and produce useable information about staffing and costs
* The Government asked both of the NHS Pay Review Bodies (Doctors and Dentists and Agenda for Change staff) to look at the payment systems for staff who work out of hours, and see if these arrangements posed ‘contractual barriers’ to the delivery of 7 day services – here’s what we said to them:
  + Need to de-conflate evidence based change from the consumer-choice model
  + NHS is only one part of a bigger system – for change to be lasting, it needs to include care too
  + This is not new! Huge numbers of NHS staff already work around the clock
  + Without the extra payments staff would simply not work out of hours
  + Staff see this as a cynical attempt to cut earnings – to deliver the political 7 day services promises without being prepared to pay for it
  + Staff have become increasingly reliant on unsocial hours earnings due to pay cuts and cutting payments would result in industrial unrest
  + More significant blocks to extending 7 day services are funds and workforce supply issues
* And here’s what the PRB said in their recommendations this July:
  + No evidence for wholesale change of the AfC system
    - Cutting premia for staff already working USH would have an impact on services and shifts would not be filled
    - Some ‘anomolies’ exist but should be considered as part of the wider AfC package
  + Extending services will require more resources
  + There is a lack of information about costs, benefits and productivity
  + Workforce supply is a bigger block than AfC
  + Role of the wider public sector needs to be considered
* In July, the Secretary of State for Health accepted this report from the PRB for Agenda for Change staff.  This means that there are no current plans from Government to impose cuts to unsocial hours payments.  However, we shouldn’t be complacent – pressure on NHS budgets means that employers will continue to push us to reduce the cost of out of hours services and some Trusts may even try to introduce local agreements outside of Agenda for Change.
* UNISON continues to defend members’ pay and has made it very clear that members will not tolerate their earnings being raided to pay for political commitments on 7 day services.

*Ends*