

## **NHS Professionals Special Health Authority**

### Entrustment

NHS Professionals (NHSP) is established as a Special Health Authority within the National Health Service i.e. the "NHS Professionals Special Health Authority (Establishment and Constitution) Order 2003 (SI 2003/3059), and this conferred the following functions on it:

"(1) Subject to and in accordance with such directions as the Secretary of State may give to the Authority, the Authority shall perform-

(a) such functions in connection with the management of matters relating to the recruitment and use of temporary staff in the health service; and

(b) such other functions,

as the Secretary of State may direct.

NHS Professionals provides services to and on behalf of other entities, typically NHS Trusts, within the NHS family.

The services predominantly consist of managing Trust nursing banks and the organisation of flexible worker services for the NHS. NHSP does not provide supply services beyond the NHS geographic borders.

There are no exclusive or special rights assigned to NHSP other than by the fact of it being within the NHS.

NHSP charges a service fee to those NHS organisations to which it provides assistance. Central funding is currently provided where this does not match costs to provide a neutral position for internal accounting purposes. Any central funding must be separately authorised by the Department and is only made if a sufficient case is made to support any claim. A robust challenge and business case process prevents any overcompensation. NHSP does not currently show surpluses and no 'profits' are taken either centrally or by any third party.

The challenge function within the Department has set a target for NHSP to reduce and then remove the need for any additional central funding. This has been successful; the funding requirements are dropping annually and on current projections will cease in 2011/12.

### Amount of compensation / Monitoring

As a Special Health Authority NHS Professionals must provide full accounts prepared to Government accounting standards and must hold full accounting records. These records and accounts are audited each year by the National Audit Office. This provides an independent and robust mechanism to ensure the adequacy of funding claims by NHS Professionals.

In addition to this there are regular reviews and internal checks carried out by the Departments own financial teams to ensure and funding claims are both justified and properly used.

The funding requirements for NHS Professionals for 06/07 and 07/08 have been and for 08/09 projected to be:

	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Funding from DH	£21.0m	£14.7m	£9.0m

A review of the market and the role and value of NHS Professionals has also been published by the NAO entitled "Improving the use of temporary nursing staff in NHS acute and foundation trusts". This is a publicly available document; NAO reference HC1176 published 12 July 2006.

In addition PwC have recently been engaged to undertake work at NHSP, part of which includes a benchmarking exercise. They will be reporting later in the year.