

AGENDA FOR CHANGE

STAFF HANDBOOK

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GENERAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT

These are the current Agenda for Change terms and conditions of employment in operation for staff employed by the Northern Ireland Medical and Dental Training Agency.

The terms and conditions of employment operate except where a contract of employment dictates otherwise. Full policies and procedures can be located at F:\GENERAL\Staff Handbook. This handbook should be used in conjunction with the AfC Terms and Conditions handbook.

1. HOURS OF WORK

The hours of work for administrative and clerical staff are 37.5 hours per week excluding meal breaks, worked between the following hours:

- Monday - Thursday: 8.45am to 5pm (45 minute lunch break)
- Friday: 8.30am to 4.30pm (30 minute lunch break)

Staff are also entitled to a 15 minute tea-break in the morning which should be taken between 10.00am and 11.00am. This time cannot be accrued. Lunch breaks must be taken between the hours of 12pm and 2pm and each employee must take a minimum of 30 minutes. The Agency remains open all day therefore staff in each office must operate a rota system to cover breaks. All staff must be at their desks at core times.

Senior Managers are expected to work such hours as are necessary for the full performance of their duties including such cover as may be necessary to sustain the management of the Agency in the absence of colleagues.

2. DRESS CODE

Employees of the Agency, are expected to be dressed appropriately at all times on the Agency's premises and whilst engaged on the business of the Agency. The code of dress is smart. The Agency does operate a dress-down day on the last Friday of each month in aid of charity.

3. SMOKING POLICY

The Agency operates a no-smoking policy within the building. Smoke breaks are not permitted at any time, therefore anyone wishing to smoke must do so on their tea break and/or lunch break.

4. TELEPHONE & INTERNET USAGE

The use of the telephone and the internet is restricted to usage for the Agency's business. The Agency recognises that there will be instances where employees have to make urgent personal calls, however excessive use of the telephone for personal business is considered to be a disciplinary offence.

5. REMUNERATION

5.1 SALARY

All salaries are paid via BACS on the third last banking day of each month into an account nominated to the Human Resources Department. Payslips will be issued on pay day and will be fully itemised. The close down for the payroll is the 10th of each month, therefore any changes which need to be made to the payroll should be advised to the Human Resources Officer before this deadline.

If you have any queries in relation to your salary you should bring this to the attention of the Human Resources Officer on 028 9040 0024 or ext 247.

5.2 INCREMENTS & INFLATIONARY RISES

Each pay band will contain a number of spinal points, which employees will progress through each year until they reach the top, subject to the necessary reviews at KSF gateways. Incremental dates will be determined as follows:

- For newly appointed or promoted staff the incremental date will be the date they take up their post.
- For existing staff on spot salaries and those who were on the maximum of their Whitley scale, the incremental date will be the anniversary of the effective date of assimilation, i.e. 1 October.

Increment dates may also change for employees who are temporarily moving onto a higher pay band depending on the number of points of an increase awarded. See section 10 of this handbook in regard to acting up for further details.

An inflationary rise will also be applied on 1 April each year.

5.3 OVERTIME PAYMENTS

All staff in pay bands 1 to 7 will be eligible for overtime payments. There is a single harmonised rate of time-and-a-half for all overtime, with the exception of work on general public holidays, which will be paid at double time. Senior staff paid on bands 8 or 9 will not be entitled to overtime payments. Part-time employees will receive payments for the additional hours at single time rates until their hours exceed the standard hours of 37.5 hours a week.

Staff may request to take time off in lieu as an alternative to payment; however this will be at single time rate and this must be taken within 3 months of working the overtime. If this is not possible it must be paid at the overtime rate.

All claims should be submitted to the HR Officer for payment on the Overtime Claim Form (see appendices) before the 10th of the month.

5.4 MILEAGE ALLOWANCES

The standard mileage allowances shall be paid to employees who use their own vehicle for official journeys. Employees can also claim for miles travelled to work for overtime. Allowances for cars are as follows:

| Engine capacity: | Up to 1,000cc | 1001 to 1500cc | Over 1500cc |
|-----------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Up to 3,500 miles: | 37.4p per mile | 47.3p per mile | 58.3p per mile |
| Thereafter: | 17.8p per mile | 20.1p per mile | 22.6p per mile |
| Passenger allowances: | 5p per mile | | |

Employees who are required to attend a location other than the Agency's offices, will be entitled to claim the standard mileage allowance limited to the distance that would have been travelled in excess of their normal journey to work. Employees who use public transport can also make a claim based on the public transport rate of 24p per mile.

Note that any profit made on mileage claims will affect your tax code for the following tax year. Employees will be advised of this at the end of each tax year.

6. SUPERANNUATION

All employees are entitled to become members of the NHS Pension Scheme. Deductions will be made from your salary at the appropriate rate depending on your grade as per the following:

| Annual Pensionable Pay (Full Time Equivalent) | Contribution |
|--|--------------|
| Up to £19,682 | 5% |
| £19,683 - £65,002 (Linked to AfC Pay Point 17) | 6.5% |
| £65,003 - £99,999 (Linked to AfC Pay Point 49) | 7.5% |
| £100,000 plus | 8.5% |

7. TRADE UNION MEMBERSHIP

Employees of the Agency can choose to join the trade union - NIPSA, via their website, www.nipsa.org.uk. Contributions will be deducted from your salary each month proportionate to your earnings. More information can be found on the NIPSA website.

8. EYE TEST

The provision of eye and eyesight tests must be funded by the employer. The maximum that the Agency will contribute towards this is £20. Employees should pay for this test and claim the cost back using an expenses form.

