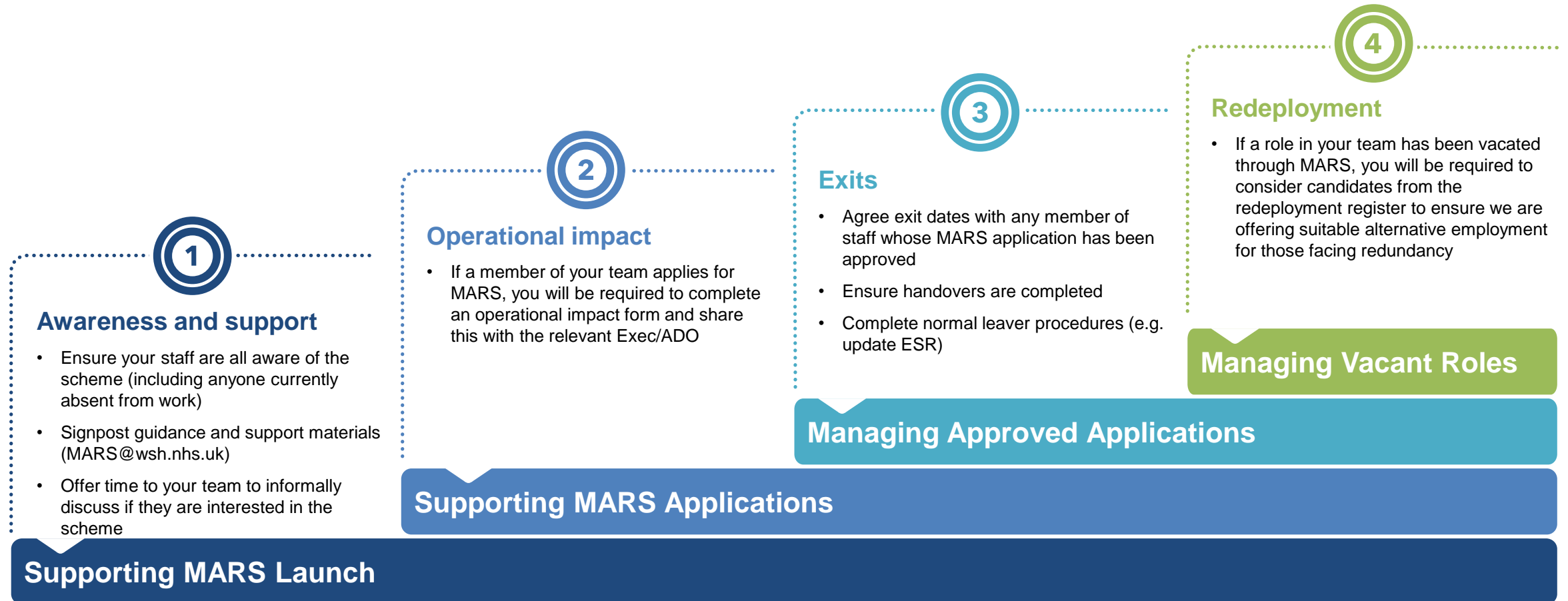


Mutually Agreed Resignation Scheme (MARS) Line Manager Guidance

1. An overview of your role as a Line Manager
2. What is the MAR scheme and why are we running a MAR scheme now
3. Who is eligible to apply
4. When will the MAR scheme be open
5. How do individuals apply for MARS and what is the role of a Line Manager during the application process
6. What happens if an application is approved
7. What happens to the roles vacated through MARS
8. Where to find useful documents/supporting materials

1. An overview of your role as a line manager throughout this process



2. What is a Mutually Agreed Resignation Scheme (MARS) and why are we running one now?

What is a Mutually Agreed Resignation Scheme (MARS)?

A mutually agreed resignation scheme (MARS) is a voluntary programme where an employee can agree with their employer to leave their role in return for a severance payment. The scheme will be open for a set time period and has clear criteria for who can or can't apply.

MARS is not the same as redundancy or voluntary redundancy. Unlike redundancy, roles vacated through MARS are not removed from the organisation and can be filled through the redeployment of other employees or traditional recruitment

Why are we running a MARS:

We've chosen to run a MARS now to:

- Offer employees the opportunity to leave their role voluntarily in return for a severance payment, and;
- Create vacancies which can be filled by redeployment of staff from other jobs or as a suitable alternative for those facing redundancy.

