Staffing Level Tool Development

Update of conditioned hours to reflect the 36-hour reduced working week

12IR HIS: Monitoring and development of staffing tools

(REF:12IR/2026/002)

January 2026

Contents

1.0 Introduction

1.1   In February 2025 the Scottish Government announced that the final 1-hour reduction in the standard working week for Agenda for Change staff to 36 hours will come into effect from 1 April 2026.

1.2   This had implications implications for the outputs of the staffing tools prescribed under section 12IR of the [Health and Care (Staffing) (Scotland) Act 2019.](#) The staffing tools are based on the current standard working week of 37 hours.

1.3   The Healthcare Staffing Programme (HSP) sits within Healthcare Improvement Scotland (HIS). They are responsible for the monitoring and development of staffing tools in line with HIS's functions under the Act.

1.4   The HSP will recommend to Scottish Ministers revisions to the staffing tools in January 2026. The revised tools will include changes to reflect the reduction in standard working hours from 37 to 36 hours. This will have an impact on the staffing tools recommended staffing levels in terms of recommended Whole Time Equivalent (WTE) to be utilised as part of the [common staffing method](#).

2.0 Background

2.1   HIS has a requirement under section 12IR of the Health and Care (Staffing) (Scotland) Act 2019 to monitor the effectiveness of any staffing level tool or Professional Judgement tool which has been prescribed by the Scottish Ministers under section 12IJ (see table 1 below).

Table 1

Type of health care	Location	Employees
Adult inpatient provision	Hospital wards with 17 occupied beds or more on average	Registered nurses
Clinical nurse specialist provision	Hospitals	Registered nurses who work as clinical nurse specialists
	Community settings	
Community nursing provision	Community settings	Registered nurses
Community children's nursing provision	Community settings	Registered nurses
Emergency care provision	Emergency departments in hospitals	Registered nurses
		Medical practitioners
Maternity provision	Hospitals	Registered midwives
	Community settings	
Mental health and learning disability provision	Mental health units in hospitals	Registered nurses
	Learning disability units in hospitals	
Neonatal provision	Neonatal units in hospitals	Registered midwives
		Registered nurses
Paediatric inpatient provision	Paediatric wards in hospitals	Registered nurses
Small ward provision	Hospital wards with 16 occupied beds or fewer on average	Registered nurses

2.2   HIS can recommend to Scottish Ministers to revoke or replace the tools. This is to ensure they remain contemporary and provide meaningful outputs to be used as part of the health board's requirement to follow the common staffing method.

2.3   As part of the pay settlement for Agenda for Change staff in 2023-24, it was agreed to conduct a review of the Agenda for Change system in NHS Scotland. This work has been taken forward in partnership by a series of Working Groups created under the aegis of the Scottish Terms and Conditions Committee (STAC).

2.4   All the specialty specific staffing level tools named in section 12IJ (see table 1) and professional judgement tool are based on a standard working time of 37 hours.

3.0 Aim

3.1 HIS will make the necessary changes to the staffing level tools and professional judgement tool to ensure outputs and recommended whole time equivalent (WTE) reflect the reduced 36 hour working week. The revision to the tools was [recommended to Scottish Ministers in September 2026](#) with the intention that they replace the existent staffing tools from 1 April 2026.

4.0 Methodology

4.1 The Healthcare Staffing Programme (HSP) have worked closely with the NHS Scotland Time and Attendance Professional Lead and Atos, NHS Scotland technical external supplier, prepare for updating the staffing tools on Scotland Standard Time System (SSTS).

4.2 We have identified the requirements that would need to be amended to reflect the reduced working week within all the staffing tools. The staffing tools have been developed independently of each other over the years, and as a result there is little commonality in their builds. Changes to the coding, databases and stored procedures for each of the staffing tools is required to differing degrees.

4.3 The HSP have produced change requests and service specifications for Atos to make the necessary changes to the staffing tools.

4.4 The technical work by Atos began in October 2025 to ensure the revised staffing tools are available when the updated National Health Service (Common Staffing Method) (Scotland) Regulations are laid before parliament. If Scottish Ministers are in agreement the tools will replace the existent tools from the 1 April 2026.

