

On-Call Policy

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People Culture & Inclusion Committee	January 2025

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1. What is a people policy

A people policy provides support, advice and guidance on what is expected from you, how you can expect to be treated, and how you can access help and guidance.

2. Why we have this policy

The NHS People Promise is a promise we must all make to each other to make our culture positive, compassionate and inclusive.

This policy brings several parts of the People Promise to life:

We work flexibly: We have predictable and flexible working patterns, and if we need to take time off, we are supported to do so.

We are a team: We are united by a desire to provide the best care.

We are recognized and rewarded: We have a fair and equitable reward for our contribution.

We are safe and healthy: We look after ourselves and each other.

This policy will provide you with the information you need about the terms and conditions of people who participate in our on-call services.

Click here for more information about [‘Our NHS People Promise’](#).

3. What this policy covers

This policy sets out what on-call is, explains the responsibilities of managers responsible for an on-call service, as well as on-call participants and their line managers, and the terms and conditions that apply to you when you are on-call.

4. Who does this policy apply to?

This policy applies to everyone employed by the ICB, including people employed on Agenda for Change, VSM, Medical & Dental and Local Clinical & Professional Terms and Conditions of Service – where an on-call service is required.

It doesn't apply to bank workers, or other workers working with us but not employed by the ICB.

5. What is on-call

On-call systems exist as part of arrangements to provide appropriate service cover outside normal working hours. An on-call service may be required for a specific team or department, or for the ICB as a whole.

A member of staff is on-call when, as part of an established arrangement, they are available outside their normal working hours either at the workplace, at home or elsewhere, to work as and when required.

6. Service Descriptions

For each on-call service, the manager responsible will develop a service description so that everyone knows what the on-call service should look like, what the expectations are, what the training is to become and stay competent, and practical things like what happens if a colleague providing the on-call service is unwell. The service description will be shared with everyone providing that on-call service.

Service Descriptions will be developed and authorized by the appropriate governance mechanism for that particular on-call service, using the template at Appendix A, **but do not form part of this policy**. Amendments to Service Descriptions do not require the On-Call policy to be amended.

Managers responsible for an on-call service are required to complete an Equality Impact Assessment of that particular on-call service.

7. Participation in an on-call service

If you are required to participate in an on-call service your line manager will talk to you about it and will check-in with you at least once a year (e.g. as part of your appraisal conversation) about your on-call work.

Where your line manager is not responsible for the on-call service provision, they will connect with the manager who is responsible at least once a year to see what they can do to support you and to make sure your participation is still appropriate.

