



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 FAQ

1. Why are working hours being reduced?

The 'Independent Body Examining Additional Working Hours in the Public Service' was established under the Building Momentum public service agreement. It was tasked with making recommendations to address the additional working time introduced for many civil and public servants under the 2013 Haddington Road Agreement (HRA). The Independent Body recommended that contracted hours be reverted to pre-HRA levels. This Report was accepted by Government on the 14th of April 2022.

2. Implementation Date:

Agreed implementation date for the reduction of working hours is 1st of July 2022.

3. What Grades are included?

For the health sector:

- Nursing and Midwifery: Standard working week of 37.5 hours per week;
- Health and Social Care Professionals: Standard working week of 35 hours per week;
- Management & Administrative: Standard working week of 35 hours per week;
- Dental grades: Standard working week of 35 hours per week
- Specific Medical see Grade Code List
- Consultant grades

4. If the hours of my grade are being reduced but I joined after the HRA increase, will my hours be reduced also?

Yes. Reversal of HRA hours applies to the Grade regardless of the commencement date of the employee e.g. an employee who commenced as a Clerical Grade IV in 2017 will revert to the standard fulltime hours for his/her grade

5. Will Divisors for pay and overtime change?

A separate HSE HR Circular will follow with specifics on divisors and overtime.

6. Do I have to apply for the reduction to my contracted hours?

If you are a Full Time Employee you do not need to apply for reduction in working hours; the reduction will be applied to full-time employees in the relevant grades automatically.

If you are a part-time employee, your working hours will remain the same and you will receive an appropriate remuneration at the higher hourly rate of pay. You have the right to reduce your current part time hours to reflect the pro rata reduction for your grade, please advise your manager if this is your intention.

7. Do I go back to the contracted hours I worked pre Haddington Road?

Yes subject to Point 3 above and a standard full-time working week.

8. Can individuals who are currently working pre-HRA hours with a commensurate pay reduction remain on pre-HRA hours or will they all need to move to the new hours?

Where an individual opted to remain on their pre-HRA hours under the terms of previous public service agreements, they may opt to remain on those working hours or opt to move to the new standard hours working week with an appropriate adjustment in pay in both scenarios.

For example on implementation of the reduced working hours, individuals who remain on pre-HRA hours (less than standard hours per week) will be subject to a pro rata adjustment to their pay.

9. What happens if I work part-time?

You are entitled to reduce your hours on a pro rata basis. However, you may be requested by your manager to maintain your existing hours and receive an appropriate pay adjustment.

10. Can I increase my hours if I am part time?

You may apply in line with normal arrangements through your Line Manager.

11. Will rosters change?

There may be changes to rosters for staff, especially those working a 24 hour /7 day roster. Your manager will discuss these with you. Full roster flexibility should be considered in order to facilitate the reduction of hours. The following are some examples:

- Staggered lunch breaks to maintain the span of the working day, where applicable;
- Explore use of previously available Daily Work Schedules (DWS) and 35 hour /37.5 hour rosters
- Maximising the use of new and existing technology to allow for service level maintenance, for example MS Teams and Attend Anywhere; and
- Deployment of available resources in a manner that recognises fluctuation in service demand (where required).

The Independent Body has recommended that working time is restored to pre-Haddington Road agreement (HRA) levels for the majority of civil and public servants where working hours were increased in 2013. However, the Body has also recommended that there should be a standardised minimum full-time working week of 35 hours across the public service. It is expected that for the most part, services will seek in the first instance to modify start and finish times in order to facilitate the newly reduced hours, with the minimal degree of impact on service delivery.

In this context the 'Banking of Hours' to be taken as time off should not be considered as an option unless it can be demonstrated that it is the only workable solution that meets the dual purpose of maintaining service and safety standards whilst delivering the agreed reduction in working time for employees. Approval of 'Banking' arrangements only with approval of National Director of Acutes/Community (relevant area) with National HR guidance will be required before implementation.

12. Will start / finish times change for Monday – Friday Rosters?

If there are any requirements for changes the Line Manager will discuss these directly with those affected.

13. Will my Annual Leave Change?

Annual leave allowances will not be impacted by the restoration of hours. The calculation of annual leave entitlements will however be based on the revised standard working day i.e. one-fifth of the standard weekly working hours for the grade.

The annual leave balance on My HSE Self Service will be correct from the 1st of July and will be updated in line with changes to working hours.

Example:

A full-time employee who is working 37 hours per week and getting 25 days annual leave currently receives 25×7.4 hours = 185 hours.

Under the pre-HRA restoration the employee will still receive 25 days annual leave but the calculation is based on the reduced standard working day of 7 hours i.e. 25×7 hours = 175 hours

Employees who were covered by Appendix 9 of HRA and chose to retain their red-circled hours and forgo the standardised annual leave allowance for their staff category/grade will now be entitled to the standardised annual leave allowance (pro-rata for part-time workers) by virtue of being subject to the minimum standard weekly working hours (35 hours per week). The employee will be subject to a maximum limit of either 30 days or 32 days in accordance with the criteria set out in the previous HSE Circulars (please refer to HSE HR Circulars [34/2019](#), [006/2014](#), [18/2013](#) and [11/2012](#)).

14. What happens to my Parental Leave?

In the public health service it is common practice to convert an employee's overall parental leave entitlement from working days to working hours. As the quota for parental leave is based on an employee's contracted working hours, the balance of your parental leave entitlement will be recalculated on an individual basis to take

account of any changes to your contracted hours from the 1st of July 2022 and the revised figure will be recorded.

If you currently use MyHSE Self Service, in the short term the balance that you see in relation to your parental leave will not be the updated balance, balances will be updated as soon as possible after the 1st July.