

Thursday 26 March 2026

Implementation of Agenda for Change Reduced Working Week – transitional week As per the Agenda for Change agreement for 2023/24, the working week for staff employed on these contracts will reduce to 36 hours (pro-rata) from 1 April 2026. As this date falls on a Wednesday, the Reduced Working Week (RWW) will **commence on Monday 30 March 2026** for rostering purposes. **Staff should therefore be rostered to work their shift pattern based on 36 hours per week (pro rata for part time staff)**. This has been agreed nationally, to ensure a consistent approach.

For pay purposes RWW will be implemented on 1 April 2026. There is no detriment to staff in having rosters based on 36 hours per week (pro rata for part time staff) from 30 March 2026 and pay being based on this from 1 April 2026.

World Cup public holiday As shared via the intranet news yesterday, NHS boards will observe the public holiday on Monday 15 June 2026. [A letter providing further detail can be read via this link](#) and we'll have more in this brief in the coming weeks.

Planned downtime – ePayroll and eExpenses Due to End of Year processing, there will be no ePayroll & eExpenses system availability from tomorrow (Friday) until Tuesday 31 March. Both systems should be back online on Wednesday, but this cannot be guaranteed. ePayslips have been released early in anticipation of this system unavailability and can be viewed now. The monthly payday for March is Tuesday 31 March. [Information concerning ePayslips can be found by following this link.](#)

Common Staffing Methodology (CSM) resources The Staffing Level Tool Schedule for 2026-27 is now available for your familiarisation and onward sharing with colleagues. Along with this, the Standard Operating Procedure: Staffing Establishment Management through Application of CSM has been updated to reflect the recent transition from Acute Sector Portfolios to a Divisional structure.

A new CSM Governance and Assurance Routes Flow Chart has also been introduced to provide clear, consistent, and structured decision-making pathways across Divisions, HSCPs and Corporate Directorates. This strengthens appropriate staffing decisions, supports budget alignment and risk escalation processes, and promotes clarity of accountability. It also reinforces governance, oversight, and assurance in line with NHS Grampian's responsibilities under the Health and Care Staffing (Scotland) Act.

[To view all the above-named documents, please follow this link to the CSM intranet page.](#) Please contact gram.staffingleveltools@nhs.scot with any queries.

Pensions update The Scottish Public Pensions Agency (SPPA) published a new circular earlier this month, to notify employers of the increase to public service pensions with effect from 6 April 2026. It also advises of the rate to be used for the annual revaluation of Career Average Revalued Earnings (CARE) benefits accrued in the NHS Pension Scheme (Scotland) 2015 for active members. [The circular is available to read via this link.](#)

Retail catering – price increases Effective from 6 April 2026 there will be a small increase in prices across all retail catering outlets. Retail catering is not subsidised in any way, and as a service is expected to break even. The rising cost of raw ingredients, changes in working patterns, and changes in customer behaviour, make this a persistent challenge. We value your custom and hope you can continue to support retail catering in the future.

Changes to rail refund rules From 1 April 2026, if you have any of the following types of rail ticket – Anytime, Off-Peak, Day Travelcards, Rover tickets, Ranger tickets - and decide not to use it, you will have **until 11.59pm the day before it becomes valid** to request a refund from the retailer who sold it to you. After that you will only be able to claim a refund if your train service has been delayed or cancelled, or if an exceptional circumstance has stopped you from travelling. National Rail is ending the practice of accepting refund claims up to 28 days after the date of travel.

For bookings made through the General Office for staff travel you will need to let us know **before 4pm the day before travel** if you no longer need to travel and need us to request a refund for you, otherwise we will be billed for the full cost of the ticket even if you are no longer travelling. This change does not affect requesting refunds for service disruptions and train cancellations, refunds for these can be claimed as usual.

Recognition for R&D Director Congratulations to Professor Seshadri Vasan, our director of research and development, on being awarded the inaugural Taylor Medal by the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow. The medal recognises his work in patient care, innovation, and leadership. Throughout his international career, Professor Vasan's research and commitment to knowledge exchange have played an important role in the fight against dangerous pathogens, including COVID-19, dengue, ebola and zika. His work has helped Grampian become one of the UK's Commercial Research Delivery Centres for pioneering clinical trials, creating opportunities to test new treatments and address unmet needs. He also co-leads on research inclusion, skills, training and workforce development for the network of centres.

Tune of the day Ann Quirk (The Legend) is retiring from the NHS after 35 years. All your colleagues & friends within the physiotherapy & orthopaedics departments at Woodend Hospital wish you all the very best in your new adventures! They've requested [Heroes by Tide Lines](#) as she is a hero in their eyes. (EP)

If you want to request a tune, follow up on items included in this brief, or suggest an item for sharing, drop us an email via gram.communications@nhs.scot