



Rota Parameters Procedure

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1 Scope

- 1.1. This procedure describes the process all colleagues should follow when carrying out rota reviews.
- 1.2. The purpose of rotas is to ensure the Trust can match demand to patient care or departmental pressures and are working in the best interests of colleagues and patients.

2 General Principles

- 2.1. Colleagues working a rota must have the opportunity to participate in its design.
- 2.2. Rotas must comply with [The Working Time Regulations \(1998\)](#)
- 2.3. A rota review may be requested where 51% or more of those working it wish to do so. Staff will bring their concerns to their relevant line managers, who will escalate to the senior leadership team before the voting process takes place to establish the 'want' to review.
- 2.4. Rotas will normally be based on a 37.5-hour working week, excluding unpaid meal breaks.
- 2.5. Colleagues working less than 34.5 hours per week who are not working on a reduced working hours rota as detailed in 2.6, will be defined as working a flexible working agreement and not occupy a 37.5 hour rota line.
- 2.6. Consideration will be given to the creation of a rota based on an average of less than 37.5 hours per week for a group of colleagues who work the same number of reduced working hours per week. This is limited to those working between 30 and 37 hours per week inclusive. Such a rota must give a balanced and fair allocation of shifts to those working it.
- 2.7. There is no requirement to have a single rota within an Operational Area. This could enable one group of colleagues to work all 12-hour shifts and another group to work all 8-hour shifts.
- 2.8. Rotas need to reflect departmental demand patterns which will be shared by the Senior Manager in charge of identifying / interpreting demand for the department.
- 2.9. Relief periods may be included in rotas only where it can be demonstrated that this is required to meet business needs. The percentage of relief provided within the business area must be the minimum needed to cover abstraction requirements in order to maintain a safe level of cover.

- 2.10. The Senior Manager will email all colleagues affected by any proposed rota change inviting them to join and participate in a Rota Writing Group.
- 2.11. All colleagues working the rotas which are subject to review will be invited to attend an initial consultation with 14 days' notice. This initial consultation period will last 30 days allowing staff to seek support and guidance. This will be led by the relevant manager. Where possible, this will be recorded for those who are unable to attend to view later.
- 2.12. All colleagues attending and participating in meetings associated with rota production will be entitled to claim a pre-agreed period of overtime.
- 2.13. A Rota Writing Group will be convened within 14 days of the initial consultation meeting. The Rota Writing Group will nominate a chair and must canvas colleague opinion. It will then produce rotas within 21 days following the rota parameters as set out. These proposed rotas will then go to rota review panel before colleagues vote to ensure compliance of the proposed new rotas.
- 2.14. A Rota Writing Group will consist of colleagues working the rota. They will be supported by the Scheduling Team, Leadership Team and union representatives, as and when required.
- 2.15. Any Unsocial Hours payment must be made available to colleagues before they are asked to vote for rotas. Indicative Unsocial Hours calculations must be undertaken for all rotas before being published for voting. This is to ensure colleagues are aware of any financial implications before choosing a rota.
- 2.16. All agreed rotas must be submitted to rotareviewgroup@secamb.nhs.uk using the agreed rota templates.
- 2.17. The Rota Review Panel Chair will convene a Rota Review Panel to consider rota proposals from colleagues upon receipt of the email from the Senior Manager. This panel must convene within 14 days upon receipt of email.
- 2.18. The Rota Review Panel will be chaired by a senior representative of the Scheduling Team who will be at Band 7 or above. For quoracy, an Associate Director of the relevant directorate or nominated deputy and representation from at least 2 of the 3 majority unions, are required. The Associate Director or nominated deputy will give assurance that the rota meets anticipated demand and needs of the business (see appendix A TOR – Rota Review Group).

