

Health and Care (Staffing) (Scotland) Act 2019

12IR 'HIS: Monitoring and Development of Staffing Tools

Transfer of Neonatal Staffing Level Tool from SSTS to SafeCare

1.0 Introduction

Healthcare Improvement Scotland (HIS) recommends to Scottish Ministers revisions to the staffing tools, prescribed under section 12IJ (3) of the Health and Care (Staffing) (Scotland) Act 2019 (HCSA) as follows:

The revision of the 'Neonatal Staffing Level Tool Version 3' with a new revised staffing level tool 'Neonatal Staffing Level Tool Version 4'

- **Staffing tool:** Neonatal Staffing Level Tool Version 4
- **Type of healthcare:** Neonatal provision
- **Location:** Neonatal units in hospitals
- **Employees:** Registered nurses and registered midwives (including other staff working under the supervision or delegation by a registered nurse / midwife)

2.0 Revision: Neonatal Staffing Level Tool

2.1 The extant Neonatal Staffing Level Tool was developed by the Neonatal Short Life Working Group (SLWG), established in 2005. The resultant tool provides information, and a recommended whole time equivalent (rWTE) for staffing based on the workload data entered. Data is gathered for each neonate under 10 defined categories. The scores from each of the categories are added together. This results in infant acuity related workload defined categories which captured actual neonatal nursing workload on a real-time basis. The categories and associated scoring set were developed through application of the [British](#)

[Association of Perinatal Medicine \(BAPM, 2001\)](#) standards, consensus and consultation with neonatal nurses throughout Scotland.

- 2.2 As part of an in-depth review of the existing staffing level tools a Neonatal Staffing Level Tool Review Expert Working Group (EWG) was established in September 2024 with the purpose and role to:
 - provide subject matter expertise and clinical input to review the Neonatal Staffing Level Tool and deliver feedback to key stakeholders within their boards
 - provide assurance to the Healthcare Staffing Programme (HSP) that the staffing level tool and methodology is valid and current and reflects current service model delivery
- 2.3 One of the key outputs, was an ask to review the data collection method which derives a level of care for a baby within the tool. This change will continue to align with the [British Association of Perinatal Medicine \(BAPM\) standards \(2021\)](#) of which current practice is based upon and is a necessary requirement.
- 2.4 To achieve this the Healthcare Staffing Programme are convening a short life working group (SLWG) to review the levels of care to reflect the categories that are within the BAPM standards including Neonatal Transitional Care.
- 2.5 The SafeCare product has been tested robustly by the HSP, and NHS Boards, to ensure it is suitable for hosting staffing level tools. This will decrease complexities in data collection whilst improving accuracy, ultimately reducing the data burden for neonatal end users.
- 2.6 Communication from the Healthcare Staffing Programme has been conveyed to the eRostering Leads in boards to ensure a state of readiness for deployment of the neonatal staffing level tool into SafeCare for the testing period.
- 2.7 Volunteer boards were requested to test this change by undertaking a two-week tool run within the SafeCare platform alongside use of the Professional Judgement Tool. Six NHS boards are testing to provide robust evidence to validate the transition of the Neonatal Staffing Level Tool to SafeCare, with revised levels of care as aligned to the current British Association of Perinatal Medicine (BAPM) standards (2021) of which current practice is based upon, as of 1 April 2026.
- 2.8 The testing of the levels of care for the transition to SafeCare will be concluded by October 2025 prior to the publication of the full report on the [HIS website](#) in December 2025. This provides sufficient time for a level of confidence to be ascertained prior to the amended regulations being laid before parliament in February 2026.

3.0 Recommendations

3.1 HIS recommend the following amendments to The National Health Service (Common Staffing Method) (Scotland) Regulations 2025, that accompany the Health and Care (Staffing) (Scotland) Act 2019, as follows:

3.2 Neonatal

- Schedule Staffing Level Tools Column 1 Kind of health care Provision: ‘Neonatal provision by registered nurses and midwives in neonatal units in hospitals’ – remains unchanged
- Schedule Staffing Level Tools Column 2 Staffing level tool:

‘Neonatal Staffing Level Tool Version 3 (10)’

(10) Version 2 was developed by Healthcare Improvement Scotland and was made available online at the [SSTS login page](#), in 2024, to those granted access.

Replacement with a new staffing level tool as follows:

‘Neonatal Staffing Level Tool Version 4 (10)’

(10) Neonatal Staffing Level Tool Version 4 was developed by Healthcare Improvement Scotland and made available online on the RLDatix SafeCare Platform as part of the national e-rostering contract, in 2025, to those granted access.

The link to SafeCare has not been included due security concerns. The RLDatix system is hosted on the world wide web and not behind the NHS SWAN network. In addition, all NHS boards would have a separate URL to their own instance of the system requiring the regulations to include multiple different links per staffing level tool.