Professional Judgement Workload Tool

User Guide & Frequently Asked Questions

July 2021
1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of Guidance
The Tool is set up to allow nurses and midwives to record information about the number of staff required in order to undertake the workload activities at a particular point in time. These time periods are broken down into 4 hourly blocks. Each block should be completed to reflect the number of registered and non registered staff required to undertake the workload in the specific operational area. There are occasions when an unusual work event has happened and impacts upon staffing and / or service. Such events should be captured in the comments field. The tool collects users’ professional opinion of how many staff are needed to carry out the workload required. This information is collated, with a predicted absence allowance of 22.5% for nursing and midwifery staff and 25% for medical staff where applicable. This is then available in a report that can be used by the practitioner and managers to plan the allocation of resources to effectively meet the service or health board’s priorities and to identify any risks that may exist in the service. It is important to remember the report is only one part of the triangulation approach to workload planning and should be considered in conjunction with:

- Funded establishment
- The findings from specific workload tool for service area
- Quality indicators and
- Local context

This document will provide all of the information required to complete the Professional Judgement workload planning tool. It will provide detailed information from how to log in to how to finalise and submit data. It will not provide information about the methodologies used to develop the tool or how best to use the reports obtained from the tool. That information can be accessed via the learning resources available on the HSP webpages:


This user guide is available within the Professional Judgement workload tool, as are prompts at each part of the tool. To see further information on a section, select the information icon:

1 Please note, the Professional Judgement Tool should be completed in conjunction with a specific workload tool where available and Quality Tool if being undertaken in a community setting. Each of these tools can be accessed in the same way as detailed below, however please refer to each tool’s individual user guides for direction about how and when to complete.
1.2 Background

Workload tools are an essential part of the Health and Care (Staffing) (Scotland) Act 2019 aimed at ensuring health & social care staffing is at the level required to deliver safe, quality focused care to people using the services. The tools are designed to give staff the platform on which to record information about the actual work they do. This is to collate the activities in a manner that supports decisions about staffing, resource allocation and service design as part of a triangulated process of planning.

To find out more about this, please refer to the HSP website and learning resources: [http://www.healthcareimprovementscotland.org/our_work/patient_safety/healthcare_staffing_programme.aspx](http://www.healthcareimprovementscotland.org/our_work/patient_safety/healthcare_staffing_programme.aspx)

The political commitment in Scotland is that, through application of a common staffing method (figure 1), health services will be staffed to the level required to provide safe, high quality care. To ensure this, each NHS Scotland Board and the services therein, are responsible for having effective planning processes, informed by the activities captured through the legislated use of workload tools. The Professional Judgement Tool is one of the national workload tools available for this purpose.

*Figure 1 – The common staffing method*
2. Logging In

2.1 Accessing the tools
To gain access to the workload planning tool you will require access to the local SSTS platform. Please speak to your line manager about local processes to obtain this.

Once you have been issued with your username and password (via your local SSTS manager) you should use the link provided to go to the login page.

⚠️ The tools should be accessed via Internet Explorer 11 or Internet Explorer 8. Firefox, Google Chrome or any other browsers are not supported and should not be used.

Enter your username and password as they were provided to you and select ‘Login’:

![Login page screenshot]

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Server NHLVWSSTSUWB01

⚠️ Passwords are case-sensitive and you will be prompted to change your password the first time you log in.

Click ‘Confirm’ to proceed:
2.2 Screen display issues
Some boards have reported issues with the workload tool screens not displaying correctly, for example save buttons being hidden or data entry boxes being misaligned. This is due to compatibility issues following an SSTS update. If you experience display problems, you should first check that you are using either Internet Explorer 8 or Internet Explorer 11. If you are still having problems, please contact your local SSTS Manager, who can advise on local settings and solutions.

Firefox, Google Chrome or any browsers apart from Internet Explorer 8 or 11 are not supported and should not be used.

2.3 Changing Working Location
Once you have logged in to the tool you will be presented with the following screen:
Check the Current Location at the top of the screen. If this is incorrect, select ‘My Account’ and then ‘Change Working Location’:

A screen will then appear containing the ward and clinical areas you have access to:

The ward/area can be searched for by roster location, staff bank, local area or employer. To choose a ward/area of interest, select it from the available list and then click ‘Select’:

The below screen will then appear, select ‘OK’ to proceed:
Professional Judgement user guide and Frequently asked questions

The location will then update on the toolbar:

3. Using the Professional Judgement Tool

3.1 Opening the tool
To open the Professional Judgement Tool select ‘Workload Tools’ and then ‘Professional Judgement’:
3.2 User Roles

There are two types of user role for the Professional Judgement tool:

- Editor permissions allow users to create, enter, edit/delete records and to view tool results.