- 2.19. Once approved at Rota Review Panel, Colleagues will then be given 21 days to vote on proposed rotas using a transparent electronic Trust approved platform such as Microsoft Forms.
- 2.20. On completion of voting, the results will be published by the Senior Manager. If there is no overall majority (*A majority is considered 51% or greater*) then a subsequent round of voting must take place on the leading rotas so far identified.
- 2.21. A subsequent round of voting must be held for another 21 days if not majority is reached in the first round of voting.
- 2.22. Once voting is completed, the results will be shared with staff and evidenced to the rota review panel that majority of staff support the new patterns. The rota can go live any date, this however will normally be at least 8 weeks from the date of approval and winning vote to allow the Scheduling Team to load the rota.
- 2.23. Rota line allocation is the responsibility of the Leadership Team who will, in conjunction with colleagues and the Rota Writing Group, inform the Scheduling Team and colleagues of who starts on which line on the given date.
- 2.24. Approved rota is to be submitted via Marvel to the Scheduling Technical Team by the responsible manager and should include where possible rota line allocation.
- 2.25. In the unlikely event that no eligible rotas are submitted within 90 days of the Trust instigating a rota review, the Trust reserves the right to give 90 days' notice of rota change being enforced. This enforced rota change must still comply with the parameters set out in this policy.

3 Rota Parameters

- 3.1. All rotas must support the appropriate skill mix at the relevant location or department.
- 3.2. Individual working patterns will not be classified as a rota. These must comply with [The Working Time Regulations \(1998\)](#).
- 3.3. A maximum of three "Double Crewed Ambulances" may start at the same time per Dispatch Desk as long as different shift lengths (eg - 0600-1400, 0600-1600, 0600-1800) to protect end of shift and meal break windows.
- 3.4. New colleagues joining the organisation may be given a rostered rest day working pattern.

- 3.5. Colleagues on training programmes may work a rostered rest day rota pattern instead of permanent relief, however rostered rest days will not be mandated.
- 3.6. Where applicable, a colleague's allocated relief shifts must cover any shifts within their rota pattern to provide flexibility to the organisation. This will appear in the rota as continuous days. Therefore, a 48 hour rest period will be required after a relief week. Before a relief week, the latest rostered shift must finish no later than 00:00 the day before the relief period starting.
- 3.7. Consecutive blocks of same type of shifts (Eg all day or all night shifts) must not exceed 48 hours in a row excluding mealbreaks. A 48-hour maximum working week (excluding breaks) must not be exceeded.
- 3.8. A 90-minute minimum change-over period for nights to days is required in all rotas. The window for this will be between 0600hrs to 0730hrs unless a majority vote of local colleagues chooses to slide the window to no earlier than 0530hrs and no later than 0730hrs. The Senior Manager and Rota Writing Group will update the colleagues affected of the window to be used.
- 3.9. Subject to 3.8 - Day and link shifts must start no earlier than the window agreed in 3.8 and finish no later than 0200hrs. Night shifts must start no later than 2300hrs and finish between 0530hrs and 0730hrs.
- 3.10. A minimum rest period of 48 hours must be given following a single night shift or the last of a series of night shifts and following a relief week.
- 3.11. Where applicable, one late link may follow a night shift. This is to support colleagues to convert back to a normal sleep pattern. This shift will be treated as if it were the same as preceding night shifts for the purposes of 3.10 (i.e., the 48-hour minimum rest period is calculated from the time at which the shift would have finished had it been the same duration as the preceding night shift).
- 3.12. With mutual agreement with the leadership team, colleagues may undertake overtime shifts starting or finishing outside of the parameters of the restrictions within paragraph 3.9.
- 3.13. Whilst meeting the needs of the Trust, colleagues who work rotas must have the opportunity to undertake a fair balance of shifts.
- 3.14. Where applicable, all rotas must also have a balance of shifts that give colleagues a fair opportunity to accrue unsocial hours in line with Agenda for Change Section 2 or Annex 5.

EOC/111 Rota Parameters Only (3.15-4.0) – Section 2 of this document (General Principles) also applies to EOC/111.