Users needing special corrective appliances for display screen work must also be funded by the employer. An employers' liability for costs is restricted to payment of the cost of a basic appliance, therefore if users wish to choose more costly appliances the employer is not obliged to pay for these. Employers may either provide a basic appliance, or may opt to contribute a portion of the total cost of a luxury appliance equal to the cost of the basic appliance. The Agency will pay up to £47 towards this cost.

9. LEAVE

9.1 ANNUAL LEAVE

The amount of annual leave varies according to your length of service as follows:

- On appointment - 27 days
- After 5 years service - 29 days
- After 10 years service - 33 days

The Agency also observes 10 bank or public holidays. These are as follows:

- New Years Day
- St Patricks Day
- Easter Monday
- Easter Tuesday
- May Day
- 2nd May Bank Holiday
- 12 July
- August Bank Holiday
- Christmas Day
- Boxing Day

Part-time employees will be entitled to paid bank holidays no less than pro-rata to the number of bank holidays for a full-time worker, rounded up to the nearest half day. Any additional entitlement above and beyond the days that they are scheduled to work will be added to their annual leave entitlement.

Employees of the Agency have also agreed to withhold 6 days from their annual leave to close on Good Friday, 13 July and 4 additional days over Christmas. These days will be automatically deducted each year from your leave card (only those days that part-time employees are scheduled to work will be deducted each year).

Applications for leave should be submitted to your Team Leader or Senior Manager on your leave card for consideration and approval and Team Leaders will forward them to Human Resources for recording. Annual leave must be taken with due regard to the exigencies of the service. At the end of each year the H R Manager shall collect all leave cards and issue a new one, which will stipulate the amount of annual entitlement and how the figure is reached.

9.1.1 Stipulations regarding the use of annual leave:

- All leave should be taken within the leave year except in exceptional circumstances.
- Subject to the exigencies of the service it may be possible to carry over up to 5 days annual leave to the following year. This must be agreed in advance and signed off by the HR Manager.
- It is expected that leave should be used wisely so as to provide for situations, which may arise towards the end of the year, which will necessitate taking leave.
- Arrangements for summer months should be made as early in the year as possible.
- It is the Agency's policy to grant unpaid leave only in exceptional purposes when all annual leave has been used.

9.2 SICK LEAVE

It is recognised that absence, due to sickness, is sometimes necessary and as such will be treated sympathetically. However, excessive absenteeism and particularly abuse of the system cannot be tolerated and cases of frequent and long-term absence will be reviewed on an ongoing basis. It may, after due consideration lead to termination of the employee's contract with the Agency.

9.2.1 Notification Procedure

All employees must follow the notification procedure, which is as follows:

- As soon the employee knows that they will be unable to attend work they must contact their Team Leader, Senior Manager or Human Resources Department. Employees should take note of the contact telephone numbers of the key people. Failure to do so by 10.00 am may result in pay being stopped or suspended.
- Provide a clear reason for absence and an anticipated return to work date. This information will remain confidential. If the relevant information is not received pay will be stopped or suspended until it is obtained.
- Between 1 and 3 days certification is not normally required.
- From day 4 there is a requirement to provide the H R Manager with a self-certificate, which may be obtained from a doctor's surgery or DHSS office.
- A medical certificate must be supplied after 5 consecutive working days absence to authorise payment of Statutory Sick Pay (SSP). If an employee has failed to return to

work following expiration of the first medical certificate, another one must be produced immediately to provide continuous cover.

- When a return to work date is known the employee shall notify their Team Leader or Senior Manager as soon as possible giving as much notice as possible.

The responsibility for submitting medical certificates on time and ensuring that they are received without delay rests with the employee. Failure to ensure submission may result in sickness payments being stopped or suspended.

It is also the responsibility of the employee to maintain regular contact with their Team Leader or the HR Department to keep the Agency fully informed of progress and the likely timescale for return to work.

9.2.2 Return to Work Interview and Trigger Points

Following each absence from work due to sickness, employees are required to complete the absence notification form (see appendices) that will have been emailed to them. Employees should give this to their Team Leader / Senior Manager, at which time a return to work interview will be conducted. At this stage the Team Leader will look at the employee's overall absence record and will discuss it with them. **The Agency's trigger point for disciplinary proceedings is on the third occasion of absence in a rolling 12 months.** This interview remains informal until the amount of absence gives cause for serious concern about the employee's welfare and the ability to do their work.

The informal interview is conducted in private. The intention of this interview is to identify if there are any ongoing difficulties, which may result in further absence and to identify if there are any work situations or conditions, which may be contributing to the absence. The return to work interview is not designed to initiate the disciplinary procedure.

9.2.3 Long Term Absence

The Agency views sickness absence exceeding 4 weeks as falling into the category of long-term absenteeism. As soon as this period has lapsed the employee will be contacted by the Human Resources Department in regard to setting up an appointment with the Occupational Health Service. This purpose of this appointment is to determine:

- The prospects of a likely return to the previous employment with or without adjustments
- The time scale for return or if the employee should return on a phased basis
- If a change of duties or hours for a temporary period is required

- If redeployment should be considered
- Whether an incapacity pension or injury benefit application should be considered

If an employee agrees to seek early retirement on the grounds of incapacity this will require processing well in advance so that the first payment of benefit can coincide with the day after their employment with the Agency ceases.

If, after 12 weeks of absence the Agency has not been advised of a return to work date, the employee may be required to visit the Agency or if the employee prefers a Senior Manager will conduct a home visit to them.

9.2.4 Statutory Sick Pay

Statutory sick pay (SSP) is a prescribed minimum level of pay which employers are obliged by statute to pay to employees who are absent from work due to personal sickness for a maximum period of 28 weeks at a time.