4.5 The Mental Health and Learning Disabilities Inpatient Nurse, Neonatal, Maternity and Emergency Care Provision staffing level tools are hosted on SafeCare from 1 April 2026 as part of the transition of the staffing level tools onto the National e-Rostering solution.

4.6 Updates to the multipliers within these tools are made at board level. We will liaise with boards to ensure tools are updated appropriately.

5.0 Validation and testing

5.1   Atos will make the changes to the test system prior to go live and perform a series of tests and validations.

5.2   The HSP are given access to the test system to complete user acceptance testing (UAT). This is done manually to test how the system reacts and performs to real-world clinical scenarios to ensure alignment with requirements.

5.3   The HSP have access to a test site for SafeCare to ensure accuracy of updated multipliers.

6.0 Collaboration and governance

6.1   HIS may develop and recommend to the Scottish Ministers new or revised staffing tools. However, in developing such tools, we must collaborate with:

- Scottish Ministers
- Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland
- every Health Board
- every relevant special health board
- every integration authority
- the Agency (NSS)
- trade unions and professional bodies HIS considers to be representative of employees
- professional regulatory bodies for employees as HIS considers appropriate
- other providers of health care as HIS considers to have relevant experience of using staffing level tools and professional judgement tools
- other persons as HIS considers appropriate.

6.2   The HSP would normally establish staffing tool expert working groups with key stakeholders to ensure a collaborative approach to the development and revision of staffing tools. However, this required change to the tools has been necessitated by a change in Scottish Agenda for Change Terms and Conditions and applies to all the staffing tools. Therefore, there is no requirement to collaborate with each stakeholder named above.

6.3   A high level [recommendation to Scottish Ministers was made in September 2026](#). In line with HIS internal governance processes, this was submitted to the HIS Executive Team and the HIS Quality and Performance Committee prior to publication

7.0 Recommendations

7.1   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:

7.2   Adult Inpatient

- Schedule Staffing Level Tools Column 1 Kind of health care Provision: 'Adult inpatient provision by registered nurses in hospital wards with 17 occupied beds or more on average – remains unchanged.

- Schedule Staffing Level Tools Column 2 Staffing level tool:

    'Adult Inpatient Staffing Level Tool Version 4 (3)'

    Replacement with a revised staffing level tool as follows:

    'Adult Inpatient Staffing Level Tool Version 5 (3)'

- (3) Version 3 was developed by Healthcare Improvement Scotland and was made available online at the [SSTS login page](#), in 2024, to those granted access – remains unchanged.

7.3   Small Wards

- Schedule Staffing Level Tools Column 1 Kind of health care Provision: 'Small ward provision by registered nurses in hospital wards with 16 occupied beds or fewer on average – remains unchanged.

- Schedule Staffing Level Tools Column 2 Staffing level tool:

    'Small Wards Staffing Level Tool Version 3 (12)'

    Replacement with a revised staffing level tool as follows:

'Small Wards Staffing Level Tool Version 4 (12)'

- (12) Version 3 was developed by Healthcare Improvement Scotland and was made available online at the [SSTS login page](#), in 2024, to those granted access – remains unchanged.

7.4 Neonatal

- Schedule Staffing Level Tools Column 1 Kind of health care Provision: 'Neonatal provision by registered midwives or by registered nurses 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 3 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 revised staffing level tool as follows:

  'Neonatal Staffing Level Tool Version 1 (10)'

  (10) Version 1 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.

7.5 Emergency Care

- Schedule Staffing Level Tools Column 1 Kind of health care Provision: 'Emergency Care provision by registered nurses or by medical practitioners in emergency departments in hospitals' – remains unchanged.

- Schedule Staffing Level Tools Column 2 Staffing level tool:

  'Emergency Care Provision Staffing Level Tool Version 3 (7)'

  Replacement with a revised staffing level tool as follows:

'Emergency Care Provision Staffing Level Tool Version 1 (7)'

(7) Version 1 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.

7.6   Maternity

- Schedule Staffing Level Tools Column 1 Kind of health care Provision: 'Maternity provision by registered midwives in hospitals or in community settings' – remains unchanged.

- Schedule Staffing Level Tools Column 2 Staffing level tool:

  'Maternity Staffing Level Tool Version 3 (8)'

  Replacement with a revised staffing level tool as follows:

  'Maternity Staffing Level Tool Version 1 (8)'

  (8) Version 1 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.

