



Royal College of Nursing
42 South Oswald Road
Edinburgh
EH9 2HH

Colin Poolman
Interim Director, RCN Scotland
Email: colin.poolman@rcn.org.uk

16 September 2022

NHSPS Consultation (2022 Amendments (No. 3))

To whom it may concern,

RCN Scotland would like to give the below response to the SPPA consultation on the continued suspension of return to work restrictions for NHS pension scheme members.

Question 1 - Do you agree or disagree that the proposed draft amending regulations deliver the policy objectives of continuing the temporary suspension of restrictions, relating to retired staff returning to work, until 31 March 2023?

RCN Scotland strongly agrees with the policy objectives of continuing the temporary suspension of restrictions, relating to retired staff returning to work, beyond 31st October 2022. The consultation document acknowledges that we are approaching what will likely be a very busy winter period and that retired and partially retired staff continue to provide valuable additional capacity. In light of the near record high levels of nursing vacancies in the NHS, it would be unhelpful to re-introduce any rules that would discourage staff to return to work in the NHS.

RCN Scotland agrees that the proposed draft regulations deliver the policy objectives of the consultation document.

Question 2 - Do you agree or disagree that the continuation of the easements until 31 March 2023 is a reasonable length of time?

While RCN Scotland agrees that the easements should continue beyond 31st October 2022, we do not believe that a 6-month extension is reasonable or desirable. Given the current staffing pressures, it is highly unlikely that the NHS workforce will be in a materially different position in March 2023, where it would make sense to reintroduce these rules.

RCN Scotland is disappointed with the lack of notice, once again, being given to staff and employers around these rule changes. Some employers will already be progressing retirements in anticipation of the rules being reintroduced on 31st October 2022 and likewise, staff will be making plans based on this timetable. Reviewing the rules on a 6-month basis does not provide sufficient certainty for workforce planning or for staff themselves. Instead, we would support a 12-month continuation of the easements, until 31st October 2023.

**Royal College of Nursing
Of the United Kingdom**
42 South Oswald Road
Edinburgh EH9 2HH
www.rcn.org.uk
+44 (0) 131 662 6124
RCN Direct 0345 772 6100

President
Dr Denise Chaffer
General Secretary & Chief Executive
Pat Cullen
Director, RCN Scotland
Colin Poolman

The RCN represents nurses and nursing, promotes excellence in practice and shapes health policies

A 12-month continuation of the easements would give significant notice to employers and to staff as well as time to consider and develop a long-term policy view on the future of the easements. Any further continuation of the easements must be introduced with significant notice for employers and staff.

In addition, RCN Scotland is of a view that in the case of the 16-hour rule, permanent suspension should be considered. We believe that the 16-hour rule provides little value to the pension scheme, hinders continuity of care and creates an unnecessary administrative burden for employers. We would welcome a further continuation of the suspension of the 16-hour rule and for this to continue to be suspended until the rule can be permanently removed.

Yours sincerely

Colin Poolman
Director, RCN Scotland

**Royal College of Nursing
Of the United Kingdom**
42 South Oswald Road
Edinburgh EH9 2HH
www.rcn.org.uk
+44 (0) 131 662 6124
RCN Direct 0345 772 6100

President
Dr Denise Chaffer
General Secretary & Chief Executive
Pat Cullen
Director, RCN Scotland
Colin Poolman

The RCN represents nurses and nursing, promotes excellence in practice and shapes health policies

The RCN is a Royal College set up by Royal Charter and a special Register Trade Union established under the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.