8. On-call service location

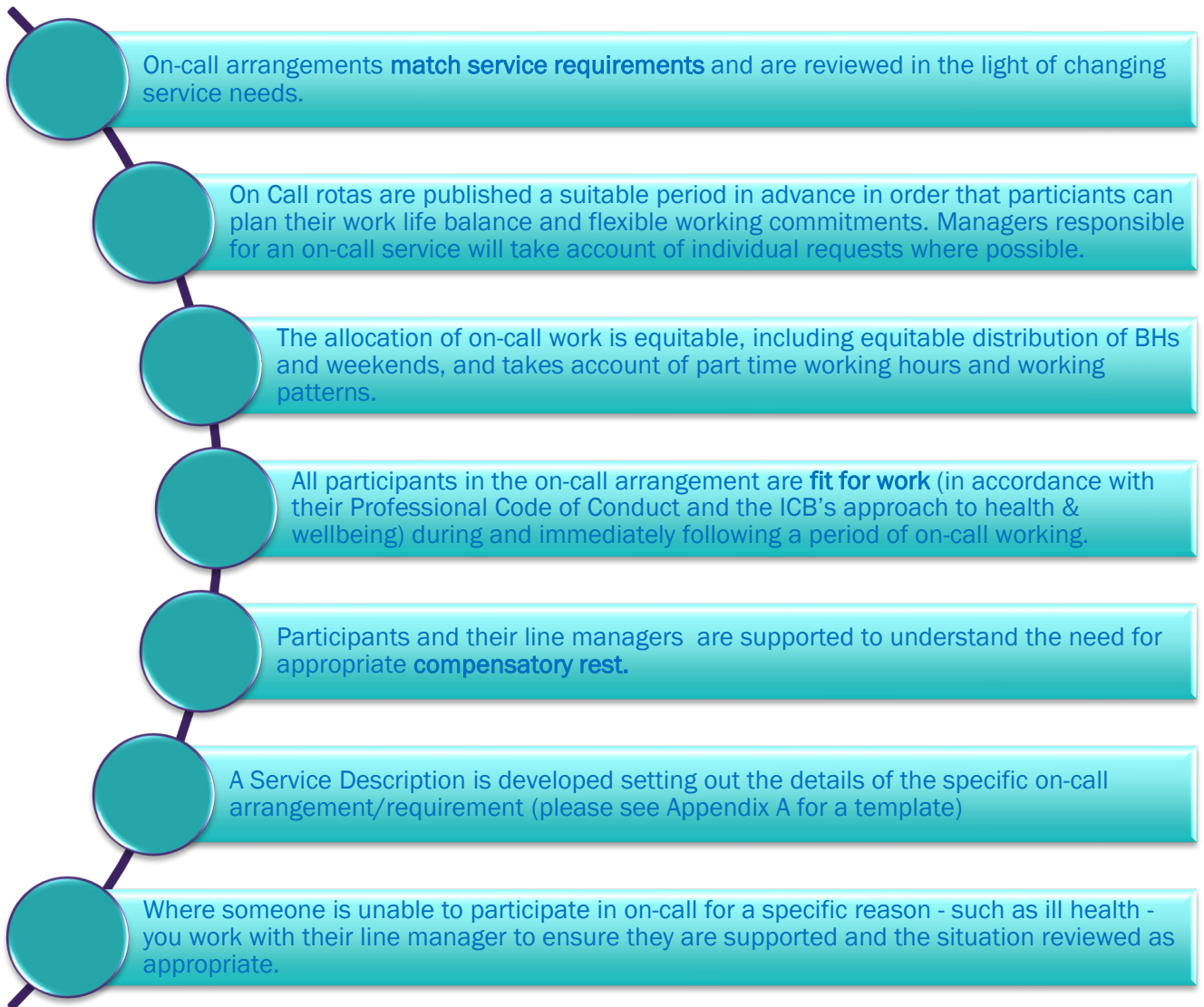
In line with the ICB's approach to work base, usually on-call work can be carried out virtually and from home.

In highly exceptional circumstances due to the nature of the situation, there may be a requirement for individuals to physically attend an ICB Hub or other location within the geographical footprint. The Service Description will set out the details about this, and how to achieve it if the travelling time from your home to the required location is considered too great.

