A short guide on things to consider when planning extended services to ensure equality of treatment or outcome

Seven day and extended working

Operationalising extended working arrangements for therapy staff

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Introduction

The principle for planning seven day / extended working hinges on the understanding that equality of treatment or outcome can be delivered without necessarily providing all services at the same level as during the week or across all services and specialities.

The survey of existing seven day / extended day working schemes across Wales revealed that schemes operate mainly in hospital environments or in planned early evening / Saturday clinics. Hospital services tend to operate in the Emergency Admissions and Trauma /Orthopaedic specialisms.

As a road map for evolving a strategy within your service for extending coverage take the following steps:

- Quantify the need
- Evaluate potential solutions
- Consider organisational change implications
- Governance and supervision arrangements
- Evaluate and review.
1 Quantify the need

Be realistic when planning services. Staff may like the idea of working a Saturday morning or a Sunday afternoon, but does the workload justify this and is there a need?

Extended / seven day coverage may be needed clinically of the service, but are the other support services also working alongside you to allow you to be effective?

Identify which services require input from your service outside conventional working hours e.g. theatre list on a Thursday/Friday requiring rehabilitation or discharge over the weekend

Evaluate potential benefit of providing cover e.g. discharge facilitation or delivering the rehabilitation plan sustainably

Are there any blockages to your service being effective e.g. patient requiring swallowing assessment before Dietitian can commence nutritional care plan or diagnostic test required before treatment can commence?

What kind of cover would most appropriately meet the need e.g. on-call or on-site presence?

Talk about potential benefits to colleagues involved in care delivery outside your own therapy service.
2 Evaluate potential solutions for realising extended day / seven day working

Remember that you must not compromise your main core services from Monday to Friday. Spreading the working week can smooth out peaks and troughs of workload demand on Mondays and Fridays.

Some changes can be made within the existing resource envelopes:

- consider changing working days of a post when you recruit to a vacancy

- consider standard working days – staff can work a longer day at the busiest periods, and get an early finish on another day as recompense

- stagger staff start and finish times during the normal working week so the service works longer hours but staff don’t.

2.1 Look for funding opportunities

Do existing on call schemes need to continue if you have an on-site presence on Saturday/Sunday?

When new funding becomes available, bid for enhanced cover costs as part of solution or re-engineer budget to offer a shorter hour’s contract with enhanced pay opportunities.

2.2 Consider different options

Could you adjust the staff working week to run from Sunday to Thursday or Tuesday to Saturday?

Could you have dedicated weekend staff?

Would compressed hours be feasible? Staff may find working a longer day in a shorter working week appealing.

Introduce 9 day rolling fortnight.
Introduce late start standard working days commencing at 1pm, this does not attract unsocial hour’s payments.

3 Organisational change implications

You should engage local Industrial Relations representatives at early stages of discussions and get HR organisational development support for employment and contractual implications.

You may find it helpful to canvas staff for views. Some staff may want to work non-standard working patterns / hours

Be realistic about how long this could take, contractual changes may take some months of consultation to introduce.

4 Governance and supervision

Staff should not work in an unsupported way. Lone working considerations should be applied during planning.

Look at providing senior supervision either through another therapy profession with weekend presence or perhaps nursing / or via existing on-call services.

Think about reporting arrangements e.g. stop and start times, sickness reporting.

Need to plan carefully for service coverage during holiday or sickness absence periods. Be pragmatic – can the service cope for one weekend without cover?

5 Evaluation of Effectiveness

Any change to working practices should be evaluated against the contribution it makes to patient care in the dimensions of safety; patient
flow; patient experience and cost. Trials through short term pilots in specific clinical areas may help you evaluate different approaches.

6 Further Reading

This information has been accessed from the British Dietetic Association Guidance on Provision of a Seven Day Service. Please refer to your own professions online resources for profession specific guidance. You may find the following references useful:

The Academy of Medical Royal Colleges Seven Day Consultant Present Care Implementation Considerations November 2013.  

NHS Improving Quality in Collaboration with NHS England NHS Services - Open 7 Days a Week - every day counts (Published by: NHS Improving Quality - Publication date: November 2013 - Review date: November 2014) © NHS Improving Quality (2013).

NHS Commissioning Board 7 Day Working the Economic Argument – Can’t afford not to David Halsall

NHS England - 7-day services: Learning from health care organisations – Janet Williamson 8 October 2013 - 13:49

NHS improvement website at
www.improvement.nhs.uk/SevenDayWorking/tabid/218/Default.aspx

The NHS Commissioning Boards Publication 7 Day Working The Economic argument - can’t afford not to change By David Halsall Commissioning Board Analytical Service.

Equality for All, Delivering safe care – seven days a week’ (NHS Improvement, 2013) proposes a four level stratification model of care provision (ref, 2012)

NHS Services, Seven Days a Week Forum - Summary of Initial Findings First published: December 2013 Gateway reference: 00889
ACAS’s Varying a Contract of Employment March 2012 ttp ref: 5425

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