



Dear Colleague

**CHANGES TO THE SCOTTISH AGENDA FOR CHANGE HANDBOOK AS A RESULT OF THE REDUCTION OF THE FULL-TIME WORKING WEEK TO 36 HOURS**

1. This circular confirms that the Scottish Agenda for Change Handbook will be updated to reflect the fact that from 1 April 2026 the full-time working week for Agenda for Change staff working in NHS Scotland will be 36 hours.

2. Annex A details the relevant changes, and an updated version of the Scottish Handbook taking account of these will be placed on the [Management Steering Group website](#).

**Cabinet Secretary Approval**

3. This agreement has been approved by Scottish Ministers under Regulation 2 and 3 of the National Health Service (Remuneration and Conditions of Service) (Scotland) Regulations 1991 (S.I. 1991 No.537). A copy of the formal approval is attached.

**Action**

4. NHS Boards and Special Health Boards should apply the provision set out in this letter and communicate the position to staff and managers.

5. This circular can be found online at:  
[www.publications.scot.nhs.uk](http://www.publications.scot.nhs.uk)

Yours sincerely

**JANE HAMILTON**

Deputy Director  
Health Workforce: Culture, Pay and Partnership Division

1 April 2026

**Addresses**

For action

Chief Executives, NHS Boards and Special Health Boards and NHS National Services Scotland (Common Services Agency)  
Directors of Finance, NHS Boards and Special Health Boards and NHS National Services Scotland (Common Services Agency)  
Directors of Human Resources, NHS Boards and Special Health Boards and NHS National Services Scotland (Common Services Agency)

For information

Members, Scottish Partnership Forum  
Members, Scottish Terms and Conditions Committee  
Members, Scottish Workforce and Governance Group

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**NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE  
APPROVAL OF REMUNERATION AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE**

In accordance with regulations 2 and 3 of the National Health Service (Remuneration and Conditions of Service) (Scotland) Regulations 1991 (S.I. 1991/537) the remuneration and conditions of service set out in the attached Scottish Government Health Workforce Directorate circular of 1 April 2026 – PCS(AFC)2026/2 – in respect of changes to the Scottish Agenda for Change Handbook to reflect the fact that full-time working hours have reduced to 36, are hereby approved for the purposes of the said Regulations.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jane Hamilton".

**JANE HAMILTON**

Deputy Director

Health Workforce: Culture, Pay and  
Partnership Division

1 April 2026

## CHANGES TO THE SCOTTISH AGENDA FOR CHANGE HANDBOOK AS A RESULT OF THE REDUCTION OF THE FULL TIME WORKING WEEK TO 36 HOURS

The reduction of the working week for Agenda for Change staff in Scotland from 1 April 2026 means that the following changes are being made to the Scottish Agenda for Change Handbook:

### Section 2: Maintaining round the clock services

Part time staff and other staff working non-standard hours

(Current section with amendment)

2.12 Part time staff working less than 367 hours a week will be eligible for unsocial hours payments.

(Revised section)

2.12 Part time staff working less than 36 hours a week will be eligible for unsocial hours payments.

### Section 3: Overtime payments

(Current section with amendment)

3.3 Part-time employees will receive payments for the additional hours at plain time rates until their hours exceed standard hours of 367 hours a week.

(Revised section)

3.3 Part-time employees will receive payments for the additional hours at plain time rates until their hours exceed standard hours of 36 hours a week.

### Section 10: Hours of the working week

(Current section with amendment)

10.1 The standard hours of all full-time NHS staff covered by this pay system will be 367 hours, excluding meal breaks. Working time will be calculated exclusive of meal breaks, except where individuals are required to work during meal breaks, in which case such time should be counted as working time.

(Revised section)

10.1 The standard hours of all full-time NHS staff covered by this pay system will be 36 hours, excluding meal breaks. Working time will be calculated exclusive of meal breaks, except where individuals are required to work during meal breaks, in which case such time should be counted as working time.

## Section 13: Annual leave and general public holidays

### (Current section with amendment)

13.5 Where staff work standard shifts, other than 7.~~24~~ hours excluding meal breaks, annual leave and general public holiday entitlements should be calculated on an hourly basis, to prevent staff on these shifts receiving greater or less leave than colleagues on standard shifts.

### (Revised section)

13.5 Where staff work standard shifts, other than 7.2 hours excluding meal breaks, annual leave and general public holiday entitlements should be calculated on an hourly basis, to prevent staff on these shifts receiving greater or less leave than colleagues on standard shifts.