

Once for Scotland Workforce Policies – Phase 2.2

New Policies & Overview of Changes to Current Policy/Guidance

August 2025

Title:	Once for Scotland Workforce Policies – Phase 2.2: New Policies & Overview of Changes to Current Policy/Guidance
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Contents

1. Gender-based violence Policy - New	2
2. Facilities arrangements for Trade Unions and Professional Organisations Policy	2
3. Personal Development Planning and Performance Review Policy	5
4. Employment Checks Policy	7
5. Fixed-term Contract Policy	11
6. Secondment Policy	13
7. Redeployment Policy	16
8. Racism Guide - New	18
9. Reasonable Adjustments Guide - New	19
10. Sexual Harassment Guide - New	19

1. Gender-based Violence Policy - New

This newly introduced policy supports staff affected by gender-based violence (GBV) and outlines how the organisation will respond to disclosures or allegations of this nature. All staff, including bank, agency, volunteers, contractors, and trainees are covered by this policy.

Key Points

- GBV includes abuse based on gender, affecting women, men, and LGBTQI+ individuals.
- Support is available for those affected, including workplace adjustments and access to occupational health.
- Managers are expected to respond sensitively, assess risk, and offer appropriate support.
- Disclosures may come from staff, colleagues, patients, or external agencies.
- Abuse is not tolerated and may lead to investigation under workforce policies.
- Perpetrators may be moved to alternative placements to ensure safety.

What You Can Do

- If you're affected, speak to a trusted person or your manager.
- Managers should create safe spaces, listen without judgement, and act promptly.
- Confidentiality will be respected, with safeguarding procedures followed where necessary.

2. Facilities arrangements for Trade Unions and Professional Organisations Policy

[Previously known as Facilities Agreement – Trade Unions & Professional Organisations]

The OfS Facilities Arrangements Policy has now been introduced as the framework for supporting trade union and professional organisation representatives. The previous policy will remain in use as a supplementary guide, offering more detailed guidance on operational arrangements that complement the new policy.

The Once for Scotland Facilities Arrangements Policy outlines the framework for supporting trade union and professional organisation representatives within NHS Scotland. Its purpose is to promote effective partnership working by detailing the legal entitlements and operational procedures for facility time—paid time off granted to representatives to carry out union duties, activities, and partnership roles.

The policy defines key roles, responsibilities, and processes for requesting and monitoring time off, including substantial release arrangements. It also ensures fairness, transparency, and compliance with the Equality Act 2010, while safeguarding representatives from victimisation and supporting their involvement in organisational decision-making and service development.

Key Changes	
NHSGGC Facilities Agreement	OfS Facilities Arrangements Policy
Applied broadly to recognised trade unions and professional organisations.	Applies specifically to accredited representatives of recognised bodies.
Focused on representative roles and duties.	Expands definitions to include partnership roles, learning reps, and governance structures like APFs and LNCs.
Listed duties and activities separately, with examples.	Clarifies legal entitlements and distinguishes duties, activities, and partnership roles.

For adhoc requests requires completion of a Facilities Time Request Form with manager approval.	Encourages discussion and proactive planning with manager. At the end of each month, the representative should complete a retrospective Facility request and monitoring form to record all facility time taken.
Covers secured release for senior reps and special projects.	Details formal release agreements include terms, duration, CPD, and exit strategy.
Lists facilities like office space, IT access, and payroll deductions.	Reaffirms similar resources and adds emphasis on fairness and transparency in funding.
Managed via HR and APF; includes equal opportunities monitoring.	Requires annual reporting of time and cost; APF oversees monitoring and resolution.

Key Points

- The policy outlines how facility time supports partnership working and trade union engagement across NHS Scotland.
- Accredited representatives are entitled to reasonable paid time off for union duties, activities, and partnership roles.
- Employers and managers must support facility time requests, record usage, and ensure fair treatment.
- Trade unions must accredit and train representatives, and ensure proper use of time and resources.
- Substantial release agreements may be arranged for roles requiring extended time off.
- Boards must provide necessary resources and monitor facility time, with annual reporting required.

What You Can Do

- Managers should familiarise themselves with the policy, support time-off requests, and record facility time accurately.
- If you're an accredited representative, give reasonable notice for time off and keep records up to date.
- Everyone should promote partnership working, respect representatives' roles, and seek early resolution of any disagreements.