9.2.5 Occupational Sick Pay

If you are absent from work due to sickness you may be entitled to Occupational Sick Pay based on your length of service. Sick pay allowance and SSP should not exceed your normal salary and should be adjusted accordingly. The scale of allowances is recorded below:

| | Full pay (months) | Half pay (months) |
|--|-------------------|-------------------|
| During the first year of service | 1 | 2 |
| During the second year of service | 2 | 2 |
| During the third year of service | 4 | 4 |
| During the fourth and fifth years of service | 5 | 5 |
| After completing five years of service | 6 | 6 |

9.3 CARER'S LEAVE

Carer's leave is short-term, with pay to provide for the immediate needs of carers. The carer must live in the same household as those they care for. The needs covered will include:

- Illness of a child (up to the age of 14) or close relative (immediate family or dependants)
- Breakdown of normal carer arrangements

- Making arrangements for a longer term care problem

As this type of leave is designed to enable staff to cope with short-term problems, entitlement should range from one half day to twelve days per year. No period should exceed three days and is available up to a maximum of four instances per annum. This entitlement is pro-rata for part-time employees.

Staff making a claim under carers leave should advise their line manager on the first morning of absence of any difficulties they are experiencing in their care arrangements. It is up to the employee to provide a daily update to their line manager of their progress, failure to do so may result in carers leave being denied. Upon return to work the employee should complete an application form (see appendices) and forward it to the HR Manager for consideration.

9.4 MATERNITY LEAVE

9.4.1 Entitlement

An employee working full-time or part-time will be entitled to 39 weeks paid and 13 weeks unpaid maternity leave under the NHS contractual maternity pay scheme. The paid entitlement consists of:

- 8 weeks full pay
- 18 weeks half pay & statutory maternity pay
- 13 weeks statutory maternity pay only

9.4.2 Qualifying Conditions

In order to qualify for this leave, employees must meet the following conditions:

- 12 months continuous service with one or more NHS employers at the beginning of the 11th week before the expected week of childbirth (EWC)
- Notification to the Agency in writing using the maternity leave request form (see appendices) before the end of the 15th week before the EWC (or if this is not possible, as soon as is reasonably practicable thereafter). Notification must contain:
 - her intention to take maternity leave
 - the date she wishes the leave to start - this can be any date from the beginning of the 11th week before the baby is born
 - that she intends to return to work with the same or another NHS employer for a minimum of 3 months after her maternity leave has ended.

- Providing the Agency with a MATB1 certificate from her midwife or GP giving the expected date of childbirth (EDC).
-

If the employee wishes to change the maternity leave dates provided, the Agency should be notified at least 28 days in advance.

9.4.3 Antenatal care

Pregnant employees have the right to paid time off for antenatal care, which includes relaxation and parent craft classes as well as appointments for antenatal care.

9.4.4 Sickness prior to childbirth

If an employees is off work, or becomes ill, with a pregnancy-related illness during the last four weeks before the EWC, maternity leave will normally commence at the beginning of the 4th week before the EWC or the beginning of the next week after the employee last worked, whichever is later.

Absence prior to the last four weeks before EWC, supported by a medical statement of incapacity to work, or a self-certificate, shall be treated as sick leave. Odd days of pregnancy-related illness may be disregarded if the employee wishes to continue to work until their previously notified start date.

9.4.5 Premature birth

Where an employee's baby is born prematurely, the employee will be entitled to the same amount of maternity leave and pay as if their baby was born full term.

- If the baby is born before the 11th week before the EWC and the employee has worked during the actual week of childbirth, maternity leave will start on the employee's first day of absence.
- If the baby is born before the 11th week before EWC and the employee has been absent from work on certified sickness during the actual week of childbirth, maternity leave will start the day after the birth.
- If the baby is born before the 11th week before EWC and the baby is in hospital, the employee may split her maternity leave entitlement, taking the minimum two week period immediately after the childbirth and the rest following the baby's discharge from hospital.

9.4.6 Still birth

Where an employee's baby is still born after the 24th week of pregnancy, the employee will be entitled to the same amount of maternity leave and pay as if her baby was born alive.

9.4.7 Miscarriage

Where an employee has a miscarriage before the 25th week of pregnancy, normal sick leave provisions will apply.

9.4.8 Sickness following the end of maternity leave

In the event of illness following the date the employee was due to return to work, normal sick leave provisions will apply.

9.4.9 Keeping in touch

An employee can voluntarily agree to arrangements for keeping in touch whilst on maternity leave to keep up-to-date with developments at work or to facilitate her return. She may work for up to a maximum of 10 KIT days without bringing her maternity leave to an end, however these must not be within the two weeks compulsory maternity leave immediately after the birth. Any days worked will not extend the maternity leave period, but will be paid at basic daily rate. Working for part of a day will count as one KIT day.

9.4.10 Returning to work on flexible arrangements

Employees have the right to request to come back to work on different hours on a temporary or permanent basis. The employee should contact their line manager at least 28 days in advance of their return to work date to discuss the options. If the employee returns to work on a flexible basis for a temporary period, this will not affect her right to return to her job under her original contract at the end of the agreed period.

If following her meeting with her line manager, the employee wishes to request flexible working arrangements on a permanent basis, this must be done in writing. The employee should complete an application for flexible working and return it to the HR Department. If it is not possible to accommodate flexible working arrangements, the Agency will provide written, objectively justified reasons.

9.4.11 Failure to return to work

If an employee who has notified her employer of her intention to return to work for the same or a different NHS employer fails to do so within 15 months of the beginning of maternity leave, she will be liable to refund her maternity pay, less any statutory maternity pay received.

