**SW London Collaborative Staff Bank Questions and Answers**

**General**

**G1 What is the SW London collaborative staff bank?**

The NHS trusts in south west London have created a ‘virtual’ staff bank. This means that workers registered at one staff bank are able to see and easily book onto vacant shifts at the other participating trusts. This has been possible through some Cloud enabled database sharing software which links together rosters The trusts involved have also agreed a number of common processes and practices to make this happen and to make it easy to work and get paid anywhere. This arrangement is the first NHS staff-sharing platform that integrates rostering and bank, and so provides visibility of working across a region.

The participating trusts are:

Epsom & St. Helier University Hospitals NHS Trust

Kingston NHS Foundation Trust

St George’s University Hospitals NHS Trust

South West London & St George’s Mental Health NHS Trust

**G2 What are the benefits of the collaborative staff bank?**

The benefits for trusts is that it maximises the opportunity to match the workforce in south west London to the temporary staffing needs of individual trusts. The aim is to increase our fill rates and reduce reliance on agency workers, reducing costs and increasing the quality of care to our patients.

For our NHS employees and workers, they will be able to plan their working lives because they will have exclusive access to all available temporary shifts in SW London four weeks in advance, they can see and book shifts through a smartphone app called Me and have the opportunity to work in a wide variety of clinical settings to support skills and career development.

 **G3 Can I work at any trust through the collaborative staff bank?**

The Cloud based software has been implemented at Kingston, Epsom & St Helier, St George’s and SW London and St George’s Mental Health; their bank workers will be able to see and access shifts at any of these trusts. Those who work elsewhere can access the collaborative staff bank by simply registering with the staff bank at one of the four trusts mentioned above. Croydon is involved in the collaborative staff bank project (for example in agreeing harmonised pay rates) but their employees and bank workers cannot yet access the collaborative staff bank without registering with the bank at one of the other four trusts.

**G4 When will the collaborative staff bank go live?**

You will be able to use the Me app to see and book shifts across the four acute collaborative trusts from Monday 9th October. For SW London & St George’s Mental Health, access will go-live a month later.

This means that from this date you can book and work shifts for the roster which started on 18th September for the period up to 16th October. For the roster published on 3rd September for the period up to 12th November, you can book available shifts before these are open to agency workers. However, the first full roster cycle you will be able to see and book will be for the roster that starts on 11th December. For this roster, you will have four weeks before it starts to book shifts and two weeks before any remaining shifts are open to agencies.

 **G5 Are there any restrictions on where I can work?**

You will only be able to see and book shifts for which you should have the necessary skills but you should not undertake any duties during the shift which you do not feel competent to perform. You may be subject to restriction by your home staff bank arising from maximum working hours, rest breaks between shifts or recent sickness which may limit access to bank working for a period whilst you fully recover.

The collaborative staff bank will initially be available to book general nursing shifts at Band 5 and Band 2.

**G6 Will unfilled shifts still be sent to agencies to provide cover?**

Rosters will be published at least four weeks in advance of the roster start date and will usually be available exclusively to collaborative staff bank workers until two weeks before it begins. At this point, agencies will have the opportunity to fill the vacant shifts. However, bank workers will be able to book shifts up to the shift start and displace agency workers where possible. Some particularly hard to fill roles will continue to be sourced through agencies before then if there is a low likelihood of filling through the bank.

**Joining the collaborative staff bank**

**J1 Who can join the collaborative staff bank?**

Anyone can download the Me rota-sharing smartphone app but to start with, membership of the collaborative staff bank will be restricted to general nursing (rather than specialist) nursing workers at Band 5 and Band 2. This is a complex project and we want to extend to other staff groups as it progresses.

**J2 How do I join the collaborative staff bank?**

You will need to download the free Me app from your app provider and electronically accept an invitation to join the collaborative staff bank and the terms and conditions which apply; you will receive this invitation to join via your mobile telephone. You will receive this automatically if you are eligible to join so you don’t need to do anything.

The details of how you complete the process are contained in the Joining Instructions and Guidelines available from your home staff bank office or your home staff bank intranet site.

In summary, you will need to complete the following forms:

1. Authority to share your personal data with the other trusts
2. Pensions Questionnaire
3. Starter checklist form to ensure you are taxed correctly
4. Personal details form for bank account details
5. 48 hour per week opt-out form

Details of relevant clinical policies and procedures, payroll timescales, reporting arrangements and who you can contact for help are available on the internet site of the trust where you are booked to work. This can be easily found by following the links on the Me app.

**J3 I am an employee but not yet registered through my home staff bank; can I still join the collaborative staff bank?**

No. You must register with your home trust staff bank in order to join the collaborative staff bank. This can both be done at the same time.

**J4 How do I join if I don’t work for one of the four collaborative staff bank trusts participants?**

Simply register through one of the four trust staff banks. This may require you to undertake pre-employment checks.

