



EXECUTIVE BULLETIN

1st February 2019

Building better rotas: a new way forward

The BBR project was paused on 3rd October as a result of the decision made at the Staff Partnership Forum following several concerns raised by staff and via UNISON. This was to allow enough time for the BBR Working Group, which includes UNISON representation, to explore options around relief working and planning.

Work has included looking at current practice in the wider ambulance sector, and a focused visit to South Central Ambulance Service (SCAS) which had indicated an intention to remove all or part of relief in rotas. These options were then presented to EEAST's Executive Team for discussion and a joint review with Unison.

We listened

We wanted to ensure EEAST has listened throughout this process, and worked with UNISON, utilising the pause period, to explore available options. There is not a one-size-fits-all solution for a trust covering such a large and diverse area with considerable variations in practice so we have identified a varied solution in a bid to make it agreeable to all.

By doing so we are looking to:

- give employees the choice to have a non-relief option in their rotas, something UNISON had always been clear was an issue for some employees
- provide an alternative option for those wanting relief to remain in rotas, by introducing a fixed rest day rota pattern
- introduce a fixed rest day rota in alignment with the new Relief Policy to improve conditions for permanent relief staff.

This will give our employees the choice between any of the following rota options, which are explained further on [East24](#):

- 1) **No relief in core rotas** (rolling gap rota pattern)
- 2) **Fixed rolling rest day rota pattern**
- 3) **Seven-day day fully flexible relief** (as per the original approach).

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What will change

Whilst everyone involved in the working parties provided input, which will continue, the project did receive some constructive feedback around overall engagement and communication. We will change this as follows.

Firstly, during the consultation phase, incorporating working parties (WP), working party representatives (WP reps) will be abstracted adequately to fulfil their role of disseminating this important information to colleagues. Last year, this was left to local negotiation which proved inconsistent and, in some cases, didn't allow adequate time for reps to consult with colleagues. Now, an agreed level of abstraction will be identified and honoured for all WP reps.

Secondly, we appreciate it wasn't always easy to pick up news on BBR. All information related to BBR is on East24, but in order to better reach out to all staff, communication will be increased to the following:

- 1) Manager's briefing email – a Building Better Rotas update will be sent to managers who can share information with employees
- 2) Social media – Building Better Rotas updates will be posted on facebook crew rooms
- 3) Station administrators will ensure station notice boards and newsletters are updated
- 4) Signposts on the weekly Need to Know re-cap email, with a dedicated Building Better Rotas – Update section.

Working parties will discuss the three options available, for employees to then choose one they want to proceed with. Depending on the choice, other working parties will be required for each AGM area. **Any areas who confirm their previous choices (option A or B) made at Working Party 4 may proceed to a vote. However, rotas will only be implemented once there are adequate levels of employees, fleet and estates to meet the rota requirement.**

The project and steering groups have planned that the WPs will be held between May and August. We have invited existing WP reps to either express an interest in continuing the role or stand down. This may create opportunities for new people to express an interest e.g. who didn't put themselves forward last year, new staff who weren't here in early 2018 to take part, etc. If you would like to be considered should the opportunity arise, just email rota@eastamb.nhs.uk

In addition to this process, our planning staff are undertaking the next phase in line with the new Relief Policy so that permanent relief staff will be working in accordance to it from 1st April 2019, including the introduction of the fixed rest day rota pattern. To make a distinction between the BBR work and the Relief Policy implementation, EEAST will push out more information on the Policy separately early this month.