- 3.15. Individual working patterns will not be classified as a rota. These must comply with [The Working Time Regulations \(1998\)](#).
- 3.16. Line Managers, Call Handling and Dispatch function, must have a 15 minute staggered start times. For example EOCMs/TLs starting at 06:00, call handling starting at 06:15, dispatch starting at 06:30 This allows for resilience during handover periods.
- 3.17. There must be a 15 minute difference with core start and finish shift times between the same roles, at different control rooms to allow for resilience. For example, West EOC functional shifts will start from 06:00 and East EOC functional shift will all start from 06:15.
- 3.18. New colleagues joining the organisation will be allocated a rota line based on team numbers to ensure a correct level of service is deliverable.
- 3.19. A staff member moving teams or joining a new team within the same function in EOC will not constitute a rota change.
- 3.20. The Senior Leadership Team will review team numbers on a regular basis to ensure an equal and fair balance of staff numbers on core teams to delivery a safe service for our patients 24/7. This will take place a minimum of once per quarter.
- 3.21. Where movement of staff might be required to re-balance core teams, staff will be asked if they wish to move on a voluntary basis in the first instance. If this is not achieved within 21 days of the initial request by the manager then the trust reserves the right to enforce a team move with 90 day's notice. Taking into account enable passports, flexible working agreements and any conflict of interest concerns.
- 3.22. Where applicable, a colleague's allocated relief shifts must cover any shift time, pattern or requirement within their rota, however must be aligned to the shifts times and parameters set out within this policy. Outside of planning unplanned relief will appear in the rota as continuous days. Therefore, a 48 hour rest period will be required after a relief week. Before a relief week, the latest rostered shift must finish no later than 00:00 the day before the relief period starting.
- 3.23. Relief shift allocation within EOC must not be rostered to exceed 48hrs a week however staff can request to have hours moved into a week where the total rostered hours exceed 48hr - Working time regulations still apply.

- 3.24. When relief hours are allocated to night shifts, a maximum of 2 night per shifts may be planned within one calendar week. Ideally, these should be 2 consecutive nights.
- 3.25. If 2-night shifts are required to be planned during any relief week and scheduling are unable to allocate 2 consecutive nights, the allocation will be 1 night followed by no less than 48 hours prior to the next night shift. This will be from the finish of the first night shift to the start of the following night shift.
- 3.26. Consecutive blocks of same type of shifts (Eg all day or all night shifts) must not exceed 48 hours in a row excluding mealbreaks. A 48-hour maximum working week (excluding breaks) must not be exceeded.
- 3.27. A minimum change-over period for nights to days is required in all rotas. The window for this will be between 0600hrs to 0730hrs unless a majority vote of local colleagues chooses to slide the window to no earlier than 0530hrs and no later than 0730hrs. The Senior Manager and Rota Writing Group will update the colleagues affected of the window to be used.
- 3.28. Day and link shifts must start no earlier than the window agreed in 3.25 and finish no later than 0200 hrs. Night shifts must start no later than 2300hrs and must finish between 0530hrs and 0730hrs.
- 3.29. A minimum rest period of 48 hours must be given following a single night shift or the last of a series of night shifts and following a relief week.
- 3.30. Where applicable, one late link may follow a night shift. This is to support colleagues to convert back to a normal sleep pattern. This shift will be treated as if it were the same as preceding night shifts for the purposes of 3.27 (i.e., the 48-hour minimum rest period is calculated from the time at which the shift would have finished had it been the same duration as the preceding night shift).
- 3.31. With mutual agreement with the leadership team, colleagues may undertake overtime shifts starting or finishing outside of the parameters of the restrictions within paragraph 3.26/3.27
- 3.32. Whilst meeting the needs of the Trust, colleagues who work the rotas must have the opportunity to undertake a fair balance of shifts. This must also apply to relief shifts, ensuring a look back at previous relief weeks to ensure a fair balance of weekends and nights for EOC staff. The look back will be undertaken by the relevant OUM and the head of scheduling prior to release to staff.
- 3.33. Where applicable, all rotas must also have a balance of shifts that give colleagues a fair opportunity to accrue unsocial hours in line with Agenda for Change Section 2 or Annex 5.

