

Q&A

Bulletin Board

With INMO director of industrial relations Phil Ní Sheaghda



Query from member

I have been advised that performance management is to be introduced for me in my staff nurse role. I work in an acute hospital and very often work in circumstances where we are short staffed and do not have a manager in place. I have huge concerns about the introduction of individual performance management in this setting and want to know if this has been agreed to by the INMO?

requires further discussion and dialogue at our national forum, the National Joint Council. To answer your question, there is currently no agreement that staff nurses, or any grades below the grade of director of nursing in Band 1 Hospitals, directors of mental health or directors of public health nursing – three senior nursing management grades that have an existing agreement – to engage with the PMS. While this might change, it can only change on the introduction of an agreed template which ensures that the PMS is assessed by a trained assessor and that its objectives are fair and reasonable, taking staffing levels and supervision into account. Please keep in contact with your local official in respect of this issue.

Reply

Performance Management System (PMS) was a feature of the Public Service Agreement and discussion was to take place with the Trade Unions in respect of developing a system which could be introduced. While briefing sessions were given, many issues were raised by the INMO and other Unions and an agreement was not formally arrived at. We are aware that individual management are seeking to roll out a PMS and the unions collectively are raising this as a matter that

Query from member

I am a public health nurse and I have been employed since December 2008 in the public health service. I am being advised that my contact of employment allows my hours of work to be altered. Currently I work Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm and am part of a roster to provide essential calls at weekends. Can you please elaborate on what is being referred to as the 'Framework Agreement' which is being referenced as the authority for these changes?

weekly contracted working hours of employees. The terms of the agreement apply to staff appointed to promotional posts and staff on renewed temporary contracts on, or after, December 16, 2008. Inherent in the framework agreement is the understanding that it is the service that is extending and that staff would be requested, but could not be compelled, if employed prior to December 2008, to change their work pattern but that those with contracts dated after December 16, 2008, would be required to work the new pattern once the service change had occurred.

Reply

The Framework Agreement was reached in December 2008 between health service employers and the health service trade unions. It set out the arrangements to facilitate introduction of an extended working day/week in the HSE and HSE funding agency. The Agreement was part of the 'Towards 2016' public service agreement. The Agreement provides a process for the introduction of an extended working day/week on a structured/planned basis within the basic

Circular 003/2009, sets out the manner in which the framework agreement is to be implemented. This circular sets out that any request by local managers to commence discussions on the extension of the working day/week for a category, would have to be notified nationally via the National Joint Council and the discussions would have to be conducted in accordance with the framework agreement. In other words, it is clear that the extension has to be to the service and not to the individual worker's terms and conditions. What is required, is that management present a plan for the extension of services outside the current working patterns to the staff. Each plan should contain the following:

- Strategic/policy/legislative basis for change
- Analysis of the need/demand which underpins the plan
- Impact on human resources/numbers/rosters/earnings across all disciplines
- Objective of the plan in improving access to services
- The minimum number of staff required in each grade to facilitate the implementation of the plan
- Costing for the plan
- Any information on cost benefits
- How the plan will be resourced

Engagement would then commence with the trade unions and a period of 21 days is set in order to reach agreement in respect of the proposal. If agreement cannot be reached at local level, it is agreed that a Joint Review Group (JRG) would be convened to facilitate the exercise and if agreement cannot be reached at that stage, following 21 days of the JRG intervention, an agreed adjudicator would be asked to intervene.

The overall aim of the Framework Agreement is that any change is introduced by consensus, and that the change is to the service, not to individual contracts. Please contact your local INMO representative or official if you require additional assistance with this issue.