**J5 Can I continue to work through my home bank if I decide not to join the collaborative staff bank?**

Yes. Joining the collaborative staff bank is entirely voluntary and if you decide not to participate, your registration with your own home staff bank would be unaffected. You can still download the Me app and use it to manage your shifts at your home trusts (as an alternative to Employee Online).

**J6 Why do I need a collaborative staff bank badge and where do I get it from?**

The collaborative staff bank badge will enable patients and colleagues to readily identify in what capacity you are working; just having your home ID badge might be confusing for some trusts. Wearing a badge on a lanyard was also considered to be an infection control risk. The collaborative staff bank badge only gives your role and not your name. You must keep your home trust photographic ID badge with you at all times. You should as a matter of good practice introduce yourself to patients regardless of whether you are wearing a name badge.

The collaborative staff bank name badge is issued by your home trust when you complete the registration process by completing the joining forms.

**Booking shifts**

**B1 How do I book a shift at another trust?**

There are 2 ways to do this:

1. You can direct book through the Me app
2. You can be contacted and booked in by the trust bank offering the shift

**B2 What additional employment checks will be required?**

None. Trusts have agreed to rely on the checks done by your home trust. You will need to prove your identity by showing your home trust photographic identity badge each time you report for work at the beginning of each shift.

**Working at another SW London trust**

**W1 What arrangements will apply when I work at another trust?**

These are covered in the Joining Instructions and Guidelines available from your home bank office. Essentially, local clinical and other procedures will apply and you should familiarise yourself with these through the trust website prior to starting work.

**W2 What uniform will I wear?**

This is covered in the Guidelines. Essentially, you should wear your home trust uniform with the exception of mental health roles where no uniform is required.

**W3 What identity badge do I need to wear?**

You will need to display on your uniform the Collaborative Staff Bank badge with you role clearly displayed. You must also keep with you your photographic identity badge from your home trust.

**Pay rates and payment**

**P1 What will I be paid?**

Common pay rates have been agreed for Band 5 general nursing and Band 2 Healthcare Assistant rates. The common pay rates are detailed below.

**Band 5 (Outer London - Epsom & St Helier, Kingston & Croydon)**

Days: £13.88 ph excl holiday pay

Nights & Saturdays: £17.50 ph excl holiday pay

Sundays & bank Holidays: £21.12 ph excl holiday pay

**Band 5 (Inner London – St George’s, SW London & St Georges Mental Health)**

Days: £16.36 ph inclu holiday pay

Nights & Saturdays: £20.45 ph inclu holiday pay

Sundays & bank Holidays: £24.54 ph inclu holiday pay

**Band 2 (Outer London – Epsom & St Helier, Kingston & Croydon)**

Days: £9.22 ph excl holiday pay

**Band 2 (Inner London – St George’s, SW London & St George’s Mental Health)**

Days: £10.60 ph inclu holiday pay

Details of the other Band 2 trusts rates are available through their websites or intranet pages.

**P2 When will the harmonised staff bank pay rates apply?**

These new rates will apply from the go-live date for the collaborative staff bank. This is currently planned for 9th October at Epsom and St Helier, St George’s, Kingston and Croydon and a month later for SW London & St George’s Mental Health.

**P3 When will I get paid if I work through the collaborative staff bank?**

The trust where you work will pay you. All trusts pay their bank workers through a weekly payroll although each have slightly different pay days. Details can be obtained through the trust website. You must complete the forms identified in the Joining Instructions to enable you to be paid whenever you work at that trust. This only has to be done once.

The weekly pay period is from Monday to Sunday. If you work a shift during this period the pay days for each trust are as follows:

Epsom: the second Friday after the end of the pay period. For example, a shift worked between Monday 9th and Sunday 15th October 2017 would be paid on Friday 27th October.

Kingston: the Friday after the pay period. For example, a shift worked between Monday 9th and Sunday 15th October 2017 would be paid on Friday 21st October.

SWLSGMH: as for Kingston

St George’s: the second Wednesday after the pay period. For example, a shift worked between Monday 9th and Sunday 15th October 2017 would be paid on Wednesday 25th October.

**P4 What happens if I book a shift at a trust where I have not completed the joiner documents?**

You will be able to see, book and work all shifts available to you across all the trusts through the Me app as soon as you have accepted an invitation to join the collaborative staff bank. However, your pay cannot be processed unless you have completed the joiner documentation for the trust where you intend to work. This documentation can take up to 10 working days to process so you should do this in good time. If you do work before your joiner documentation is processed, you will be paid as soon as you have been put on the payroll. You should let the trust where you intend to work the shift know in advance if you work sooner than 10 days before you have submitted your joiner documentation by contacting their staff bank by telephone or email.

