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RCM Employment principles for developing continuity teams in England when an inclusive pay arrangement is proposed

The RCM is supportive of midwifery continuity of carer models as the foundation for safe, woman-centred maternity care, recognising the profound impact it can have on outcomes for women and families. In developing services that deliver continuity of carer midwives and managers may consider a move to an inclusive pay arrangement, also known as salary 'uplift'. This approach is sometimes used as a way to support the development of more flexible working arrangements and reduce bureaucracy for individual staff and managers. This document seeks to support members, RCM Workplace Representatives and service managers to ensure that any proposed changes to pay, terms and conditions are fair and not to the detriment of midwives seeking to improve the quality of services delivered.

The NHS Terms and Conditions of Service Handbook (Agenda for Change) sets out the contractual basis for remunerating midwives and MSWs for unsocial hours working and overtime, as well as principles for agreeing on-call arrangements locally. It is not mandatory to apply a salary uplift when developing continuity teams. The Handbook provisions enable continuity teams to work successfully without any changes necessary, however the RCM has developed the following principles to guide discussions and decisions when a salary uplift is being considered by maternity teams.

1. NHS Trusts are able to agree locally, variations to standard NHS terms and conditions e.g. annualised hours, paying for unsocial hours and on-call on a prospective rather than retrospective basis. Employees must not be at a disadvantage (paid less than their actual hours worked) through these arrangements, policies for monitoring should be in place to ensure that this isn't the case. Whilst it is recognised that NHS Foundation Trusts have additional freedoms as set out in Annex 11 of the NHS Terms and Conditions of Service Handbook (Agenda for Change), the principles set out in this document still apply.
2. It is imperative that any variation to terms and conditions must be negotiated and approved by recognised trade unions through local staff-sides.
3. Midwifery departments looking to introduce any of the above changes when developing continuity teams should engage the RCM through the relevant Regional Officer. The Regional Officer will then liaise with the RCM at a national level to ensure that the NHS Terms and Conditions of Service Handbook (Agenda for Change) is not undermined and midwives and MSWs do not suffer a detriment (made worse off compared to a midwife/MSW in an equivalent role being paid according to standard arrangements).



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4. Detailed modelling should be undertaken in advance of any proposals and shared with trade unions and staff.
5. A risk assessment and benefits analysis of proposals should be carried out in partnership with the RCM and other recognised trade unions.
6. The midwifery continuity of carer model of care has the potential, demonstrated in research, to improve a range of outcomes for maternity service users. Any such improved outcomes are also of benefit to the organisations providing care. Organisations may therefore consider recognising this potential through developing payment and uplift proposals that could incentivise staff to work in this way.
7. Proposals should be clear and transparent as to what is included, for example, whether an uplift is inclusive of on calls alone or on-call + unsocial hours.
8. A fundamental change to terms and conditions must be subject to both individual and collective consultation with affected members of staff.
9. Any change that is agreed and implemented must be subject to a joint review process and equality impact assessment.
10. Records should be maintained in parallel to evidence staff remuneration under the new arrangements and what would have been received if no change to terms and conditions was made to ensure there is no detriment (considering both remuneration and pension implications).

Useful Resources

Pay and Agenda for Change: <https://www.rcm.org.uk/supporting/pay>

Continuity of carer: <https://www.rcm.org.uk/promoting/professional-practice/continuity-of-carer/>

RCM 'Nuts and Bolts' publication which describes some of the key guidance that relates to terms and conditions that are of relevance in introducing continuity models of care: <https://www.rcm.org.uk/publications/publications/continuity-models-the-nuts-and-bolts-england-and-wales/>