



Western Health
and Social Care Trust

NURSING AND MIDWIFERY ROSTERING POLICY

January 2011



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Administered By	Directorate of Primary Care and Older People

1.0. Introduction

This document presents a Rostering Policy for the nursing and midwifery workforce of the Western Health and Social Care Trust. The policy aims to promote good practice in the preparation of rosters, and to guide Line Managers and their staff on the principles of effective rostering.

Nursing and midwifery teams largely provide a twenty four hours, seven days per week service. The responsibility of preparing rosters that ensure the appropriate number of skilled staff are available to safely manage the care of the patient or client group, whilst maintaining a work-life balance for the staff can be a complex and time consuming process. This complexity was acknowledged by the Health Finance Management Association (HFMA).

Roster planning is predominantly a manual process, although the Trust has procured an electronic solution which will be implemented throughout the nursing and midwifery teams from the autumn of 2010. The implementation will be project managed and should be completed within 18 months. The electronic rostering system will greatly assist the Ward Sisters, Charge Nurses and Team Leaders in the timely preparation of rosters and enable them to effectively manage the staffing resource available to them. The system also has the capacity to produce valuable management information which is not possible from a manual system. Regardless of the method used, this policy presents a number of good practice principles to be adhered to in the preparation of effective rosters.

2.0. Scope and Principles

This policy is applicable to nursing and midwifery staff where rosters are used to manage the duty hours of the teams to support the delivery of Trust services. The overarching principles underpinning rostering are to ensure the effective management of the Trust's staffing resource to:

- Ensure safe and appropriate staffing levels for all wards and departments using flexible, fair and consistent rosters.

- Minimise clinical and non clinical risk by ensuring that the appropriate number and skill mix of staff is available.
- Ensure that rosters are prepared using existing resources to meet demand.
- Support the effective management of staffing establishments, thereby generating efficiencies in the nursing and midwifery workforce across all services.
- Improve the monitoring of absence across the organisation, enabling comparisons, and identifying trends.
- Improve the quality of management information on the deployment of nursing and midwifery staff across the full range of services.
- Ensure that staff who work part-time, or fixed roster patterns, are not disadvantaged through the workings of this policy.

3.0 Responsibilities

3.1. Managers

Responsibility for reviewing and updating staffing establishments lies with the Assistant Director of Nursing (Workforce Planning and Modernisation) and the General Managers and Lead Nurses. The General Managers are responsible for the safe staffing of each ward/department, even if she/he does not undertake the task of producing the duty roster. The General Managers will monitor rosters, produce analysis reports, and approve all shifts where temporary staff are requested in excess of the funded allocation.

Ward Sisters/Charge Nurses are responsible for ensuring that their expenditure does not exceed the allocated budget for the ward/department and that the baseline staffing has been agreed within this allocation.

3.2. Staff

All staff have a responsibility to fulfil their contract hours to meet the needs of the service. The Trust has supported the implementation of flexible working policies and

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thus will endeavour to accommodate requests where possible. Staff must be considerate of their colleagues, and be agreeable to fulfil all aspects of the duty roster, including evening, night and week end shifts.

4.0 Production of Staff Rosters

In addition to the requirements of the European Working Time Directive (EWTD), the following principles should be applied in the production of the staff roster.

- 4.1. All ward/department duties must commence on a Monday.
- 4.2. All rosters should be designed to adequately cover service requirement utilising permanent staff proportionately across all shifts.
- 4.3. The roster must reflect the skill mix and numbers of staff required to safely manage the workload on each shift.
- 4.4. Shifts given a high priority must be filled first, such as night duty, weekends and bank holidays.
- 4.5. All shifts should be equitably allocated to all staff in accordance with their contract of employment, the Trust's policy on Flexible Working, and the team's overall plan for rotation to day/night shifts and annual leave.
- 4.6. Managers should endeavour to comply with all reasonable requests. All staff must have equal access to requests for particular shifts or time off. Staff will be required to prioritise special requests to inform the Line Managers.
- 4.7. Requests for time off during popular periods such as Bank Holidays and School Holidays should be considered equitably.
- 4.8. The roster must reflect the essential skills required to provide continuity and coordination.

- 4.9. Senior staff should be rostered to provide management cover for the ward/department across the working week.
- 4.10. Where staff members are working a preferred roster pattern this must be recorded on the roster to avoid misinterpretation.
- 4.11. The completed duty roster must be approved by the Ward Sister/Charge Nurse/Team Leader or designated deputy.
- 4.12. Rosters should be planned for 4 week periods and completed at least two weeks in advance of the start date of the four week roster period. This will enable staff to better manage their personal arrangements whilst providing more time to fill any vacant shifts.