**P5 How soon after completing the joiner documentation can I work at a collaborative staff bank trusts?**

This can take up to 10 working days to process. If you do work before your joiner documentation is processed, you will be paid as soon as you have been put on the payroll. You should let the trust where you intend to work the shift know in advance if you work sooner than 10 days before you have submitted your joiner documentation by contacting the their staff bank by telephone or email.

**P6 What are the tax implications?**

These are explained in the Guidelines. Essentially, provided you complete the starter checklist, in most cases workers will be paid at the basic tax rate for each shift they work away from your home trust. Tax arrangements are of course personal to individual circumstances and you should contact the tax authorities for definitive personal tax advice.

**P7 When I work through the collaborative staff bank, is my pay pensionable?**

The pensions questionnaire you complete when you join the collaborative staff bank will help determine your pension options.

It is government policy to encourage workers to provide for their pension and therefore employers cannot be seen to be encouraging non-membership of either occupational pension schemes (such as the NHS scheme) or the government sponsored scheme (known as NEST which deducts 1% from pensionable pay). This means that you are likely to be opted-in to either the NHS scheme (if you are entitled) or the NEST scheme and will have the choice to opt out after the first weekly pay period. Should you decide to opt out, this will need to be done within a week or the refund process for any contributions already made becomes complicated.

In compliance with the NHS Pension Scheme regulations and national regulatory requirements your eligibility to contribute to a pension scheme has to be assessed by the trust where you intend to work. Following the receipt of completed questionnaire (which you would have completed as part of the joiner documentation), and subject to meeting the necessary criteria, you will be automatically enrolled into either NHS Pension Scheme or the alternative Government pension scheme (NEST).

These are explained in the Guidelines. Essentially, your pension options are limited by whether you are already in the NHS Pension Scheme and paying the maximum full-time contributions. Depending on your current circumstances, you may be enrolled into the government stakeholder pension ‘NEST’ scheme (a 1% deduction from gross pay) for the payment for your first shift at the trust where you work through the collaborative staff bank. You can then opt-out of this pension by request.

Whilst this sounds complicated and bureaucratic, the national pension regulations do not allow employers to be seen to be encouraging pension opt-outs in advance.

**P8 Can I opt out of paying pension contributions for the collaborative staff bank?**

If you do not want to continue to contribute to the pension scheme, a request to leave the scheme must be made within one pay period of joining the scheme (which for bank workers is a week), by completing / submitting a prescribed form to the Pensions Department. The employee will be taken out of the pension scheme from the following pay period in which the form was received.

A refund of pension contributions will be made provided the above conditions are satisfied or if the contributions are deducted in error i.e. ineligible to join a pension scheme. Failing that, an application for refund will be required and forwarded to the appropriate Pension Scheme for processing a refund.

**If you decide you don’t want to be a member of NEST** you can opt out during the opt-out period. This is *normally* a one-week period that starts after your employer enrols you. You can find this date in the welcome letter we sent you when you joined.

If you choose to opt out**, you’re only opting out of NEST with the trust mentioned in that letter.** If another trust enrols you, either now or in the future, and you want to opt out you’ll need to do it again.  If you opt out, any money you’ve contributed with this employer will be refunded, but you should think carefully before you opt out. Any contributions made to your pot during your opt-out period won’t be invested until after this period ends. That means that your contributions won’t earn any interest or investment growth during the period. Opting out means you’ll lose out on employer contributions and tax relief that would have gone into your retirement pot. After the opt-out period has passed, you can still choose to stop making contributions but you won’t get a refund of any contributions you’ve already made. Your contributions will stay in your NEST retirement pot until you reach the age when you can take your money out.

There are three ways your workers can opt out of NEST.

* Go to the NEST website and [opt out online](https://www.nestpensions.org.uk/schemeweb/NestWeb/faces/public/MUA/pages/loginPage.xhtml)
* Call the NEST contact centre and follow the automated instructions
* Request the form from NEST by emailing or calling the contact centre.

 ***For further information, please contact the Pensions Department.***

**Leaving the collaborative staff bank**

**L1 What happens if I resign from my substantive employment?**

Upon leaving substantive employment, you should check the local process for remaining registered with your home bank. If your registration with your home staff bank continues, your membership of the collaborative bank will be unaffected. If your local trust practice is to remove you from the home bank when you resign you must either re-join your home trust or join one of the other three trust staff banks; this will then become your home trust for the purposes of the collaborative staff bank.

**Help and support**

**H1 Who should I contact if I have any questions about the collaborative staff bank?**

You should contact your home staff bank office in the first instance.

The email enquiry addresses at each trust area as follows:

Epsom & St Helier: *esth.cloudstaff@nhs.net*

Kingston: TBA

St George’s: *collaborativebank@stgeorges.nhs.uk*

SW London & St George’s Mental Health: *collaborativebank@swlstg-tr.nhs.uk*