3. Personal Development Planning and Performance Review Policy

[Previously known as Personal Development Planning and Review PIN Policy]

The newly introduced Once for Scotland Personal Development Planning and Performance Review Policy outlines NHS Scotland's approach to personal development planning and performance review (PDP & PR), ensuring all employees - including bank and sessional workers - are supported to develop professionally and meet role expectations.

Key Changes	
PDP & Review PIN Policy	OfS PDP & Review Policy
Strategic tool for planning, monitoring, and supporting staff development aligned with organisational goals.	Framework for appraisal and development planning to support role performance and career progression.
Applies to all NHSScotland staff as part of terms and conditions.	Applies to all employees including bank and sessional workers.

KSF (Agenda for Change), GP Appraisal Scheme, ARCP (Doctors in Training), Executive/Senior Manager systems.	Turas Appraisal, SOAR (for doctors).
Annual appraisal with structured review cycles depending on staff group.	Annual appraisal with optional mid-year review.
Detailed responsibilities for employers, reviewers, reviewees, and trade unions. Emphasis on partnership and equity.	Defined for managers, reviewers, and employees. Includes expectations for preparation, feedback, and support.
Emphasis on lifelong learning and equitable access to development resources.	Statutory and mandatory training must be completed. CPD is mandatory for some roles.
Objectives linked to service and personal development, with emphasis on self-assessment.	SMART objectives aligned with organisational priorities.
Quantitative and qualitative evaluation required; monitored via Staff Governance Standard.	Completion tracked via systems; monitored against national targets.
Local resolution processes required; trade unions involved in policy awareness and compliance.	Escalation via manager, HR, or trade union; Grievance Policy applies.
Legally embedded PIN policy forming part of employment terms.	Operational guidance document.

Key Points

- All employees must participate in annual appraisals and mid-year reviews where applicable.
- Objectives should be SMART and aligned with organisational priorities.
- Personal Development Plans (PDPs) identify learning needs and support career progression.
- Managers must ensure access to systems (Turas, SOAR), provide protected time for preparation, and offer constructive feedback.
- Employees are responsible for engaging in the process and completing mandatory training.
- Appraisal systems vary by staff group: Agenda for Change, Medical/Dental, and Executive/Senior Managers.
- Performance concerns should be addressed promptly and in line with the Capability Policy.
- Revalidation requirements apply to regulated professionals (e.g. GMC, NMC, HCPC, GDC).
- Completion of reviews must be recorded for compliance monitoring.
- Disagreements should be resolved informally or via HR/trade union support, with escalation through the Grievance Policy if needed.

What You Can Do

- All staff should prepare for their appraisal, reflect on their performance, and take ownership of their own development.
- Managers should schedule and support appraisals, provide feedback, and ensure training needs are met.
- Managers should be informed, skilled, and objective in conducting appraisals.
- Everyone should use the PDP process to support learning, wellbeing, and service improvement.

4. Employment Checks Policy

[Previously NHS Scotland PIN Policy]

This updated policy ensures compliance with the latest national standards and legal requirements, strengthens safeguarding for patients and service users, and promotes a more consistent and transparent recruitment process.

The policy applies to all employees and candidates for employment. It also applies to current and future bank, agency, sessional workers, volunteers, contractors, secondees and those on placement or work experience including trainees and students.

In addition to setting out strengthened safeguarding measures, improved consistency in recruitment activity, and greater transparency in decision-making, the policy clearly defines the responsibilities of the candidate, the recruiting manager, and the recruitment team or lead within each NHS Board.

Key Changes	
Previous PIN Policy	OfS Employment Checks Policy
References and other checks could be initiated in parallel with conditional offer.	References can only be sought after the candidate accepts the first stage of the conditional offer. May extend recruitment timelines.
Noting ID type and signature was sufficient.	Candidates now required to present original identity documents wherever possible; if this is not feasible, copies must be certified by a solicitor. This introduces an additional cost for candidates and increases verification steps. Where no photographic identification is available, submission of a certified passport-sized photograph is required.

	Identity verification should take place at interview either in person or virtually with original documents prioritised.
evidence of professional registration could suffice where it implied the necessary qualifications.	Qualifications must be verified <i>in addition</i> to registration, confirming that they meet the appropriate level. Where essential qualifications are listed in the person specification, these must now be recorded formally. Recruiters are expected to verify qualifications directly, while managers must continue to use qualification criteria to ensure a robust shortlisting process.
Occupational Health Checks required for job family changes.	a pre-employment health check is required where there is a change in job family; however, this should be clarified to “change in division” in practice. Exposure-Prone Procedures (EPP) considerations should now extend to all bank workers, due to their flexibility in picking up shifts across different settings.
More reliance on post-offer follow-up.	Greater onus on early verification by recruiters.