5.0 Changes to Roster

- 5.1. Staff wishing to change their roster should, in the first instance, attempt to exchange shifts with other appropriate team members. Changes should be made with colleague from the same Agenda for Change band level, and with consideration to the overall skill mix of all shifts being changed.
- 5.2. All changes must follow the principles outlined above, be approved by either the Ward Sister/Charge Nurse or the authorised deputy, and should not result in the use of bank/agency staff or overtime payment.
- 5.3. No member of staff should be required to change their rota with less than twenty four hours notice, unless in extreme circumstances when it is necessary to provide essential cover. Any such change to the rota can only be made following discussion and agreement with the member of staff involved.
- 5.4. When there are unforeseen circumstances, for example, a member of staff reporting absent at short notice, the manager may request a member of staff to work additional hours. In these circumstances an agreement will be reached by

the Ward Sister/Charge Nurse as to how these hours will be returned or remunerated.

- 5.5. Shift changes should be kept to a minimum.
- 5.6. A staff member with an allocated student should not change a shift without ensuring that the student changes with them, or is allocated to another suitable member of staff, and that this is noted on the roster.
- 5.7. New staff must have a preceptorship period and this should be allocated on an individual basis and reflected on the roster.
- 5.8. New staff should work with their preceptor during the preceptorship period.

6.0 Unsocial Hours/Time Owing

- 6.1. Unsocial hours should be distributed evenly and fairly, in accordance with contractual restrictions.
- 6.2. Any time worked over and above shift times should be authorised by the relevant manager.
- 6.3. Any time claimed back must be recorded and authorised by the manager.
- 6.4. Ward Sisters/Charge Nurses and Team Leaders must ensure that any staff hours that do not balance over a four week period are balanced over an eight week period. Where possible staff should be allowed to take time owing at the earliest opportunity, provided adequate notice is given to enable the provision of cover.
- 6.5. All time owing or time in lieu must be agreed in advance where possible. Any hours accrued or taken must be recorded.

- 6.6. Managers must ensure that no more than twenty hours time owing either way is allowed. In the event of accumulating time owing in excess of twenty hours, this must be authorised by the General Manager during office hours and the On Call Manager out of hours.
- 6.7. Hours agreed above twenty hours must be taken within twenty eight days and any difficulties in achieving this must be brought to the attention of the General Manager. Managers may not unreasonably refuse to allow time off in respect of time owing; however, where this is unavoidable, it will not result in the loss of any hours.
- 6.8. Staff who are unable to take time of in lieu within three months, for operational reasons, must be paid in line with Agenda for Change terms and conditions.
- 6.9. The booking of time owing should follow the same principles as for annual leave in that it should not incur unnecessary expenditure.

7.0 Annual Leave

- 7.1. All annual leave must be approved by the Ward Sister/Charge Nurse. Fifty percent of annual leave, including time allowed for bank holidays, should normally be booked by 31 May and the remainder by 31 October. A maximum of five days may be carried forward to the following leave year subject to the approval of the Line Manager.
- 7.2. All reasonable steps must be taken to ensure that all annual leave is taken within the relevant financial year.
- 7.3. No holiday bookings should be made until the annual leave request has been approved by the Line Manager.
- 7.4. When a member of staff moves to another ward/department or team, pre booked annual leave will be honoured where possible.

- 7.5. Annual leave for school holidays, Christmas, New Year, and other religious festivals and celebrations will be shared equally amongst those requesting leave and will be contingent on service needs being met as a priority.
- 7.6. Annual leave will be allocated in hours.
- 7.7. Each ward/department should calculate how many qualified and unqualified staff can be given annual leave in any one week. An agreed number should be set and adhered to. Staff should be made aware of the need to maintain this number throughout the year. Should this number not be met by way of requests, the ward /department manager will allocate leave following discussions with the staff concerned.
- 7.8. Annual leave must be booked before a roster is planned. Annual leave requested after this can only be granted if staffing levels permit.

8.0 Skill Mix and Shift Staffing

- 8.1. Each ward/department must work to an agreed funded establishment which is reviewed every two years or as a result of a service reconfiguration.
- 8.2. Each ward/department should have an agreed level of staff with specific competences on each shift, as agreed with the Ward Manager and General Manager. This will include a designated nurse in charge of each shift who has the required skills for a coordinating role.
- 8.3. In areas where the workload is known to vary over the week, staff numbers and skill mix should reflect this.
- 8.4. The rostering of senior staff must be compatible with managerial and supervision requirements.