7.7   Mental Health and Learning Disability

- Schedule Staffing Level Tools Column 1 Kind of health care Provision: 'Mental health and learning disability provision by registered nurses in mental health or learning disability units in hospitals' – remains unchanged.

- Schedule Staffing Level Tools Column 2 Staffing level tool:

  'Mental Health and Learning Disabilities Inpatient Nurse Staffing Level Tool Version 1 (9)'

  Replacement with a revised staffing level tool as follows:

  'Mental Health and Learning Disabilities Inpatient Nurse Staffing Level Tool Version 2 (9)'

(9) Version 2 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.

7.8   Community Children's & Children's Specialist Nurse

- Schedule Staffing Level Tools Column 1 Kind of health care Provision: 'Clinical nurse specialist provision (for children) by registered nurses who work as clinical nurse specialists in hospitals or in community settings' – remains unchanged.

- Schedule Staffing Level Tools Column 2 Staffing level tool:

  'Community Children's and Children's Specialist Nurse Staffing Level Tool Version 3 (5)'

  Replacement with a revised staffing level tool as follows:

  'Community Children's and Children's Specialist Nurse Staffing Level Tool Version 4 (5)'

  (5) Version 4 was developed by Healthcare Improvement Scotland and was made available online at the SSTS login page, in 2025, to those granted access.

7.9   Clinical Nurse Specialist

- Schedule Staffing Level Tools Column 1 Kind of health care Provision: 'Clinical nurse specialist provision (for adults) by registered nurses who work as clinical nurse specialists in hospitals or in community settings' – remains unchanged.

- Schedule Staffing Level Tools Column 2 Staffing level tool:

  'Clinical Nurse Specialist Staffing Level Tool Version 3 (4)'

  Replacement with a revised staffing level tool as follows:

  'Clinical Nurse Specialist Staffing Level Tool Version 4 (4)'

  (4) Version 4 was developed by Healthcare Improvement Scotland and was made available online at the SSTS login page, in 2025, to those granted access.

7.10   Community Nurse

- Schedule Staffing Level Tools Column 1 Kind of health care Provision: 'Community nursing provision by registered nurses' – remains unchanged.

- Schedule Staffing Level Tools Column 2 Staffing level tool:

  'Community Nurse Staffing Level Tool Version 3 (6)'

  Replacement with a revised staffing level tool as follows:

  'Community Nurse Staffing Level Tool Version 4 (6)'

  (6) Version 4 was developed by Healthcare Improvement Scotland and was made available online at the SSTS login page, in 2025, to those granted access.

7.11   Paediatric

- Schedule Staffing Level Tools Column 1 Kind of health care Provision: 'Paediatric inpatient provision by registered nurses in paediatric wards in hospitals – remains unchanged.

- Schedule Staffing Level Tools Column 2 Staffing level tool:

  'SCAMPS – Scottish Children's Acuity Measurement in Paediatric Settings Version 3 (11)'

  Replacement with a revised staffing level tool as follows:

  'SCAMPS – Scottish Children's Acuity Measurement in Paediatric Settings Version 4 (11)'

- (11) Version 3 was developed by Healthcare Improvement Scotland and was made available online at the SSTS login page, in 2024, to those granted access – remains unchanged.

7.12   Professional Judgement

- Professional judgement tool:

  '4. For the purposes of section 12IJ(3)(b) of the 1978 Act, the professional judgement tool for each kind of health care provision described in the first column of the table in the schedule, is the Professional Judgement Tool Version 4 (2).'

Replacement with a revised tool as follows:

'4. For the purposes of section 12IJ(3)(b) of the 1978 Act, the professional judgement tool for each kind of health care provision described in the first column of the table in the schedule, is the Professional Judgement Tool Version 5 (2).'

(2) Version 5 was developed by Healthcare Improvement Scotland and was made available online at the SSTS login page, in 2025, to those granted access.

7.13   For information on the staffing tool methodology and revised outputs please refer to appendix 1.

These staffing tools will be included in the accompanying regulations to the Health and Care (Staffing) (Scotland) Act 2019. The regulations will be laid before parliament in February 2025 and if agreed released in April 2026.

8.0 Appendices

Appendix 1: Staffing tool methodologies and outputs January 2026