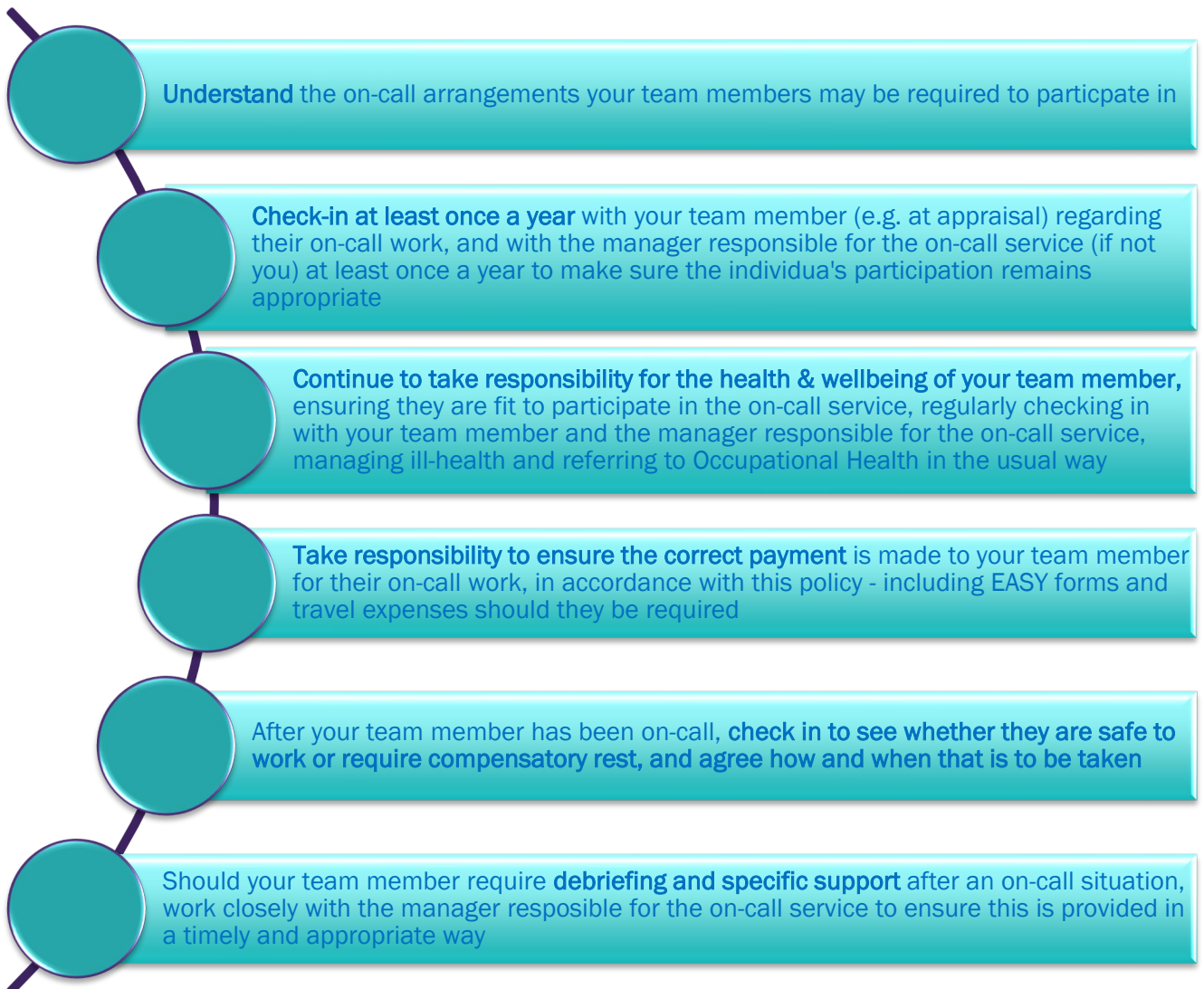
9. Expectations and Responsibilities

For an on-call service to work properly, we have to make a few expectations and take some responsibilities together.