- 8.5. Shift patterns should maximise off duty time wherever possible, for example, nurses should have two consecutive days off.
- 8.6. Staff will be required to work a variety of shifts and shift patterns as agreed with their manager. Managers must ensure that hours do not exceed an average of forty eight hours per week over a seventeen week reference period in line with the European Working Time Directive.
- 8.7. Night shifts should be kept together wherever possible. No more than four nights in a row should be allocated to a member of staff.
- 8.8. Weekend shifts are defined as Friday night, Saturday day or night, Sunday day or night.
- 8.9. Senior staff should work opposite shifts.
- 8.10. Band 7, Ward Sisters/Charge Nurses/Team Leaders should routinely work Monday to Friday unless rostered to provide site management cover over weekends. Bank 6 staff should work a maximum of one weekend per rota period, although this can be split days and nights if required as agreed by the Service Manager.
- 8.11. Other Bands of staff may have a minimum of one full weekend off per four week roster period in normal circumstances. Additional weekends can be rostered if the circumstances allow.
- 8.12. Student nurses should be rostered with their mentor to ensure 40% contact with their mentor. If their mentor is unavailable, an associate mentor should be allocated as soon as possible.
- 8.13. All shifts of six hours or more should include a minimum thirty minute unpaid break. Shifts of twelve hours or longer should have a minimum of a sixty minute unpaid break.
- 8.14. The Ward Sister/Charge Nurse is responsible for ensuring that breaks are facilitated. Breaks should not be taken at the end of the shift as their purpose is to provide rest time during the shift.

- 8.15. The maximum number of consecutive day shifts of eight hours or less recommended for staff to work is five. Staff may work more than this (to a maximum of eight) if they specifically request this. The maximum number of consecutive twelve hour shifts (days and nights) recommended for staff to work is four.
- 8.16. A member of staff must inform the Ward Sister/Charge Nurse/Team Leader if they are unable to fulfil a shift giving as much notice as possible before the commencement of their shift. At this point a time and date will be agreed for the sick member of staff to update their manager.

9.0 Staff Requests

- 9.1. Staff can make change requests via existing paper based systems or electronically using the rostering system.
- 9.2. To ensure equity all staff will be allowed **four requests** within a four week rota period.
- 9.3. Requests must be prioritised by the member of staff to identify the level of importance to them to inform the Line Manager when deciding which of the requests can be granted in the light of service needs and other competing requests.
- 9.4. Application can be made for regular or specific shifts or days off (Personal pattern). They must be agreed and reviewed quarterly by the manager who must take into account service needs and equity for other staff members before agreeing to the request.
- 9.5. Staff cannot assume that their requests will be accommodated. This includes essential requests. Service needs must take priority. Staff should be considerate of their colleagues, and the requirement that they fulfil their fair share of weekend and night shifts. If annual leave is being taken during this period, off duty requests should be pro rata.

- 9.6 Requests from staff who typically make few requests will be given higher priority than requests from staff making numerous requests within the prioritisation process.
- 9.7. The closing date for making requests will be three weeks before the roster is due to be worked.
- 9.8. Personal patterns are not to be considered as requests.

10.0 Booking of Temporary/Bank/Agency Staff

- 10.1. Unfilled shifts may be forwarded to be considered for bank nurse cover when the Ward Sister/Charge Nurse has approved the roster. Approval for bank or agency nursing cover should be sought from the General Manager in line with Directorate procedures.
- 10.2. Replacement staff should not be booked without assessing the need for them, the shift hours required and determining if the booking will be within the funded establishment.
- 10.3. It is not permissible to cover annual leave requests that exceed the documented acceptable level for the ward/department with bank nursing cover.
- 10.4. Bank and agency staff should not be used to cover bank holiday shifts unless approved by the General Manager.
- 10.5. Bank and agency staff should not be rostered to take charge of a ward unless they are familiar with the ward, have completed a ward induction programme and are competent and willing to do so. This must be approved by the Line Manager.
- 10.6. Night and weekend shifts must be covered by substantive staff whenever possible. Where this is not possible it must be escalated to the attention of the General Manager.
- 10.7. Study leave should not be covered by bank/agency staff.

- 10.8. Staff who have informed the ward/department/team that they cannot work specific times or dates should not be working these on the bank or agency.

This policy is designed to establish the ground rules to ensure that rosters provide safe staffing levels with competent staff while preserving equity among all staff across the range of shifts to be covered.

Glossary of Terms

1) Fixed Roster Pattern

This refers to a roster pattern that has been applied for and approved by senior management.

2) Preferred Roster Pattern

This refers to a roster pattern that a member of staff has negotiated with their line manager for a time limited period.

3) General Manager/Head of Service

This refers to a manager at tier four in the organisational structure. This acknowledges that differing role titles may be used in different Directorates.

EQUALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS STATEMENT

The Western Health and Social Care Trust's equality and human rights statutory obligations have been considered during and development of this policy.

Signed _____(Chairman)

Date: _____