9.4.12 Terms and conditions whilst on maternity leave

- Maternity leave, whether paid or unpaid, will count as service towards annual increments and for the purposes of any service qualification for additional annual leave.
- Employees on maternity leave will progress through their KSF gateway on the due date if concerns had not been raised prior to the leave.
- Annual leave will continue to accrue during paid and unpaid maternity leave. Payment in lieu may be considered where accrual of annual leave exceeds normal carry over provisions.
- Pension rights and contributions shall be dealt with in accordance with the NHS Superannuation Regulations.

9.5 PATERNITY LEAVE

Employees are entitled to 2 weeks paternity leave, paid at their full rate, which can be taken in a block of one or two weeks, not odd days. They can choose to start their paternity leave on any day of the week on or following the child's birth. The statutory provisions provide for such leave to be taken within the first 8 weeks following the birth.

Employees must satisfy the following conditions to qualify for paternity leave and pay:

- Have or expect to have responsibility for the child's upbringing
- Be the biological father of the child or the mother's husband or partner
- Have 26 weeks continuous service leading into the 15th week before the baby is due

Under the statutory provisions only one period of leave will be available to employees irrespective of whether more than one child is born as a result of the same pregnancy.

Employees intending to take paternity leave are required to submit a Paternity Leave Request Form (see appendices) to the Human Resources Officer during or before the 15th week before the EDC. Written confirmation of the leave approved will be provided.

9.6 ADOPTION LEAVE

Paid adoptive leave will be available to employees where an approved adoption agency notifies the adopter of a match to a child. To qualify for adoption leave an employee must:

- Be newly matched with a child by an approved adoption agency
- Have worked continuously for their employer for 26 weeks

9.6.1 Length of adoption leave

Adopters will be entitled to up to 39 weeks ordinary adoption leave followed immediately by 13 weeks additional adoption leave. An adopter can decide to start their leave either from the date of the child's placement or from a fixed date, which can be up to 14 days before the expected date of placement. Only one period of leave will be available irrespective of whether more than one child is placed for adoption by the same agency. If the child's placement ends during the adoptive leave period the adopter will be able to continue adoption leave for up to 8 weeks after the end of the placement.

9.6.2 Statutory adoption pay

Statutory adoption pay will be paid by the employer for up to 39 weeks. Paid leave will be commensurate with provisions for maternity leave and will be paid in accordance with maternity pay provisions.

9.6.3 Notice of intention to take adoption leave

Adopters will be required to inform the Agency of their intention to take adoption leave within 7 days of being notified by the adoption agency that they have been matched with a child for adoption. Employees will be required to advise the Human Resources Manager as to when the child will be placed with them and when they want their adoption leave to commence. As part of the application process the employee will be required to provide a copy of their matching certificate from the adoption agency as evidence of their entitlement to statutory adoption pay.

9.6.4 Notice of intention to return to work after adoption leave

Adopters who want to return to work before the end of their adoption leave period must write to the Agency 28 days before they wish to do so.

9.6.5 Adoptive paternity leave and pay

The spouse or partner of the child's adopter is entitled to paternity leave and pay. The same rules apply as for paternity leave.

9.7 PARENTAL LEAVE

Parental leave came into force in December 1999. The parents of a child born or adopted after this date who have been employed by their employer for more than one year are entitled to take 13 weeks unpaid leave to care for the child following the birth or adoption. Each parent is entitled to take 13 weeks for each child under the age of 14 or in the case of disabled children before their 18th birthday.

An employee must give at least 21 days notice of their intention to take parental leave and must specify the dates that it would start and end. The leave can be taken as blocks of one week or more up to a maximum of 4 weeks per annum.

The employer must give justifiable reasons to postponement of this leave if it conflicts with the business needs of the organisation.

9.8 TIME OFF TO ATTEND MEDICAL AND DENTAL APPOINTMENTS

Employees are entitled to time off to attend medical and dental appointments. Where possible appointments should be made early morning, during lunchtime or late afternoon to minimise the time needed. Part-time staff (except in unavoidable circumstances) are required to make medical and dental appointments in their own time. Time off is allocated as follows:

- Up to a maximum of 2 hours for standard medical and dental appointments
- Up to a maximum of 3 hours for specialist medical and dental appointments
- Up to a maximum of 4 hours for hospital appointments

Employees must return to work after any appointment if the time is still within their normal working hours. In cases where employees have attended an appointment and have been absent

from the workplace for longer than the time permitted by the Agency, arrangements should be made to repay the time owed by annual leave or a time owed arrangement. Discretion may be used in relation to the time awarded if the circumstances are unique.

9.9 MARRIAGE LEAVE

Three days special leave with pay for marriage may be granted. Dates must be provided to the Human Resources Department.

9.10 JURY SERVICE & COURT WITNESS

Staff who are called for jury service may be granted leave with pay on the understanding that any court fees are surrendered to the Agency.

A member of staff who attends court as a witness with the consent of the Agency may be granted leave with pay.

9.11 COMPASSIONATE LEAVE

Compassionate leave is available to those staff who have a close relative, mother, father, guardian or child who is suffering from an illness or condition which has been diagnosed as either critical, in the short term or terminal. The Human Resources Manager will examine each individual case and take account of all prevailing circumstances and make a judgement as to what will best meet the needs of both the organisation and the member of staff.

Each situation will be very different, and every attempt will be made to reach a compromise. This should ensure that the needs of the individual are treated sympathetically and that the operational requirements of the Agency are not compromised or disadvantaged.

