



Circular 2/2022

24th June 2022

To: Ms Anne Marie Hoey, National Director of Human Resources, HSE
CEOs of NCSAs
HR Managers of NCSAs

**Revision of Working Hours in the Public Health Service:
Implementation of the Independent Hours Body Recommendations in relation to the
Haddington Road Agreement (HRA) Hours and Updated Flexitime Arrangements for
Public Health Sector Employees**

Dear All

I am directed by the Minister for Health to convey the following instructions in relation to:

- A reduction in working hours
- Changes to flexitime

The provisions of this Circular apply to public health sector employees who were impacted by the HRA additional hours requirement. I also attach DPER Circular 14/2022 and associate FAQ document in respect of this matter for Civil Servants.

WORKING HOURS

Additional HRA hours implemented in 2013 will be restored for impacted public health sector employees with effect from 1 July 2022.

Working hours for any staff category/grade will not be less than the level that applied prior to the HRA, in this regard a minimum floor of 35 hours per week will apply. Employees who had red-circled weekly working hours under Appendix 9 of the HRA will be subject to the standardised minimum full-time working hours of 35 hours (pro rata for part-time employees) – see FAQ for further detail.

Attendance

Adjustments will need to be made to attendance/rosters to reflect the revised working hours including the revision of standard attendance periods where those apply by HSE HR/NCSA HR Managers.

Annual Leave

Annual leave entitlement will not be impacted by the restoration of hours.

Where a public health sector employee availed of the option under the terms of previous public service agreements to remain on pre-HRA working hours, they may elect to remain on those hours or move to the revised working week with an appropriate pay adjustment in both cases.

FLEXI-TIME (IF APPLICABLE)

Flexi-time in the public health sector, if applicable, should be revised to take account of the adjustment of the restoration of the hours as appropriate.

Management has the responsibility and the right to actively manage flexi-time in their organisations, if applicable, to ensure that business needs across the full working day are met. Flexi-time is only possible as long as it supports and enhances efficient operations. In particular, all areas must always be appropriately staffed during the working day.

The normal operation of flexi-time, or equivalent attendance management rules, including any flexi-time accruals and deficits, continues to remain temporarily suspended since the onset of the pandemic for those employees who are working under different arrangements. This includes those who are working from home and working different shift patterns etc.

Flexitime arrangements were re-introduced with effect from 24 August 2020 and/or commencement of the organisation's next viable flexi period only in circumstances where employees are attending the employer's work premises and are working their normal, pre-COVID work attendance patterns.

Grades affected

Flexitime, where it applies, will only be available for staff up to Higher Executive Officer (HEO) grade and its equivalents across the public health sector, as appropriate.

Queries

Requests for clarification from employees should be directed to the employees own HR Manager where they are employed.

Requests for clarification from HR managers in the HSE and Section 38 agencies should be directed to the HSE National Employees Relations Service info.t@hse.ie who if required, will raise the matter further with the Department of Health at National_HR_Unit@health.gov.ie

Requests for clarification from HR Managers in the NCSAs should be raised directly with National_HR_Unit@health.gov.ie

Circulation

The contents of this circular should be brought to the attention of all HR managers, payroll staff, and all employees of the HSE, Section 38 Agencies and the NCSAs.

Yours sincerely


Mairéad Keating
Principal Officer
Industrial Relations Unit