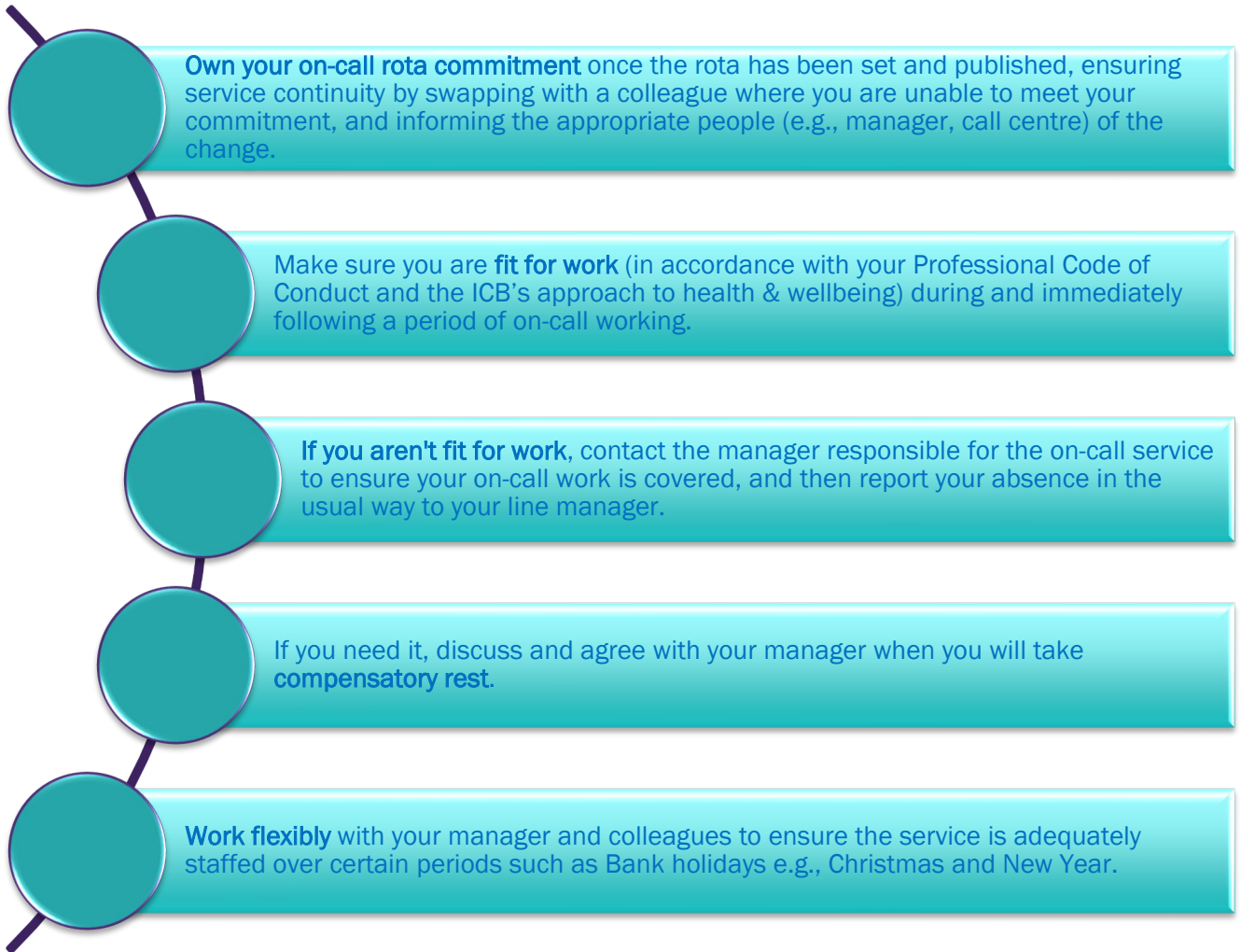
Our expectation of Managers responsible for an on-call service



Our expectation of line managers of those who participate in an on-call service



Our expectation of you, our colleagues



10. What you'll be paid

Pay depends on the terms & conditions of the roles participating in on-call and the on-call arrangement they are participating in, as follows:

Terms & Conditions	Remuneration
VSM	Included within the annual salary for the role – no additional payment made.
Agenda for Change	A payment of 1% of individual salary p.a.
Local Clinical & Professional Leadership	A payment of 1% of individual salary p.a.
Medical & Dental	Payment made in accordance with the M&D Terms & Conditions of Service

If you are a member of a work-related pension scheme, the payment in respect of being on-call is classed as pensionable pay.

The ICB's People, Culture & Inclusion Committee (Part B) will review the pay rates annually and consider whether or not an increase is appropriate.

If you need to travel to a work premises because of an on-call issue, we will pay your travelling expenses in accordance with the ICB's usual approach.

11. Being on-call on a public holiday

If you are required to be on-call over a public holiday, you are entitled to one day's leave back in lieu of the lost public holiday.

How many hours one day's leave equates to depends on your contract or your working pattern.

If you work full time over a 5-day working week, a day's leave will equate to 7.5 hours.

