

## NHSGGC Health and Care (Staffing) (Scotland) Act 2019

### Healthcare Science Workforce – Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)



#### **Q1. What is the Health and Care (Staffing) (Scotland) Act 2019 (HCSSA)?**

The Health and Care (Staffing) (Scotland) Act 2019 came into effect on 1 April 2024 and provides a legal framework to support safe and effective staffing across health and social care services.

For the Healthcare Science workforce, this means ensuring services have the right staff, with the right skills, available at the right time to support safe, high-quality patient care, service delivery, diagnostics, treatment pathways, and staff wellbeing.

#### **Q2. Why is the Act important for Healthcare Science services?**

Healthcare Science services are essential to patient diagnosis, treatment, monitoring, rehabilitation, and prevention. Staffing pressures within scientific services can directly impact diagnostic turnaround times, waiting times, quality and safety of investigations, service resilience, and staff wellbeing.

#### **Q3. Who does the Act apply to within the Healthcare Science workforce?**

The Act applies to all Healthcare Science staff groups, including registered, clinical, scientific, technical, support, and leadership roles across all Healthcare Science disciplines.

#### **Q4. What are my responsibilities under the Act?**

All Healthcare Science staff should understand the principles of safe staffing, raise concerns where staffing levels may impact patient care or staff wellbeing, participate in local escalation processes, and support accurate recording of staffing pressures and service impacts.

#### **Q5. What does “Real Time Staffing” mean for Healthcare Science services?**

Real Time Staffing (RTS) refers to the ongoing assessment of whether staffing levels are sufficient to safely meet service demand at a given time. This may include workload, staffing vacancies, skill mix, urgent workload, turnaround times, and service pressures.

#### **Q6. Does the Act define what safe staffing levels should be?**

No. The Act does not prescribe minimum staffing numbers. Appropriate staffing levels will vary depending on the type of Healthcare Science service, clinical risk, workload complexity, and workforce skill mix.

#### **Q7. Who are considered “Clinical Leaders” within Healthcare Science?**

Clinical Leaders may include Heads of Service, Lead Scientists, Principal Scientists, Operational Managers, and senior practitioners responsible for workforce coordination or staffing decisions.

#### **Q8. What should services do if staffing levels are regularly below establishment?**

Services should consistently record and escalate staffing concerns, identify impacts on patient care and service delivery, and review mitigation measures and workforce plans.

**Q9. What mitigation actions may Healthcare Science services consider?**

Mitigation actions may include prioritising urgent work, redeploying staff, adjusting workforce allocation, reviewing workflows, and escalating risks through governance routes.

**Q10. Will additional funding automatically be provided under the Act?**

The Act does not include dedicated funding for additional staffing but supports improved visibility of workforce pressures and staffing risks.

**Q11. Are there training resources available for Healthcare Science staff?**

Yes. Public Services Delivery (PSD) Scotland provides learning resources through Turas Learn, including Informed, Skilled, Enhanced, and Expert level resources.

**Q12. What should I do if I have concerns about staffing within my service?**

Concerns regarding staffing levels, workload pressures, patient safety, or staff wellbeing should be raised through local escalation processes and discussed with the appropriate line manager or clinical leader.

**Useful Links**

Link to the Act	<a href="https://www.gov.scot/publications/health-and-care-staffing-scotland-act-2019-overview/">https://www.gov.scot/publications/health-and-care-staffing-scotland-act-2019-overview/</a>
An overview of what the Act means for individuals, and roles and responsibilities	<a href="https://sway.cloud.microsoft/c0ynYqO6BWxFeEsb?ref=Link&amp;loc=play">https://sway.cloud.microsoft/c0ynYqO6BWxFeEsb?ref=Link&amp;loc=play</a>
TURAS link for Informed, Skilled, and Expert and Enhanced Level	<a href="https://learn.nes.nhs.scot/">https://learn.nes.nhs.scot/</a>
Quick guides relating to the Act	<a href="https://learn.nes.nhs.scot/74342">https://learn.nes.nhs.scot/74342</a>
NHSGGC HCSSA webpage	<a href="https://www.nhsggc.scot/health-care-staffing-scotland-act-2019/">https://www.nhsggc.scot/health-care-staffing-scotland-act-2019/</a>