



National Health Service in Scotland  
Management Executive

St. Andrew's House  
Edinburgh EH1 3DG

Dear Colleague

NHS MAINTENANCE STAFF: HOURS OF WORK AND  
ORGANISATION OF WORK

Summary

1. The 1992/93 pay settlement for NHS maintenance staff (set out in NHS Circulars PCS(MC) 92/1 and 92/2) provides for local agreement on a self-financing reduction in the working week from 39 hours to 37 hours. In view of this, you may find it helpful to have the attached advice about maintenance staff working and the Labour Management System.

2. Implementation of these arrangements for maintenance staff could set a valuable precedent for other groups in the local negotiation of conditions of services designed to achieve improved working.

3. The new agreement enables all conditions of service, other than national rates of pay and General Whitley Council conditions, to be negotiated locally. This provides opportunities for management to secure improved performance and working practices which may go beyond those required to generate a self-financing reduction in attendance hours.

Action

4. The Management Advisory Panel (MAP) will be monitoring progress on the introduction of local agreements including what changes in working practices are achieved and any lessons of general application will be conveyed to Health Boards and Trusts. The Management Executive would be interested to know of any problems arising in Scotland to ensure that the details are passed to the MAP.

5. The Audit Commission Report "NHS Estate Management and Property Maintenance" (HMSO March 1991, ISBN 0 11 886051 8) will provide assistance and additional information on the Labour Management System in the context of the maintenance requirements of the NHS estate.

30 November 1992

Addressees

For action:

General Managers,  
Health Boards

General Manager,  
Common Services Agency

General Manager,  
State Hospital

Chief Executives, and  
Chief Executive  
Designate, NHS Trusts

For information

General Manager,  
Health Education Board  
for Scotland

Enquiries to:

Mr J McElhinney or  
Ms L Ford  
Directorate of  
Manpower  
NHS Management  
Executive  
Room 61A or Room 63  
St Andrew's House  
EDINBURGH  
EH1 3DE

Tel: 031 244 2473

031 244 2481

Fax: 031 244 2837

6. The National Policy Advisory Group on incentive bonus schemes (Buildings and Engineering Steering Group) can provide further information on the Labour Management System and the Works Information Management System (WIMS). If specialist advice is required and you are unaware of a local source this can be obtained on the telephone numbers given in Note (ii) of paragraph 1 of Appendix B.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Andrew Matheson". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above a solid horizontal line that serves as a separator between the signature and the typed name below.

A J MATHESON  
Director of Manpower

PRIVATE SECTOR INITIATIVES

1. Evidence from other organisations that have recently negotiated a reduction in the working week indicates that nearly all of the agreements in the engineering industry provide for a reduction in hours from 39 hours to 37 hours

2. Agreements contain provisions for offsetting the cost of the hours reduction to the employer. One of the most common offsetting measures is the reduction or abolition of tea breaks and/or washing up time. Other measures include:-

- (a) job flexibility
- (b) control of absences
- (c) increased use of information technology
- (d) increased use of power rather than hand tools
- (e) closer monitoring of overtime and allowances
- (f) promotion of self-monitoring of work standards
- (g) maximise benefits of multi-skilling
- (h) introduction of quality standards
- (i) use of temporary labour extended
- (j) greater use of contract labour
- (k) meal breaks staggered
- (l) change in shift patterns

POSSIBLE AREAS OF SAVINGS:

1. OPERATION OF LABOUR MANAGEMENT SCHEME.( LMS )

a) Control of LMS

The following areas where savings could be made were identified by the Audit Commission in their report:

\* Accurate work measurement

Jobs issued with inflated values, allowing inaccurate, inflated performances to be easily achieved.

ACTION - Audit of Work Measurement system.

\* Work Coverage

Very low amount of work measured before issue. Gives the Tradesman no target time and the opportunity to offset times on one job against another.

ACTION - Increase measured work coverage.

\* Accurate time recording

Tradesmen inaccurately book times against jobs thus ensuring a good performance.

ACTION - Police times booked.

\* Supervision levels

Levels of supervision high in relation to the number of Tradesman being supervised.

ACTION - Audit levels of supervision.

\* Diverted time levels

Levels of diverted time too high. Utilisation, the time spent by Tradesmen working, is too low.

ACTION - Audit of time spent on diverted work.

\* Reduction in Relaxation Allowances

Reduction in the allowance by 3% thus giving a workshop value of 12% and a site value of 15%.

\* Reduction in Average Auxiliary Allowance

Reduction in the elemental build up of the allowance by reducing the shift change allowance and the progressive planning allowance.

NOTES :- i. A reduction in the working week from 39 to 37 hours requires an increase in output of 5.4% in order to maintain the same level of productivity. This increase in output can be achieved by implementing the recommended 'Amendments to the LMS'.

ii. Specialist advice is required if management wish to pursue the 'Amendments to the LMS.' This is available from the local National Policy Advisory Group Building & Engineering trainer. If the local trainer is unknown then advice can be obtained on the following telephone numbers:

0532- 837029

0277- 228470

iii. Further work is being undertaken to improve the productivity of the LMS and reduce the overheads by fully computerising the system from work ordering and work measurement through to planning and feed back. This work is being developed by WIMS and will be available for issue early in 1993.

## 2. REDUCTION IN SICKNESS LEVELS

The Audit Commission also commented on sickness levels which they stated should be in the region of 5 - 7% of total attendance hours.

## 3. LEVEL OF PLANNED PREVENTATIVE MAINTENANCE (PPM)

The level of PPM should be the subject of review. In many units the profile of the site has changed due to closures but the PPM has not been updated accordingly.

#### 4. USE OF MULTISKILLING

#### APPENDIX B

Substantial increases in productivity can be achieved by a full implementation of the national multi-skilling agreement for electricians, fitters and plumbers.

#### 5. PROVISION OF MAINTENANCE AT OUTLYING SITES.

Travelling time to outlying sites can be substantial and consideration should be given to employing multi-skilled operatives outstationed as the single maintenance operative or the employment of contractors.

#### 6. TENDERING FOR MAINTENANCE SERVICES.

Savings may be achieved by the selective, controlled tendering of specific services.

#### 7. SHIFT PATTERNS

Opportunities to achieve savings and increases in productivity are available by the elimination or rationalisation of shift patterns. The opportunities will however vary from site to site depending on current working practices.

##### \* Core times

Consideration should be given to implementing core working times from 0700 to 2200 for which basic rates of pay will be paid. This will in many places reduce the need for overtime to maintain operational departments where access in normal working hours is not available.

##### \* Continental Shifts

The implementation of continental shift patterns which give 7 days a week cover without the payment of enhanced rates at weekends are an opportunity to improve the cost per standard hour.

The above list is not intended to be exhaustive and many other opportunities may exist at local levels for the improvement of productivity and the lowering of cost per standard hour.