- Data Entry permissions allow users to create records and enter data on the Week 1 and Week 2 tabs, but not to enter Skill Mix, view results or delete records.

3.3 Entering Data

After opening the Professional Judgement tool, a screen similar to the below will appear:

- Any data entered into the tool before the evening of 30th October 2019 will not be visible on this screen. Instead, it can be viewed in BOXI reports (see Section 4).

- To navigate through the tool, please use the buttons at the bottom of the page (e.g. Save & Proceed, Previous). Clicking directly between tabs may result in entered data being lost.
The **Status** column shows records which have been completed or are still In Progress. **Editor** users will have the option to Edit or Delete records. **Data entry** users will only be able to delete records. More information on editing and deleting records can be found in sections 3.4 and 3.5.

If you wish to create a new record, click on the ‘**Add Record**’ tab. You will see the following screen:

Select the **date** you wish your two week data collection to begin. This cannot be a date in the future:
When you go to the Add Record tab, today’s date will be highlighted in yellow. However, this does not mean that today’s date is selected. You must click on the date in the calendar screen to select it.
Then, select the Workload Tool for which you are collecting data:

If you choose Professional Judgement Tool Only, a text box appears asking you to specify the service area. This should only be used where no specialty specific workload tool is available:

This must be completed before clicking ‘Save & Proceed’.

For specific guidance on completing the Professional Judgement Tool for the EDEM Workload Tool, go to Section 3.6.

If you wish to record a comment, insert this in the Comments box:

The comments box should be used to provide explanation and justification of staff requirements. Please see the frequently asked questions section for more details on how the comments box should be used.

The Professional Judgement Tool and workload information should be used together to explain staffing needs for the actual workload carried out during the designated period.

Once the comments have been updated, click on ‘Save & Proceed’ and you will see the following screen:
At the top of the screen, there is information about the record. Start Date and End Date refer to the start and end of the two-week period which the Professional Judgement tool is being run for. Date created and created by refer to when the record was started. Date completed and completed by refer to when Skill Mix 2 was completed and saved.

The Professional Judgement tool is developed in 4 hourly time blocks. To enter data for a time block, click the checkbox below Activate. This will allow data to be entered into the Registered and Unregistered rows for that time block:

To activate all 6 time blocks, click the Activate All checkbox at the top of the page:

Unchecking an Activate checkbox will remove all data for that time block and deactivate the block. Unchecking the Activate All time block will remove data from all time blocks and deactivate them. There is a warning message when you uncheck the Activate All checkbox, but not when you uncheck boxes for individual blocks.

Clicking Clear Data at the end of a row will clear all data from that row.

Pressing the return key at any point on this page will save the data and take you to the next tab.
Activate the blocks required and add the number of staff required (Registered & Unregistered) against each block.

Staff numbers must be lower than 100 and have no more than two decimal places. If not, there will be a red asterix next to the relevant box: and you will not be able to save the record.

⚠️ You cannot leave any boxes in an activated time block blank. If staff were not needed for all of the days in the time block, please enter 0 for any unneeded boxes.

⚠️ You can update Comments on the Week 1, Skill Mix 1, Week 2 and Skill Mix 2 screens. Any updates are saved when you click ‘Save & Proceed’.

Once data entry is complete, click ‘Save & Proceed’. If you have Editor permissions, you will then be taken to the Skill Mix tab:

⚠️ The Night WTE Req’d column will be displayed even if only day time blocks have been activated. This can be left as 0 if no night data has been entered.

If you have not completed Week 1 data input at this point, you should select ‘Previous’:
If you have completed **Week 1** data, you are now required to allocate staff to the relevant Agenda for Change Bands ensuring that these add up to the totals recorded not your current skill mix.

⚠️ If you amend the data on the Week 1 screen, any data entered into the Skill Mix 1 tab will be cleared.

Click on ‘Save & Proceed’ to save the data:

⚠️ If you have Data Entry permissions, you will be taken straight from the Week 1 to Week 2 screen. You will not be able to view or enter the Skill Mix.

You will then be taken to the **Week 2** screen:

Follow the same process as for Week 1 and Skill Mix 1.