The scheme has been approved by NHS England and is similar to schemes run by other Trusts.

3. Who is eligible to apply for MARS?

MARS will be open only to the following teams/staff;

- Corporate Services
- Admin and/or clerical roles across the organisation

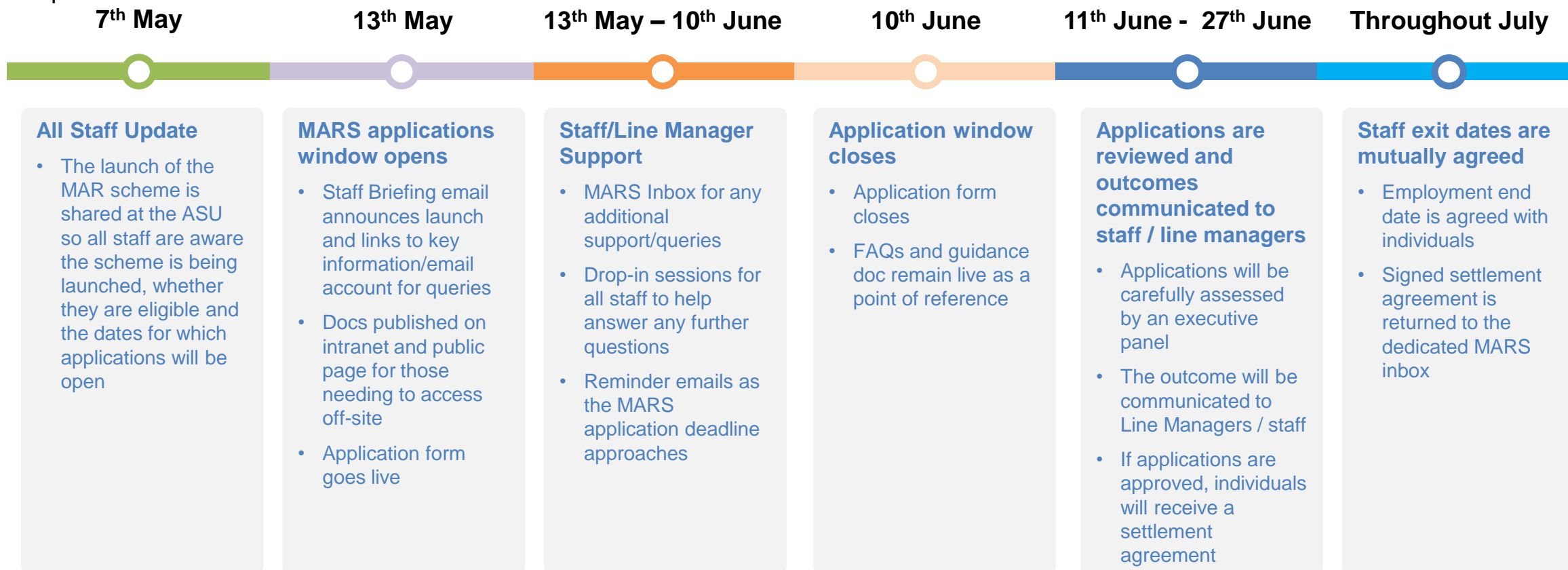
It is the responsibility of line managers to identify any eligible staff who are absent from work (including staff on maternity leave, long term sick leave, secondment or unpaid leave) and contact these employees to inform them about the scheme.

Staff will not be able to apply for MARS if they:

- Have been identified as at risk of redundancy
- Do not hold a minimum of 12 months continuous service
- Have already formally given notice of their intention to resign/retire
- Have secured employment with another employer
- Have been notified of the date of the termination of their contract of employment for any other reason
- Have been undergoing a performance management procedure to address poor performance
- Have been undergoing a conduct procedure

4. When will the MAR scheme be open?

The MAR scheme will be open for Corporate Services, and admin and clerical roles across the organisation for four weeks from **Tuesday 13th May to Tuesday 10th June**. Supporting documents will be provided to all staff and line managers, and drop-in sessions will be held while the scheme is running to help answer any further questions. There will also be a dedicated MARS inbox (MARS@wsh.nhs.uk) for any email enquiries.



