The five top tips

**01 Benefits**
Agenda for Change has clear benefits for patients and staff. It is important that finance departments understand these benefits and the financial implications and savings.

**02 Working together**
To deliver Agenda for Change effectively the finance department needs to work with the rest of the organisation. It is essential you obtain the support of your chief executive and clinical director and establish good links with HR and the payroll function. Look to involve your senior finance staff from the beginning in order to understand the financial implications associated with implementation and the new terms and conditions. Ensure finance staff are involved in the working groups (for example job evaluation, terms and conditions and payroll) so that they are able to understand and when necessary challenge the structure of the decision making. These working groups make decisions that will impact on future costs.

**03 Payroll**
Payroll will have a crucial role in the process. The Agenda for Change team will need to support payroll. It is important that payroll’s workload is recognised and prioritised in order to deal with the influx of requests from the various project groups including the assimilation and calculation of arrears. It is essential you do not underestimate the amount of input required in calculating each employee’s arrears taking account of incremental dates, promotions, change in hours etc. By moving as quickly as you can you can avoid back pay issues - solid planning and preparation in advance of the effective date will reap benefits.

**04 Financial assessment**
As with any change you will need to know the cost implications for Agenda for Change. It is important that you understand the areas being reviewed for example, basic pay, annual leave etc and that you devise a method of capturing and comparing the outcomes from job evaluation plus the new terms and conditions in order to identify the impact on your current pay bill. You will also need to manage the costs associated with implementing Agenda for Change. Backfill arrangements for staff performing job evaluation is by far the biggest expense and you will need to have an agreed policy on how this will operate in practice. It is important to involve senior staff and retain those with HR and financial skills. A properly resourced project plan will save time and money down the line.

**05 Financial systems**
Start planning now on how to modify your financial systems to meet the requirements of the new pay system. It is clear that this impacts on all aspects of financial information and will involve numerous departments in understanding current and future requirements for example, creation of budgets, financial coding structure, continuity of information, payroll systems and workforce data.
How ready is your Finance Department for Agenda for Change?

Key questions you might want to ask yourself or others to ensure you are on the right track with Agenda for Change.

Does your payroll team have the capacity to handle Agenda for Change?

Can the finance, IT and HR systems ‘talk’ to each other?

Does your team understand the current practices that are in place? If not how will they be able to understand how Agenda for Change is different?

Are you liaising with your Strategic Health Authority Finance Director to ensure you have the tools to deliver Agenda for Change?

Have you done any cost awareness training?

Have you an established process with staff?

How will you inform staff of changes?

Have you considered the complexity of assimilating staff from one pay system to another?

Have you figured out a realistic plan for which staff should move when?

How are you managing staff expectations?

Agenda for Change websites:
For policy issues visit the Department of Health site: www.dh.gov.uk/policyandguidance/humanresourcesandtraining/modernisingpay/agendaforchange

For advice on implementation and examples from Early Implementer sites visit the Modernisation Agency’s site: www.modern.nhs.uk/agendaforchange

These top tips have been compiled from contributions made by Finance Directors in EI sites currently working on implementing Agenda for Change including: Central Cheshire PCT, East Anglian Ambulance Service NHS Trust and Aintree Hospitals NHS Trust.