A ‘Clone Week 1’ option is available if the staffing requirements for Week 2 match those of Week 1. To use this option click on the ‘Clone Week 1’ button:

Once completed, click ‘Save & Proceed’.
If you have **Data Entry** permissions, you will receive a message confirming that the data has been saved.

If you have **Editor** permissions, you will then be required to complete Skill Mix 2.

A **Clone Skill Mix 1** option is also available on the Skill Mix 2 tab:

1. **Active blocks in weeks 1 and 2 must match before skill mix can be cloned.**

2. **The cloning function should only be used where there is minimal variation in workload between the two weeks.**

Once complete click on ‘Save & Proceed’:

The Results tab will then appear.

3. **The Results tab is only available to Editor**

You can amend the Comments box in this screen if required - click ‘**Update**’ to cascade any change to the previous screens.

If you wish to print a copy, click on the ‘**Print**’ button. Click ‘**Exit**’ to return to the Select Record screen.
3.4 Editing Data

If you wish to select an existing record, the record can be searched for using the filter option on the Select Record screen:
The filter can be applied for a period of up to one year.

You can also click on the table headings to sort the data.

Once the record has been found, click ‘Edit’:

![Table]

This can either be a completed record or the record you are currently working on.

If you click ‘Edit’ on a complete record, this will change to In Progress. You will need to click ‘Save & Proceed’ on the Skill Mix 2 tab to mark this record as ‘Complete’ again.

You will need to select the start date every time you wish to add data to the current data set. You can review the data by clicking on the tabs at the top of the screen:

3.5 Deleting Data

Only users with Editor permissions can delete records.

To delete an entry select the entry of interest on the Summary screen and then ‘Delete’:

![Table]

You will be asked to confirm that you wish to delete the record.

3.6 Professional Judgement for EDEM Workload Tool

If EDEM is selected as the workload tool on the Add Record screen, additional tabs to enter medical staff data appear:
Data can also be entered for ENPs in the nursing tabs:

Data should be entered as described for other tools above.

In the Skill Mix 1 and Skill Mix 2 tabs, skill mix for doctors is automatically calculated based on information entered in the Medical Week 1 and Medical Week 2 tabs:
4. **Reporting results**

After Professional Judgement data entry into SSTS is complete, please use one of the Professional Judgement standard reports developed in Business Objects (BOXI) to view and extract information for a selected period of time. These reports were created by the national team and have a series of built-in prompts to generate customised outputs locally.

Access to BOXI reports requires a login and password, which can be granted by your local SSTS Manager. You will require your Line Manager’s permission and authorisation before contacting your local SSTS Manager.
5. Frequently asked questions

Below are the most frequently asked questions and answers raised during the use and application of the Professional Judgement Tool. This quick guide has adopted a question/answer format and should be used in conjunction with earlier parts of the user guide.

**Q1 How is the tool accessed?**

Please see Section 2.1 Accessing the tools for details.

**Q2 How often should the Professional Judgement tool be completed?**

The Professional Judgement tool is run concurrently with the workload tool for the particular specialty. Usually, both the workload tool and Professional Judgement tool are run concurrently for a designated 2-week period for local runs. Some tools may run for a longer or shorter period. This is dependent on local and national decisions and should be clarified prior commencing your run.

**Q3 How many days/weeks should the tool run for?**

The Professional Judgement tool is run for two weeks, fourteen consecutive days. It is advisable the run commences on a Monday and includes weekends. If your service area does not have a specialty tool the PJ tool can still be run for a 2 week period but decide locally the regularity of these runs. If the service is unavailable during these times please reflect this with entering ‘0’ for requirements. Boxes left empty will register as incomplete records.

The Professional Judgement tool should be completed once by a team leader or designated person on behalf of the team. Local arrangements should be established so information from the whole team is collated to inform completion of the tool.

You should check with your local workforce team for detail about when the tool has been scheduled for the local area.

**Q4 Should other tools be completed at the same time as the Professional Judgement?**

Yes.

**Workload Tool:** Speciality specific workload tools are available for 98% of nursing and midwifery areas and should be completed alongside the Professional Judgement tool. Like the Professional Judgement tool, all of these tools can be accessed via the SSTS platform. User guides on how to input data are available for each tool. Please refer to this during the run.

**Quality Tool:** The Quality Tool is designed specifically for use in conjunction with the Community Workload Tool and Community Children’s & Specialist Nurse workload Tool. It is essential the Quality Tool is completed alongside these workload tools to provide data for evidencing best practice.