As this type of leave is designed to enable staff to cope with unplanned and unforeseen demands on an individual basis, entitlement will range from one half day to up to 18 days per year. However, no one period should exceed 6 days and is available up to 3 times per annum. Staff making a claim under compassionate leave should ensure that their line manager is advised promptly of any domestic difficulties she/he is experiencing.

9.12 BEREAVEMENT LEAVE

Bereavement leave is available to those staff who suffer the loss of a relative through death. Whilst it is difficult to assess how the death of someone close to us will affect each of us, this policy is to help ensure that staff are treated with sympathy and consistency at difficult times. An employee who intends to apply for bereavement leave should ensure that the HR Manager is advised of the situation as soon, as is practicable.

9.13 LEAVE FOR ATTENDANCE AT FUNERALS

In the event of death of a close friend or a particular relationship not covered under the bereavement leave staff may be given time off work to attend funerals subject to the needs of the Agency. This time should not exceed 4 hours.

10. ACTING UP OPPORTUNITIES

Acting up opportunities may be used in exceptional circumstances to cover short to medium term absences such as maternity leave, long term sick leave or secondments. Unless there are exceptional circumstances acting up arrangements should not be used to cover permanent vacancies. Acting up should not normally exceed a period of six months.

When an opportunity arises it will be emailed to all employees, who should register their interest via a return email. If more than one applicant registers interest an interview will be held, if not the position will be given to the only interested candidate. The successful candidate will receive confirmation in writing from the HR Department. Appeals against the decision should be made to the Chief Executive/Postgraduate Dean and will normally be dealt with within seven days.

Pay for a temporary move to a higher pay band will be set at the minimum of the pay band, or if this would result in no pay increase, the first pay point in the band which would deliver an increase. Where the movement results in only one extra pay point the employees incremental date will remain the same, however if it results in more than one pay point the incremental date will change for the duration of the acting up period to the date the acting up began.

11. SECONDMENT

Secondment opportunities are offered to employees to enable them to move for a temporary period to another health service body. Usually, as part of the recruitment process, the advertising body will require applicants to provide written approval from the Agency for the

secondment. Employees should therefore submit the request in writing to the Human Resources Department using the Secondment Approval Request Form in the appendices. Employees should note that it is their responsibility to ensure that appropriate notice is given to ensure written approval can be obtained before the closing date of the post.

The request will be considered by Senior Management and the applicant will be informed of the outcome in writing. Appeals against the decision should be made to the Chief Executive/Postgraduate Dean and will normally be dealt with within seven days.

If an employee is successful in obtaining a secondment, they must provide the Agency with one months notice in writing.

12. KNOWLEDGE & SKILLS FRAMEWORK

The Knowledge and Skills Framework (KSF) defines the knowledge and skills which employees need to apply in their work in order to deliver quality services. It provides a single, consistent, comprehensive and explicit framework on which to base the review and development of all employees. It involves the production of a KSF Outline and personal development plan, which provides a fair and objective basis for yearly performance reviews.

12.1 POST OUTLINES

It is a requirement under Agenda for Change that all posts have a KSF outline, which is a measure of the knowledge and skills required to do the job and must reflect the key activities of the post, not the post-holder. All outlines have 6 core dimensions and a selection of relevant specific dimensions. The core dimensions are:

1. Communication
2. Personal and people development
3. Health, safety and security
4. Service Improvement
5. Quality
6. Equality and diversity

All outlines will have detailed requirements for progression through foundation and second gateways.

12.2 GATEWAYS

There are two gateways on each pay band, at which progression up the scale is not automatic, but is based on the employees ability to demonstrate that they have developed the necessary knowledge and skills as described in the appropriate KSF outline. The first gateway is the foundation gateway, which applies no later than 12 months after appointment. The purpose of this gateway is to confirm that individuals can meet the requirements of the post normally expected after one year. The position of the second gateway varies depending on the band. They are as follows:

| Pay Band | Position of the second gateway |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Pay band 1 | Before the final point |
| Pay band 2 - 4 | Before the last two points |
| Pay band 5 - 7 | Before the last three points |
| Pay bands 8, ranges A - D | Before the final point |
| Pay band 9 | Before the final point |

This gateway is used to confirm that individuals can meet the full demands of the post. Annual Personal Performance and Development Reviews will provide a formal basis for development to enable progression through these gateways.

Detailed information can be found in the Knowledge and Skills Framework Handbook accessible at F:\GENERAL\Staff Handbook.

13. TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

The Agency is committed to the support and promotion of staff development and training. It recognises that the efficient and effective functioning of the Agency depends on its support and provision of staff development activities, which are designed to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes of staff.

Staff development and training may be related to specific job skills, to an individual's career development or to personal development in a broader sense. It may be achieved through a variety of methods e.g. seminars, short courses, workshops, and courses leading to qualifications.

At the heart of staff training and development is the formal appraisal mechanism currently in place for the Agency's administrative staff. The Agency undertakes, where possible, to respond

to the development and training needs identified through the appraisal procedure. Should a member of the administrative staff feel that s/he is being unfairly treated with respect to undertaking a staff development or training activity s/he may appeal to the Chief Executive/Postgraduate Dean. Neither leave nor the reimbursement of expenses can be claimed as a right, but will be awarded at the discretion of the Agency.

13.1 CRITERIA FOR LEAVE AND EXPENSES

Each application for further training or a course of study will be viewed individually on its own merits and the following criteria will be applied:

- The relevance of the study to the performance of current and prospective duties and to the career structure for the grade of staff concerned.
- The opportunities for the applicant to keep abreast of developments in his/her line of work.
- The overriding needs of the service where leave is requested.
- The level of study activity and funding previously afforded.