If your usual pattern of work is part-time over a 5-day working week, a day's leave will equate to your normal working day for the day of the public holiday (for example if you usually work 6 hours on that day, you claim 6 hours back).

If your usual pattern of work is part-time over fewer than 5 days, or you work a compressed week (e.g. a 9-day fortnight) a day's leave will equate to your normal working day for the day of the public holiday (for example in the case of a 9-day fortnight, 8.33 hours).

If your normal working pattern means you would not have worked on a public holiday, yet you have been required to be on-call, a day's leave will equate to 7.5 hours.

Any leave you claim back in lieu of a lost public holiday must be managed locally (please do not adjust ESR).

12. Compensatory Rest

Occasionally, a surge in demand means our on-call is more onerous than normal, and your overnight rest could be significantly disrupted.

Legally (Working Time Regulations 1998) employees and workers are entitled a minimum amount of rest depending on how long they have worked:

- between working days – 11 hours' rest between finishing work and starting work (Young workers (those aged under 18) are entitled to a consecutive rest period of not less than 12 hours daily rest in every 24-hour period).
- between working weeks – 24 hours every 7 working days or 48 hours every 14 working days

If this amount of rest isn't achieved because there is an unexpected surge of activity, we want you to take compensatory rest – which means taking your lost rest later, or in a different way.

If your on-call shift is particularly busy, please record your time and, chat with your line manager about when you can take some time back, when it is appropriate for you and your team. We want you to take the time back quickly because we want to support you to be safe and well at home and at work after your busy on-call, not to store up untaken rest for a few weeks – so we would expect you and your manager to agree that you could start a bit later, or finish a bit earlier for your next working day, for example.

13. Looking after your health and wellbeing

You are responsible for looking after your health and wellbeing and making sure you are fit for work, and your line manager is responsible for supporting you to remain as well as you can be at work.

Your line manager will check-in with you at least once a year (e.g. at appraisal) about your on-call work. Where your line manager is not responsible for the on-call service provision, they will connect with the manager who is responsible at least once a year to make sure they are working together, and with you, to help you maintain your health and wellbeing while participating in an on-call arrangement.

If you are unwell when you are on-call, please contact your line manager to report your illness/absence in the usual way. If your line manager is not responsible for the on-call service, please also contact the manager who is responsible so they can ensure you are immediately supported and your on-call obligation is covered.

If you experience a particularly challenging on-call, please contact the manager responsible for the on-call service who will work with you and your line manager to provide you with access to appropriate support and debriefing should this be required.

14. How do we know that this policy treats people fairly?

Whenever we write a policy, we always do an 'Equality Impact Assessment' (EIA) to ensure it treats everyone fairly, does not disadvantage anyone, or discriminate against any protected group.

We also review our policies regularly to see how we are doing, which includes listening to colleagues' views and reviewing information about how the policy works in practice.

The manager responsible for a specific on-call service will also ensure that an Equality Impact Assessment is carried out in relation to that Service Description.

15. How do I access help and guidance?

For general help and guidance on this policy, please contact the ICB People Team.

For help and guidance in relation to a specific on-call service, please contact the manager responsible for that service.

16. Training and Implementation

There is no mandatory training associated with this Policy. If staff have queries about its operation, they should contact their line manager in the first instance.

Line Managers are responsible for the implementation of the policy within their team and addressing any failures to follow agreed processes.

17. Review, Ratification and Archiving

The policy will be reviewed every 3 years, or earlier if national policy or guidance, organisational changes are required to be considered. The review will then be subject to review and re-ratification.

The Corporate Governance Team is responsible for ensuring that archive copies of superseded working documents are retained. All policies which have been superseded will be archived.

Please note the authors' responsibilities regarding archiving superseded copies. The author will ensure that a review of the document is carried out in the event of a change in circumstances or immediately prior to the expiry date.

18. Dissemination and Publication

Dissemination of the final policy is the responsibility of the author. They must ensure the policy is uploaded on the intranet via the Communications Team. The Communications team is responsible to issue an organisation-wide notification of the existence of the Policy.