Where no specific workload tool is available the Professional Judgement Tool can still be used by those service areas.
Q5 How does the tool work?

While the workload tools are developed to take an evidence-based objective approach, the professional judgement approach is subjective, seeking professional opinion on how many staff are needed to carry out the workload required in a defined period of time.

The Professional Judgement tool is a single 24 hour tool. This is broken down into 4-hourly blocks over a 7 day cycle. The designated local lead for the Professional Judgement Tool after consulting the wider team would populate in each 4 hourly block the number of staff required to undertake the workload as a headcount for that period. If there is no workload then 0 can be entered. If the service doesn’t usually operate in this 4 hourly section by leaving this column unticked it will remain ‘greyed out’ and therefore not affect the calculation for Whole Time Equivalent (WTE).

The calculator of the Professional Judgement tool will then use the information inserted for both registered and un-registered staff to calculate a WTE. The Professional Judgement tool WTE automatically includes a 22.5% Predicted Absence Allowance for nursing and midwifery staff and a 25% Predicted Absence Allowance for doctors. There is also a deduction for unpaid breaks. If only 8 hours of data is entered, the deduction for unpaid break is 15 minutes per 4-hourly block. If more than 8 hours is entered, the deduction for unpaid break is 20 minutes per 4hourly block.

It is important that the judgement is based on the number of staff required to carry out the workload during the period. This may be more, less or the same as the staff rostered on duty. Please enter the reason behind the decision in the comments box provided which will be used to inform discussions locally as part of the Common Staffing Method.

Q6 What constitutes ‘workload’ for completion of the Professional Judgement Tool?

Workload is defined as comprising Direct Care, Indirect Care, Associated Work and Personal Time. • Direct care is workload that is carried out to or with a patient.

• Indirect care is the additional work directly related to the patient, e.g. record keeping, telephone calls, liaising with other about the patient.

• Associated Work comprises all of the other work not directly related to a patient, e.g. general communications, repairs, off duty, appraisal and training.

• Personal time is general breaks.

Q7 Should the SCN / SCM be included in the workforce required?

The SCN / SCM should be included in the required headcount figures if they are on duty and contributing to the workload of the area to ensure safe and effective care. If the SCN is rostered for managerial duties out with the ward / department then this would not be captured to prevent ‘double counting’.

i.e. If a SCN /SCM is 1.0 WTE for a ward environment but is only contributing 0.4 WTE to workload on the ward then this should be reflected in the skill mix on page 2.
**Q8 The 4 hourly blocks do not capture the shift pattern. How do I record this?**

The Professional Judgement tool works on the premise of 4 hourly time periods and not individual shift patterns. You would record the number of staff needed to carry out workload during that time period. If there is no workload or no operational service this will remain 0.

If the staff work for a portion of the 4 hourly block then enter the number of staff required but be mindful this will be pro rata. i.e. If for 2 hours of the 4 hourly period you require 4 staff to undertake the workload, the headcount would be captured as 2 for that 4 hourly block. It is possible to input decimal points up to a maximum of two decimal places if necessary, e.g. if for 2 hours of the 4 hourly period you required 3 staff to undertake the workload, the headcount could be captured as 1.5.

Please enter the number of staff required for the workload, not the number of staff rostered on duty as standard.

**Q9 Why does it ask for skill mix on page 2 weekly data entry?**

The skill mix is a local decision whereby the senior professional completing the Professional Judgement tool would utilise the WTE to break down their requirements for registered and unregistered staffing.

The skill mix figures entered have to add up to the total for registered and unregistered in both Day and Night columns.

**Q10 Our service has an overlap of shifts. Is this calculated into the WTE?**

The Professional Judgement Tool is developed on 4-hourly time periods. The workload that is carried out during each of these periods determines the staffing need. Therefore if there are more staff on during certain periods and the workload identifies that more staff are needed for that corresponding period then the numbers of staff recorded would reflect this.

**Q11 When should the comments box be used?**

The comments box is useful as an aide memoire and as rationale for the figures entered and the decisions taken as some time may pass before you have your local discussion on the outcomes of running the workload tools.

Examples of what may arise:

You have an emergency requiring more staff for a period of time.

Preceptorship of staff within an area has increased the number of staff required to undertake the workload.

Member of staff was off sick at the last minute but the workload was still manageable therefore they would not be captured in the figures.

These real time issues can have an impact on your capacity to maintain the quality of patient care and additional staff may be needed for identified time periods to undertake the workload. The information in the comments box would help you explain the rationale for your decisions at the time.
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