Key Points

- The policy outlines mandatory employment checks for all staff groups, including employees, volunteers, contractors, trainees, and students.
- Checks must be completed before employment or placement begins and may be repeated during employment.

- Required checks include:
 - Identity and address verification
 - Right to work in the UK
 - Criminal record checks
 - Qualification and professional registration verification
 - References covering at least 3 years
 - Pre-employment health screening
- Secondary employment must be declared and must not conflict with NHS duties or policies.
- All checks must comply with legislation including the Equality Act 2010, Data Protection Act 2018, and Working Time Regulations 1998.
- Falsifying information or working during contracted hours elsewhere may be considered fraud and subject to investigation.

What You Can Do

- Hiring managers and recruitment teams must familiarise themselves with the new policy and apply the updated policy to all current and future recruitment activity.
- Managers should ensure all employment checks are completed and documented at interview before confirming appointments.
- Use the Employment Checks Risk Assessment if outcomes are unclear.
- Monitor ongoing compliance with registration and right-to-work status.
- Discuss and record any secondary employment or volunteering that may impact work.
- All staff and candidates should provide accurate documentation and updates on health or employment status.
- All staff should continue to ensure they maintain professional registration and right-to-work status.
- Declare any secondary employment or volunteering that could affect your NHS role.

5. Fixed-term Contract Policy

[Previously known as NHSGGC Fixed-Term Contract Policy]

The purpose of the OfS Fixed Term Contract Policy is to provide a clear framework for the appropriate use and management of fixed-term contracts within NHSScotland. It ensures that such contracts are only used when necessary, and that employees on fixed-term contracts receive equal treatment, access to development opportunities, and the same or equivalent terms and conditions as permanent staff. The policy also outlines procedures for reviewing, renewing, or ending contracts, and supports fair access to redeployment and redundancy provisions where applicable.

Key Changes	
NHSGGC Fixed Term Policy	OfS Fixed Term Contract Policy
Applies to all fixed-term employees; no specific exclusions listed.	Applies to fixed-term employees including doctors/dentists in training and locums; excludes agency workers and apprentices.
Contracts should be time-limited and used only when necessary. No more than 2 renewals in one year unless justified.	Same principle, but more emphasis on avoiding contracts under 3 months unless justified.
Mid-term and ongoing reviews required; outcome must be discussed and confirmed in writing.	Mid-term and regular reviews required; outcome confirmed in writing with clear options (end, extend, or make permanent).
Employees with >2 years' service may be made permanent if criteria are met. Legal right to permanency after 4 years unless justified.	Same legal rights, but more guidance on when to appoint permanently or redeploy.

Engage with redeployment and seek alternative employment.	Same expectations, with emphasis on active participation in redeployment.
Not explicitly addressed.	Requires extension of contract to allow access to maternity entitlements.
Detailed guidance on redundancy payments, redeployment access, and protection of earnings.	Similar provisions, with clearer links to related policies and appeal rights.

Key Points

- Fixed-term contracts should only be used when necessary and appropriate; permanent contracts are preferred.
- Employees on fixed-term contracts must receive equal access to development opportunities and equivalent terms and conditions as permanent staff.
- Contracts should not typically exceed 2 years or be renewed more than twice in one year.
- Managers must review contract status mid-term and regularly thereafter, with outcomes confirmed in writing.
- Employees with over 4 years of continuous service may be entitled to permanent status.
- Redeployment support must be provided before contract end, with access periods of up to 3 months.
- Redundancy payments may apply if the post ends and no suitable alternative is found.
- Pregnant employees must have contracts extended to access maternity entitlements.
- Permanent employees accepting fixed-term roles must be formally notified of the change in status.

What You Can Do

- Managers:
 - use fixed-term contracts only when justified and clearly documented.
 - Regularly review contract status and communicate with employees.
 - Support access to development and redeployment opportunities.
 - Ensure compliance with notice periods, redundancy entitlements, and maternity provisions.
 - Avoid allowing contracts to lapse without formal renewal or closure.
- All staff:
 - Familiarise yourself with the fixed-term policy
 - engage with redeployment processes if your contract is ending.
 - Actively seek alternative employment and development opportunities.