Heads of Departments/Managers are responsible for ensuring that all staff (including bank, agency, contracted and volunteers) have access to and are made aware of policies that apply to them.

All staff will be able to access copies of policies via the policy section of the ICB intranet.

Appendix A: Template for an on-call Service Description

This Service Description has been developed under the auspices of the overall ICB On-Call Policy.

Supporting guidance can be found in the On-Call Handbook and ICB / ICS Incident Response Plan, which detail the specific areas of information which may be needed to respond to an escalation or incident.

The pay and conditions of individuals participating in on-call arrangements are determined by ICB On-Call Policy.

It is the responsibility of the manager named below to develop and maintain this Service Description to deliver the on-call service in the best interests of the ICB and ICS.

This Service Description describes the local arrangements for on-call provision for the following service:	
Date of Issue:	
Manager responsible for this on-call service:	

Definitions and Descriptions	
The period of on-call described covers the hours of:	
Interaction with System Coordination Centre Operations and EPRR in hours during the on-call period:	
The frequency of on-call availability is expected to be:	
The service(s) that is(are) covered by this on-call arrangement are:	

The role(s) that are required to be carried out within this on-call arrangement are:	
The types of work that are expected to be carried out during the on-call period as an emergency are:	
The types of work that can be safely left until the following normal working day are:	
The number of staff required to participate in this arrangement (as a minimum/maximum) are:	
The minimum skill level for an individual to be deemed competent for on-call work is:	
The minimum number of on-calls to be worked per annum to maintain competence is:	
The on-call arrangement will be reviewed at regular intervals to ensure that it remains fit for the needs of the service	

Location of the on-call service	
The location from which the on-call service will usually be required to operate	Home/Virtual
Circumstances in which an individual may be required to	

physically attend an ICB Hub or other location in the geographical footprint	
Arrangements where the travelling time of an individual to the physical location is considered too great	

The safety of the on-call service	
<p>The rota will be risk assessed to ensure that it is safe to provide the on-call service where there are either short or long-term gaps in the rota due to sickness, leavers, vacancies etc. The rota will be risk assessed and gaps filled by volunteers so that the on-call service is not compromised.</p>	
The manager who is responsible for ensuring all on-call availability slots are covered, by allocation if necessary, is:	
The manager who will, in exceptional circumstances, require members of staff to participate where necessary, is:	

Management Escalation	
The triggers that require escalation to more senior departmental or ICB management are:	

Rostering	
The person responsible for creating and publishing the rota is:	
Each rota will cover a period of:	

Sickness and other short notice absence
--

The procedure to follow should the on-call individual call in sick (or require other absence) at short notice is:	
The manager will ensure that the on-call rota is adequately covered during sickness or other short notice absence by:	

Longer term absence	
The manager will ensure that the on-call rota is adequately covered during long term absence (e.g. longer-term sickness, maternity leave, vacancies etc.) by:	

Swapping on-call availability shifts	
The process for swapping shifts is:	

Normal Working Day Overruns	
The rules for the cover of on-call if an individual's normal working day overruns into the on-call period are:	

Public Holidays	
The department covers on-call availability on all public holidays by:	

Exceptional Circumstances	
Please specify the types of exceptional circumstances you would expect an individual to encounter, and what you would expect them to do when faced with these (i.e. discuss and agree the approach with their manager)	

Looking after your Wellbeing

Please set out the support available to an individual after a particularly challenging on-call (in conjunction with their line manager)	
Please set out the process by which the manager responsible for the on-call service will work with the line manager of the individual to ensure the individual is (and remains) fit to participate in on-call	

Contact Arrangement	
The contact arrangements for on-call are:	

Personal Logbook	
When called out, the individual must record actions and decisions taken in:	

Media Enquiries	
Any media enquiries out of hours must be dealt with in accordance with the Communications and Media Plan available in the On-Call Managers Handbook.	