13.2 FUNDING

If financial assistance is granted the member of staff will receive either:

- **100%** funding - only if the training is considered to be **essential** for carrying out the duties of the post (to include exam fees)
- or**
- **Maximum of 66.6%** funding - this will only be granted if the training or course of study is relevant to the area of work in which the applicant is employed.

Staff who receive full funding will be entitled to travel and subsistence expenses at the rate agreed by the Agency. Staff who receive up to 66.6% funding towards tuition fees to include exam fees are responsible for any additional costs. Where courses are part funded a claim for fees should be submitted after the course of study and if applicable where examinations have been passed. If the course is 100% funded, invoices for fees etc. can be submitted to the Agency's finance department for payment.

Financial assistance for those pursuing professional qualifications is only given for one year and re-application has to be made for each subsequent year until completion of the course of study. Staff on fixed-term contracts wishing to pursue professional qualifications must have at least one year of appointment left in their contract, or if this is not the case, have received confirmation that their contract will be renewed for at least another year beyond the current date of termination.

13.3 EXAM LEAVE

The following entitlements apply to exam leave: -

Non-essential courses:

- A half day's exam leave if the exam occurs during the normal working day
- One day's leave per examination (up to a maximum of 3 per year) for study purposes - normally the day prior to the examination.

Essential courses:

- One day's exam leave if the exam occurs during the normal working day
- One day's study leave (up to a maximum of 3 per year), normally the day prior to the exam

Staff required to re-sit examinations will do so in their own time and at their own expense. Leave for part-time staff will be calculated on a pro-rata basis.

Any applications for study leave and exam leave must be made to the Human Resources Manager in advance for approval using the Study Leave Application Form (see appendices). The Human Resources Manager will indicate how much leave will be granted for both the exam and study leave.

13.4 DAY/BLOCK RELEASE

This will only be granted where the training is considered to be **essential** for carrying out the duties of the post.

13.5 NON COMPLETION OF A COURSE FUNDED BY AGENCY

If an employee fails to complete a course funded by the Agency, he/she should be required to reimburse all of the course fees.

14. FLEXIBLE WORKING ARRANGEMENTS

The Agency is committed to developing positive flexible working arrangements which allow employees to balance work responsibilities with other aspects of their lives. New working arrangements will only be introduced by mutual agreement, whether sought by the employee or the Agency.

14.1 TYPES OF FLEXIBLE WORKING ARRANGEMENTS

Flexible working arrangements provided by the Agency include:

- Part-time working, where an employee works to a pattern and number of hours by mutual agreement.
- Job sharing, where two or more employees share the responsibilities of one or more full-time job(s), dividing the hours, duties and pay between them.
- Flexi-time, where employees can choose their own start and finish times around fixed core hours.
- Voluntary reduced working time, where employees work reduced hours by agreement at a reduced salary.

If an employee wishes to apply for flexible working, they should meet with their line manager in the first instance to discuss options. Following this meeting, he/she should complete an Application for Flexible Working (see appendices) and submit it to the Human Resources Department for consideration at the next senior management meeting. Employees will be informed of the decision in writing. All jobs will be considered for flexible working arrangements, however if it is not possible the Agency will provide clear demonstrable operational reasons why it is not practicable.

14.2 FLEXI-TIME SYSTEM

A flexi-time system is available for all staff who have successfully completed their six-month probationary period. Rules for use of the flexi-time system are as follows:

- Times must be completed on a daily basis

- The core office hours are 10am - 12pm and 2pm - 4pm, therefore flexi-time hours are between 8am and 10am, 12pm - 2pm and 4pm - 6pm. Any hours worked before 8am or after 6pm is overtime.
- If you wish to use flexi-time you should agree this with the rest of the department to ensure that there is always cover during office hours.
- You may take up to one day off each month (either as one day or two half days), however this must be agreed in advance with your line manager.
- Flexi-time should not be used to change your working hours or developing patterns, for example, always working between 9.30am - 5.30pm. You should ensure that you do work your contracted hours some days during the month.
- You can carry over up to 8 hours flexi-time each month. If you accrue more than 8 hours at the end of the month, the flexi-time sheet will automatically default back to 8 and the extra time will be lost. You may be able to carry this time over in exceptional circumstances, which should be agreed in advance with the HR Manager.
- You must always take and record a minimum of 30 minutes lunch break between the hours of 12pm and 2pm.
- Your running total may be minus, however it should not be minus at the end of the month for two months in a row. If your running total is minus on the last day of the month, you should ensure that this time is worked back during the following month.
- Your running total should not be minus more than 8 hours at any time.
- Doctors or dentists appointments do not have to be taken out of flexi, you are entitled to time off for these. Simply record a full working day and put 'doctors appointment' in the comments box.
- Time should be recorded to the nearest 5 minutes.

Please note that spot checks will be carried out by the HR Manager on a regular basis. Recording information incorrectly is a disciplinary matter and could result in the system being taken away for individual employees or for everyone.

Flexi sheets should be printed off at the end of each month and signed by team leaders and employees.

14.3 CAREER BREAK

The career break scheme applies to both male and female employees of the Agency. The scheme covers reasons such as childcare, eldercare, care for another dependant, training, study leave or work abroad. Career breaks may be granted for other reasons although they will not

normally be granted for the primary purpose of taking up alternative salaried or wage earning employment. The objectives of the scheme are:

- To give staff the opportunity to leave their employment for a period of time, and return at a later time,
- To retain skills and expertise within the Agency
- To provide new job opportunities within the Agency

14.3.1 Eligibility

Employees must have satisfactorily completed one year's service to apply for a career break within the Agency. Employees wishing to avail of this scheme should firstly discuss it with their line manager. Following this, an application must be made using the Career Break Application Form (see appendices) providing at least 6 months notice. The application should be submitted to the human resources department for consideration at the next senior management meeting. Applications will be considered on the merit of each individual case; however it may not be feasible for the Agency to grant release in every case. Please note that the date on which a career break begins will be a management decision taking into consideration the circumstances of the application and the time required to fill the vacancy.