- 3.34. Although a minimum 28 days is the agreed period of notice for relief planning, the trust recognises that, as a Civil Protection Agency, it is dutybound to provide a service to the public. Recognising that the unforeseen can happen, for example the trust escalates to REAP 4, the trust reserves the right to review and request that staff alter planned relief hours with less than 28 calendar days' notice. In any circumstance, the re-assignment of a shift with less than 28 calendar days' notice may only occur with the explicit agreement and acknowledgment of the employee concerned.
- 3.35. In line with AfC staff will be entitled to claim £15 short notice shift change, for contractual shifts, if less than 24 hours' notice.
- 3.36. Staff working in the call handling function on a 2 week repeating demand pattern will be considered as working flexibly and not occupy a rota line.
- 3.37. Rotas in EOC must be function based with required demand levels and not base location focused. For example Call Handling and Dispatch Rotas, Not Crawley EOC Rota & Medway EOC Rotas. This mean same roles in different control rooms must follow the same rota pattern.
- 3.38. When Voting for proposed new rotas, staff in EOC will vote as a function and not an EOC.
- 3.39. Only staff affected by the proposed rota change will be permitted to vote. If you are on a secondment you will only be able to vote in line with your substantive position.
- 3.40. Rotas within EOC should be reviewed yearly to ensure the changing demand profiles are reflected within core working patterns. The Senior Leadership team reserves the right to perform a full rota review at any point while giving the correct notice period outlined in this policy.

4 Responsibilities

- 4.1. The Chief Executive Officer has overall responsibility and accountability for all aspects of unsocial hours and rota parameters, and for ensuring these are in line with Agenda for Change.
- 4.2. The senior department head (normally 8b Manager) has responsibility for rota control and is responsible for implementing the procedure.
- 4.3. All managers who have responsibility for rota parameters have responsibility for monitoring and audit.

- 4.4. The Rota Review Panel will meet as and when required, and no later than 14 days after receiving a rota from the submitting colleague.
- 4.5. The Rota Review Panel has responsibility to assure the quality of rotas in line with the Rota Parameters Procedure. It will inform the presenting manager if the rota is not compliant, provide reasons for this and raise any concerns at the Rota Review Panel meetings.

5 Audit and Review

- 5.1. This procedure will be reviewed every three years or sooner where there is an introduction of new legislation, codes of practice or national standards (including changes to Unsocial Hours calculations via amendments to the Agenda for Change Handbook).
- 5.2. In line with all other procedures, the effectiveness of this procedure will be audited by the responsible Management Group at regular intervals, and initially six months after its approval and dissemination.
- 5.3. Effectiveness will be reviewed using the tools set out in the Trust's Policy and Procedure for the Development and Management of Trust Policies and Procedures (also known as the Policy on Policies).
- 5.4. This document will additionally be reviewed in its entirety if feedback from employees indicates that the policy is not working effectively.
- 5.5. All changes made to this procedure will go through the governance route for development and approval as set out in the Policy on Policies.

6 Equality Analysis

- 6.1. The Trust believes in fairness and equality, and values diversity in its role as both a provider of services and as an employer. The Trust aims to provide accessible services that respect the needs of each individual and exclude no-one. It is committed to comply with the Human Rights Act and to meeting the Equality Act 2010, which identifies the following nine protected characteristics: Age, Disability, Race, Religion and Belief, Gender Reassignment, Sexual Orientation, Sex, Marriage and Civil Partnership and Pregnancy and Maternity.
- 6.2. Compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty: If a contractor carries out functions of a public nature, then for the duration of the

contract, the contractor or supplier would itself be considered a public authority and have the duty to comply with the equalities duties when carrying out those functions.

7 Financial Checkpoint

- 7.1. To ensure that any financial implications of changes in policy or procedure are considered in advance of document approval, document authors are required to seek approval from the Finance Team before submitting their document for final approval.
- 7.2. This document has been confirmed by Finance to have no unbudgeted financial implications.

8 Associated Documentation

- 8.1. Annex 5/6 and section 2 of agenda for change (Provisions for unsocial payments for ambulance Staff).
- 8.2. Jointly agreed interpretation of Annex 5: (Provisions for unsocial hours payments for ambulance staff). Organisation change policy and procedure.
- 8.3. Working Time Directive Policy
- 8.4. Flexible working policy.

9 References

- 9.1. Agenda for Change Annex's 5 and 6 (Provisions for payments for ambulance staff).