6. Secondment Policy

[Previously known as NHSGGC Secondment Policy]

The Secondment Policy provides a structured framework for managing secondment opportunities within NHSScotland. It supports employee development by enabling temporary transfers to different roles or organisations while maintaining employment continuity. The policy ensures fair access, clear responsibilities, and transparent procedures for initiating, managing, and concluding secondments.

Key Changes	
NHSGGC Secondment Policy	OfS Secondment Policy
Detailed and procedural, includes annexes and coordinator role.	Streamlined and accessible, with embedded links to guides and agreements.

Applies to all NHS GGC employees; no automatic right but equal access is emphasised.	Applies to all employees; emphasises fair access and compliance with equality legislation.
Includes detailed definitions of internal/external secondments, host organisation, accountable manager, and coordinator.	Defines internal/external secondments, releasing/receiving managers, and special class status.
Central coordination required; secondments typically advertised. Needs assessment and HR involvement are emphasised.	Employees must discuss with their manager before applying or accepting. Managers must respond promptly and in writing.
Requires formal agreements between parties, with detailed terms including appraisal, registration, and return arrangements.	Requires signed agreement detailing duration, management arrangements, and contract changes.
Refusals must be justified and documented; coordinator tracks refusals.	Refusals must be confirmed in writing within 7 days; employees have 14 days to appeal.
Detailed guidance on pay, registration, continuity, and return arrangements. Includes provisions for early termination and organisational change.	Similar provisions, with emphasis on clarity before acceptance and protections during organisational change.
Coordinator tracks secondees, learning outcomes, and retention. Policy reviewed regularly in partnership.	Monitoring through HR and partnership forums; includes links to related policies.

Training for managers included in development programmes.	No specific training section, but guides are provided for managers and employees.
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Key Points

- The policy defines a secondment as a temporary transfer from an employee's substantive post to another role, either internally or externally.
- Applies to all NHSScotland employees considering secondment.
- Duration of secondment noted typically between 3 months and 2 years, with possible extensions.
- A formal Secondment Agreement must be signed by all parties, detailing terms, duration, and management arrangements.
- Employees retain their substantive post's T&C's unless agreed otherwise. Pay adjustments and pension implications must be clarified.
- Regular contact between the secondee and releasing manager is encouraged.
- Appraisal & PDP must be maintained during secondment and documented in the agreement.
- Professional Registration must be retained if required for the substantive post.
- Secondees affected by changes to their substantive post are entitled to consultation and redeployment support.
- Discussions should occur 4 months before the end date of the secondment if not returning to the original post.
- Extensions require mutual agreement; early termination must follow the agreement terms and involve both managers.

What You Can Do

- Familiarise yourself with the Secondment Policy

- Managers should consider secondment requests seriously and only refuse with clear service-based reasons.
- Ensure terms and conditions are clearly communicated and documented.
- Maintain contact with Secondees and support their return or redeployment.
- Follow procedures for extensions, refusals, and early terminations.
- discuss secondment opportunities with your manager early.
- Stay in touch with your releasing manager during the secondment.

7. Redeployment Policy

[Previously known as Redeployment PIN]

The Redeployment Policy provides a fair, consistent, and supportive framework for identifying and securing suitable alternative employment for employees who are displaced or unable to continue in their current roles. It aims to retain valuable skills within NHSScotland while supporting affected staff through structured processes and clear responsibilities.

Key Changes	
Redeployment PIN Policy	OfS Redeployment Policy
Applies to all displaced employees, including those affected by organisational change, capability, or fixed-term expiry.	Applies to displaced employees or those unable to continue in their role; excludes bank, agency, and sessional workers.
Access to Redeployment initial 3 months, extendable based on likelihood of suitable roles or reasonable adjustments.	Maximum 3 months in one block or several shorter periods
Detailed guidance on exact and non-exact matches, including use of KSF and prioritisation tiers.	Matching based on essential criteria and skills profile; prioritisation tiers also defined.
Prioritises organisational change, capability, redundancy, and other fixed-term cases; includes disabled employees.	Similar prioritisation structure, with additional emphasis on protected characteristics under Equality Act.

Standard 4 weeks, extendable to 8 weeks or more; pay protection applies during trial.	4-week trial period, extendable; pay protection applies depending on reason for redeployment.
Posts at advert can no longer considered or the purposes of redeployment	Posts can be held for redeployees up until a post is formally offered to a candidate appointed via the boards normal recruitment process.
Daily Matching	Central weekly matching panel.