It is the responsibility of the employee to inform the HR Manager of any change in circumstances.

14.3.2 Duration of Career Break

Special leave without pay for a career break may be granted for a period of not less than three months and for any period up to a maximum of 5 years. Breaks can be taken as a single period or as more than one period. The notice period required before the return to work is as follows:

- Break of less than a year - 2 months notice in writing
- Break of more than a year - 6 months notice in writing

14.3.3 Continuity of Service

Periods of service before and after a career break shall be treated as continuous for conditions of service. The break itself will not count for continuous service purposes or for incremental credit. A period of absence on a career break will not count for Superannuation purposes and employees are advised to contact Superannuation Branch in relation to this.

14.3.4 Return to Work

If a career break is taken for less than one year, the employee may return to the same job, however if the break is longer than one year, the employee will be guaranteed as similar a job as possible.

If prior to the commencement of a career break an employee was working in a part-time job-sharing arrangement every effort will be made to allow the employee to return on that basis. However, there is no guarantee that this will always be possible and in these circumstances employees may be offered a full time post.

Employees who are unable to resume duty on the due date because of illness will be required to produce supporting medical documentation.

14.3.5 Promotion

Employees will be free to apply for promotion during the career break. However they would have to accept the promotion at the time of offer and take up duties when required.

14.3.6 Social Security / Income Tax Arrangements

It is the responsibility of the employee taking a career break to contact their local Social Security Office to determine whether they are entitled to any benefits and to check the position with regard to their National Insurance and Income Tax.

14.3.7 Appeals

Employees will receive a written explanation of the reason for refusal of all applications. They are entitled to resort to the grievance procedure if a break is refused.

NORTHERN IRELAND MEDICAL AND DENTAL TRAINING AGENCY

ABSENCE NOTIFICATION FORM (AN1)

Part 1

To be completed by the Line Manager on receiving a report of absence:

When you have completed Part 1 send this to Human Resources and the Employee who is absent.

The Employee **must** complete part 2 **immediately** on their return and send it to Personnel and copy it to their Line Manager for reference.

| | | | |
|--|----|-----|--|
| Full Name | | | |
| Department | | | |
| First Day of Absence (Date) | | | |
| Reason for Absence / Nature of Illness | | | |
| Estimated Duration (Days) | | | |
| Notification Received on: | | At: | |
| Notification Received from: | | | |
| Is the absence the result of an industrial injury / accident at work? (Yes/No) | No | | |

If Yes, please refer to the Accident Reporting Procedure.

| | | | |
|-----------------------------|--|-------|--|
| Managers Acknowledgement | | Date: | |
| Date forwarded to Personnel | | | |

Part 2

To be completed by the **Employee** immediately upon their return to work and forwarded to **Personnel** and their **Line Manager** for urgent attention.

| | | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|-----------------------|--|
| First Date of Absence: | | Last Date of Absence: | |
| Total Number of Working Days Lost | | | |

I certify that the information given above is correct.

| | | | |
|-------------------------|--|-------|--|
| Signed: | | Date: | |
| Line Managers Signature | | | |
| Signed: | | Date: | |

Note: Any employee who knowingly submits a certificate containing false information is liable to dismissal.

NORTHERN IRELAND MEDICAL AND DENTAL TRAINING AGENCY

APPLICATION FOR CARER'S / COMPASSIONATE / BEREAVEMENT LEAVE (CCBL1)

| | | |
|---|-------|-----|
| SECTION 1: TO BE COMPLETED BY EMPLOYEE | | |
| Name: | | |
| Department: | | |
| Type of leave requested: | | |
| Number of days absence: | | |
| Period: | From: | To: |
| Reason for absence (please specify): | | |
| | | |

Signed (Employee): _____

Date: _____

| | | | |
|--|-----|--|----|
| SECTION 2: TO BE COMPLETED BY HUMAN RESOURCES | | | |
| Leave approved? (please tick): | Yes | | No |
| No of days approved: | | | |
| Authorised by: | | | |
| Position: | | | |

All applications must be received by the H R Manager on the first day of the employee returning to work.

Applications will not be considered where an employee has not kept their line manager fully informed about the need to take leave.

NORTHERN IRELAND MEDICAL AND DENTAL TRAINING AGENCY

MATERNITY LEAVE REQUEST FORM (MAT1)

Entitlement (subject to conditions): 8 wks full pay, 18 wks half pay & SMP, 13 wks SMP only

| | | |
|---|-----------------------|----------|
| Name: | | |
| Department: | | |
| I wish to commence maternity leave on: | | |
| My expected week of confinement is: | | |
| I wish to take annual leave at the end of the maternity period: | | |
| From: | To: | |
| I confirm that I will be returning to work with the same / another HPSS employer for a min of 3 months following maternity: | | YES / NO |
| I expect to return to work on: | | |
| I expect to return to work: | Full-time / Part-time | |
| I wish to have my payments spread out over the maternity leave period: | | YES / NO |

Signed: _____ Date: _____

I do not expect to return to work and therefore tender my resignation with effect from:

_____ (Date)

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Employees must complete this form and return it to the Human Resources Officer before the end of the 15th week before the EDC. Employees must give 28 days notice of any change to these dates.

