

T: 0300 244 4000
E: scottish.ministers@gov.scot

Clare Haughey MSP
Convener
Health, Social Care and Sport Committee
The Scottish Parliament
HSCS.committee@Parliament.Scot

26 March 2025

Dear Ms Haughey,

RE: Meeting of 18 March 2025 on item the National Health Service (Common Staffing Method) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2025.

During the above meeting, Sandesh Gulhane MSP asked whether the Staffing Level Tools (“tools”) included within the Health and Care (Staffing) (Scotland) Act 2019 included allocated time for breaks. I am writing to clarify this after my officials confirmed the position with Healthcare Improvement Scotland.

As detailed in my recent evidence to Committee, the tools in question are used to enable evidence-based decision making on staffing establishments by measuring actual workload. The tools contain formulae - based on rigorous statistical analysis - to calculate the workload attributed to individual patients. This in turn provides information on the Whole Time Equivalent (WTE) staffing requirement for that workload. They are based on clinical need, specialism, throughput, and safe, effective, person-centred care. The calculations used as part of the Staffing Level Tools can be accessed [here](#).

It is crucial to distinguish between paid and unpaid meal breaks when developing tools. The outputs of the tools are presented as WTE; therefore, the outputs must be based solely on the paid component of a shift and cannot include unpaid meal breaks.

The Adult Inpatients, Emergency Care Provision, Paediatrics, and Small Wards Tools currently remove approximately 4% each for paid breaks. A paid break is a complimentary measure designed to support staff wellbeing and is and dependent on capacity and work pressures.

Finally, I would like to reassure the Committee that staff wellbeing is our priority, and it is critical that staff have access to rest breaks, leave entitlements, and wellbeing support.

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I hope this information is helpful and I would be happy to answer any further questions from the Committee.

Yours sincerely,



NEIL GRAY

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St Andrew's House, Regent Road, Edinburgh EH1 3DG
www.gov.scot

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