5. How do individuals apply for MARS and what is the role of a Line Manager during the application process?

- If an individual meets the eligibility criteria, they will first need to have **an informal conversation with their line manager** to confirm their intention to apply
 - As a Line Manager you should support any line reports who are considering applying for the scheme and ensure they have read and understood the guidance materials as well as signposting them to where to go to for any further support e.g. Employee Assistance Programme
 - MARS is a voluntary scheme and therefore the decision to apply is entirely up to the individual. Line Managers are not expected to comment on whether individuals should apply or discuss any financial, or other, terms. There is no penalty for applying for MARS and if one of your team is unsuccessful, it is essential they are reassured that it will not be held against them in the future
- Applications are then **shared with the individual's Line Manager and HR representative**, where eligibility and operational impact will be reviewed
 - As a Line Manager you will be required to provide an overview of the operational impact should the individual's application be successful e.g. team/service provision impact. A form has been provided to support you complete this assessment (*appendix 1*)
- Operational considerations are **shared with the relevant Exec/ADO member** for consideration at a MARS application panel
 - Line Managers will be required to share the completed operational impact form with their relevant Exec/ADO and copy in the dedicated MARS inbox (MARS@wsh.nhs.uk)
 - The MARS application panel will review all applications and make a final decision
- MARS application outcomes are **confirmed with Line Managers and individuals**

6. What happens if an application is approved?

- If a member of your teams MARS application is approved, you will receive a notification from the dedicated MARS email address.
- Individuals will also be contacted directly with a copy of their settlement agreement, which will include a severance payment based on their length of service. This sets out the financial and other terms under which the employment relationship will end
 - As a Line Manager you are not expected to provide advice on any terms included in an individual's settlement agreement, and you should direct the individual to the relevant supporting materials if required. Independent legal advice will need to be obtained by the individual before signing the Settlement Agreement and the organisational will contribute up to a maximum of £400 inclusive of VAT towards the cost of this legal advice
 - It is expected that the individual will inform you when/if they have signed the settlement agreement at which point you will need to agree an exit date with them. Unless otherwise agreed, individuals will be required to work their notice period and will not be entitled to any notice pay. This can be discussed further with your HR Business Partner if needed
 - Handovers will need to be completed prior to the individual leaving the organisation and normal leaver procedures will need to be completed by HR/Line Managers, including updating ESR with the correct leaver code for MARS.
- If a member of your teams MARS application is not approved, it is essential they are reassured that it will not be held against them in the future

7. What happens to the roles vacated through MARS?

- Roles vacated through MARS are not removed from the organisation and one of the reasons we've chosen to run a MARS is to create vacancies which can be filled by redeployment of staff from other jobs or as a suitable alternative for those facing redundancy
- Any vacancies created through MARS should therefore be held to allow for the **redeployment of staff**

What do we mean by redeployment?

Redeployment is the process of securing suitable alternative employment for an employee. This is usually when it is identified they will be displaced, usually at a stated future date, from their post as a result of organisational change, or, following application of formal processes relating to capability (whether due to ill-health or performance), or, in advance of the non-renewal of a fixed term contract upon expiry.

The Trust is currently going through a level of organisational change. Throughout this, we are committed to exploring opportunities for suitable alternative employment for our staff, to ensure we minimise the need for redundancy.

What is the redeployment process and what will happen after the MAR scheme?

- Any employee who is identified as 'at risk of redundancy' and is to be considered for redeployment will be added to a 'Redeployment Register' so Line Managers and HR teams can support individuals find suitable alternative employment
- If a post is deemed as a 'suitable alternative employment' the individual will apply for the role via TRAC for the hiring manager to interview
- If the individual is successful in their application, they will be eligible for a 4-week redeployment trial, where both the individual and Line Manager can assess if the new role is suitable without the individual losing their right to redundancy pay. If the trial period is successful, the individual is confirmed in post via a letter and ESR is updated accordingly.
- If the individual is not successful at the hiring stage, or the redeployment trial is unsuccessful, Line Managers will be required to complete a justification form outlining the reason for rejecting the redeployed candidate. Please note, Line Managers will need to have clear rationale for rejecting a redeployed candidate which will then be reviewed by HR.