A MATB1 FORM AVAILABLE FROM YOUR GP MUST ALSO BE FORWARDED TO THE HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICER

NORTHERN IRELAND MEDICAL AND DENTAL TRAINING AGENCY

PATERNITY LEAVE REQUEST FORM (PA1)

| | |
|--|------------------------|
| Name: | |
| Department: | |
| National Insurance Number: | |
| The baby is due on: | |
| If the baby has been born, please enter the actual date of birth and also give the date the baby was due in the above box | |
| Date of commencement of paternity leave: | |
| I wish to take the following leave: | One / two weeks |
| Date of return to work: | |
| Any additional information: | |

You must be able to tick all three boxes below to get Paternity Pay and Paternity Leave. I declare that:

- I am
 - the baby's biological / adoptive father
 - married to or in a civil partnership with the mother
 - living with the mother in an enduring family relationship, but am not an immediate relative

- I have responsibility for the child's upbringing

- I will take time off work to support the mother or care for the child

Signed: _____

Date: _____

The Agency provides 2 weeks full pay for Paternity Leave.

You are required to submit this form at least 28 days before you wish the paternity leave to start.

NORTHERN IRELAND MEDICAL AND DENTAL TRAINING AGENCY

APPLICATION FOR ADOPTION LEAVE (AL1)

| SECTION 1: TO BE COMPLETED BY EMPLOYEE | |
|---|--|
| Name: | |
| Department: | |
| Date of commencement of Adoptive Leave requested: | |
| Date of return to work: | |

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Please note at least 7 days notice is required to apply for adoptive leave.

Where the child is below the age of 18, adoption leave and pay will be in line with the maternity leave and pay provisions.

NORTHERN IRELAND MEDICAL AND DENTAL TRAINING AGENCY

APPLICATION FOR FLEXIBLE WORKING (FW1)

| | | | |
|---|------------------|---------------|--------------------------------|
| SECTION 1: TO BE COMPLETED BY EMPLOYEE | | | |
| Name: | | | |
| Department: | | | |
| Request (please circle): | Job Share | Yes/No | Part time Yes/No |
| Preferred working pattern/ hrs: | | | |
| Reason for request (please specify): | | | |

Signed (Employee): _____

Date: _____

| | | | |
|--|------------|--|-----------|
| Section 2: TO BE COMPLETED BY SENIOR MANAGEMENT | | | |
| Decision (please tick): | Yes | | No |
| Working pattern agreed: | | | |
| Authorised by: | | | |
| Position: | | | |

- Please complete this form and return it in confidence to the H R Manager at least 3 months prior to the date that the employee would wish to work flexibly.
- Applications will be considered by the Senior Management Committee and the outcome will be relayed to the applicant within 28 days of receipt.
- Appeals can be made through the Senior Management Committee.

NORTHERN IRELAND MEDICAL AND DENTAL TRAINING AGENCY

TRAINING APPROVAL REQUEST FORM (TR1)

Please complete fully and return to the H R Manager

| | |
|--|--|
| SECTION 1: TO BE COMPLETED BY EMPLOYEE | |
| Name: | |
| Department: | |
| Course Applied for (please include details of course provider) | |
| Course dates: | |
| Course fee: | |
| Please state why you think this application should be supported: | |
| | |

Signed: _____

Date: _____

| | |
|--|--|
| SECTION 2: TO BE COMPLETED BY SENIOR MANAGEMENT | |
| This training should/should not be supported (delete as appropriate) | |
| Funding to be awarded: | |
| Authorised by: | |
| Position: | |

NORTHERN IRELAND MEDICAL AND DENTAL TRAINING AGENCY

STUDY LEAVE REQUEST FORM (SL1)

| | |
|---|--|
| SECTION 1: TO BE COMPLETED BY EMPLOYEE | |
| Name: | |
| Department: | |
| Details of exams to be taken & dates of leave: | |
| | |
| No half days exam leave requested: | |
| No days study leave requested: | |

Signed: _____

Date: _____

| | |
|--|-----------------|
| SECTION 2: TO BE COMPLETED BY HUMAN RESOURCES | |
| Leave approved: | YES / NO |
| If no, no days approved: | |
| Authorised by: | |
| Position: | |

PLEASE NOTE ENTITLEMENT IS AS FOLLOWS: (Leave for part-time staff will be pro-rata)

NON-ESSENTIAL COURSES

- A half day's exam leave if the exam occurs during the normal working day
- One day's study leave (up to a maximum of 3 per year), normally the day prior to the exam.

ESSENTIAL COURSES

- One day's exam leave if the exam occurs during the normal working day
- One day's study leave (up to a maximum of 3 per year), normally the day prior to the exam

Any applications must be made to the HR Manager in advance for approval. The HR Manager will indicate how much leave will be granted for both the exam and study leave.

NORTHERN IRELAND MEDICAL AND DENTAL TRAINING AGENCY

SECONDMENT APPROVAL REQUEST FORM (SAR1)

| | |
|--|--|
| SECTION 1: TO BE COMPLETED BY EMPLOYEE | |
| Name: | |
| Department: | |
| Job Title: | |
| Details of secondment i.e. trust, department, position: | |
| | |
| Duration of secondment: | |

Signed (Employee): _____

Date: _____

| | |
|--|----------|
| SECTION 2: TO BE COMPLETED BY HUMAN RESOURCES | |
| Secondment approved: | YES / NO |
| Authorised by: | |
| Position: | |

Employees wishing to apply for a secondment often have to submit approval from their current employer along with their application; therefore this form should be submitted to the HR Department well in advance of the closing date.