Key Points

- The policy applies to all displaced employees or those unable to continue in their current role (excluding bank, agency, and sessional workers).
- Reasons for redeployment includes organisational change, capability issues (e.g. health or performance), and end of fixed-term contracts.
- The access period to redeployment is typically up to 3 months, with possible extensions for reasonable adjustments or organisational change.
- The matching process is based on essential criteria, skills, and experience. Priority is given to employees based on factors such as maternity leave, disability, redundancy, and organisational change.
- Trial Periods: A standard 4-week trial applies, with extensions possible for training or reasonable adjustments.
- Fixed-Term Matches: Permanent employees retain their status when matched to temporary posts.
- Declining suitable roles or failing to engage may lead to employment termination.
- Any disagreements can be raised under the Grievance Policy.

What You Can Do

- Managers should maintain regular contact and support with displaced employees.
- Consider redeployment before advertising vacancies.

- Collaborate with HR and redeployment contacts to ensure fair matching.
- Provide feedback and document reasons if a match is deemed unsuitable.
- Redeployees should engage actively with the redeployment process and training opportunities.
- Be flexible and open to suitable alternative roles.
- Communicate any concerns or changes in circumstances early.
- Participate in trial periods and provide feedback on suitability.

8. Racism Guide - New

This guide supports staff affected by racism and helps managers respond appropriately. It applies to all employees, including bank, agency, volunteers, and trainees.

Key Points

- Racism includes discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and microaggressions based on race, ethnicity, or nationality.
- It can happen in or outside the workplace, including online or via third parties.
- Managers should be alert to signs such as changes in performance, attendance, behaviour, or physical wellbeing.
- If you suspect someone is affected, start a respectful conversation and listen without judgement.
- Managers must act under NHSScotland policies and promote a safe, inclusive culture.

What You Can Do

- Talk to someone you trust, keep records, and report concerns via the <https://workforce.nhs.scot/policies/bullying-and-harassment-policy-overview/bullying-and-harassment->

policy/ or <https://workforce.nhs.scot/policies/grievance-policy-overview/grievance-policy/>.

- Managers should lead by example, take action on complaints, and support staff appropriately.

9. Reasonable Adjustments Guide - New

This guide supports disabled employees and applicants by outlining how reasonable adjustments can help remove barriers at work and applies to all staff, including applicants, bank, agency, volunteers, and trainees.

Key Points

- Adjustments are changes that help disabled individuals overcome disadvantages at work or during recruitment.
- Examples include adapted equipment, flexible working patterns, or support services like BSL interpreters.
- Managers must respond promptly and respectfully to adjustment requests, and involve occupational health or other services if needed.
- Adjustments should be reviewed regularly and updated if circumstances change.
- If adjustments can't be made, alternatives or redeployment should be explored.

What You Can Do

- Staff can request adjustments at any time. Your manager will work with you to find suitable support.
- Managers should create a safe space for discussion, act quickly, and keep staff informed throughout the process.

10. Sexual Harassment Guide - New

This guide supports staff affected by sexual harassment and helps managers respond appropriately. It applies to all employees, including bank, agency, volunteers, and trainees.

The guidance provides some good practice examples of how to identify a member of staff who may be a victim of sexual harassment and how to have a conversation with a victim-survivor. It is linked to our Sexual Harassment: Cut It Out programme and current bullying & harassment policy.

Key Points

- Sexual harassment includes unwanted sexual behaviour that violates dignity or creates a hostile environment.
- It can happen in person, online, or outside work hours—including from patients or third parties.
- Examples include sexual comments, gestures, unwanted contact, intrusive questions, and inappropriate messages.
- A single incident can be enough to constitute harassment.
- Recognising the Signs
- Managers should look out for:
 - Changes in performance, attendance, or behaviour.
 - Signs of stress, anxiety, or withdrawal.
 - Physical symptoms like fatigue or panic attacks.
- Supporting Conversations
 - Ask open, empathetic questions.
 - Listen without judgement and respect confidentiality.
- Managers must act under NHSScotland policies and promote a safe, inclusive culture.

What You Can Do

- Talk to someone you trust, keep records, and report concerns if you feel safe doing so.
- Managers should create safe spaces, respond sensitively, and take appropriate action.