



ASSOCIATION OF
AMBULANCE
CHIEF EXECUTIVES

AACE POSITION STATEMENT

Impact of Agenda for Change pay scales on ambulance services: 2020/21

The implementation of the new Agenda for Change (AfC) pay scales will have a material and potentially significant impact on the ambulance service in the coming financial year. This has been assessed as a potential cost pressure of £64m across the sector in England in 2020/21.

The 2019/20 planning guidance recognised the unique nature of the revised AfC pay scales for ambulance services and mitigated the additional costs across the sector through the provision of ring-fenced funding. However, the AfC cost pressure is significantly higher in the coming year than in 2019/20. As a consequence, it will be challenging for commissioners to fund this additional pay pressure whilst meeting additional costs associated with continuing the journey towards delivery of the Ambulance Response Programme (ARP) standards and funding demand pressures from within their baseline funding allocations. There is subsequently a high risk of a detrimental impact on the performance improvements achieved by the sector over the last two years.

In the context of the above, the Association of Ambulance Chief Executives (AACE) would strongly advocate the ring-fencing of funding for the coming financial year to enable commissioners to mitigate the impact of AfC cost pressures faced within the ambulance sector. Planning guidance for the coming year references the need for commissioners to have due regard for the impact of AfC where this can be shown to have a significant differential impact, for example, on ambulance services, however, AACE does not believe that this goes far enough, hence the request for ring-fencing. This would help avoid any clinical commissioning group (CCG) growth being used to meet pay pressures rather than mitigating demand or improving delivery of the ARP standards.

If funding to mitigate the impact of AfC cost pressures does not occur, ambulance services could see funds set aside for the delivery of the ambulance response standards being diverted to meet this additional unfunded cost pressure. Furthermore, this could mean trusts having to choose between committing to delivering against their financial improvement trajectories or accepting a detrimental impact upon service delivery and patient care.