

**GUIDANCE ON STARTING SALARIES, INCREMENTAL POINTS, ACTING  
ARRANGEMENTS AND RELATED ISSUES FOR STAFF PAID ON AGENDA FOR  
CHANGE TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE**

**December 2024**

**Guidance on Starting Salaries, Incremental Points,  
Acting Arrangement and Related Issues  
December 2024**

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

This guidance is based on the AfC Terms & Conditions Handbook and takes account of additional nationally issued guidance. The purpose of this guidance note is to bring together in a single document the information managers require in order to determine starting salaries and the process where there may be a case for awarding incremental credit.

Agenda for Change (AfC) specifies the arrangements which apply to staff joining or rejoining the NHS. Managers are asked to note that awarding incremental credit without good reason is contrary to the principle of fair pay on which AfC terms and conditions are based. This guidance also aims to ensure that managers across all job families in NHS Lanarkshire are implementing these arrangements fairly and consistently.

Full arrangements for existing staff are contained within the AfC handbook, updated from time to time by NHS Circulars. The latest version of the AfC Handbook can be accessed at <https://www.msg.scot.nhs.uk/pay/agenda-for-change>

## **2. STARTING SALARIES FOR NEW STAFF INCLUDING BANK WORKERS (NEW ENTRANTS TO THE NHS)**

### **2a) Starting Salary at Minimum Spine Point**

This section applies to staff joining the NHS for the **first time**. All new staff should be appointed onto the minimum spine point of the pay band unless the circumstances described at paragraph 2b) apply.

### **2b) Starting Salary above the Minimum Spine Point**

As detailed in [DL\(2021\)47](#) NHS Scotland staff are normally appointed on the minimum point of the pay band and their incremental date will be the anniversary of their appointment. However, there will be situations when experienced staff with relevant recognised service will apply for posts and their service may be considered when placing the individual on a point above the minimum of the scale. These provisions would apply to any new employee who:

- Is returning to the NHS after a break in service and has relevant recognised service which equates directly to the competences required for the post;
- Has worked in the UK and has relevant recognised service which equates directly to the competences required for the post;
- Has worked out with the UK and has relevant recognised service which equates directly to the competences required for the post.

It should be noted that due to current pay arrangements, a number of pay points have the same salary, therefore awarding incremental credit may not result in an increase to salary. Only complete years of service can be counted towards incremental credit; 1 years' experience equates to one increment.

Where a manager can evidence that a new entrant has significant relevant experience which would justify a starting salary above the minimum of the pay band they are required to consult with the Recruitment Manager at the point when the preferred candidate is identified and prior to any offer being made.

The form is available in [Appendix 2](#). Guidance on completing this is included at paragraph 10 of this document. Managers and HR are reminded of their responsibility to take into account the impact on other posts to ensure fairness and consistency.

## **2c) Incremental Dates**

The incremental date will be the anniversary of the date of appointment in both circumstances described above.

## **2d) Agenda for Change Staff transferring to NHS Scotland**

Any staff member covered by Agenda for Change who is transferring to NHS Scotland from the rest of the UK, Channel Islands and Isle of Man will be paid as set out in PCS(AFC)2023/5.

This states that:

- In the event a staff member is transferring from NHS employment in another part of the UK, Channel Islands or the Isle of Man, into the same AfC Band, for the purposes of their starting salary the staff member will be placed on the pay point they would have been on had they performed all of their previous service in NHS Scotland.
- In the event a staff member is transferring from NHS employment in another part of the UK, Channel Islands or the Isle of Man, to a post at a lower band in the same role, they should be treated, for starting salary purposes, as if they had performed all of their previous service in NHS Scotland at that lower band.

A transfer certificate will be required from the previous NHS employer to confirm service. This can be requested directly by the employee, or Payroll can be notified and the request will be made on the employee's behalf.

## **3. STARTING SALARIES FOR TRAINEES**

### **3a) Salary Placement**

Jobs undertaken by trainees will be evaluated using the NHS Job Evaluation Scheme to determine the correct pay band. Special arrangements will apply where trainees undertake all their training whilst an employee within the NHS. Pay for staff in this position will be a percentage of the pay for qualified staff – Annex 21 of the AfC Handbook terms and conditions is attached as [Appendix 1](#).

The starting salary for any new trainee must be no less than the rate of the main (adult) rate of the Scottish Living wage.

On assimilation to a substantive pay band following completion of training, the trainee should be placed on the next pay point of the appropriate band which provides an increase in salary, taking into account their earnings as a trainee at completion of their training. This is in line with [PCS \(AFC\) 2024/6](#).

### **3b) Salary Placement for NHS Lanarkshire Employee**

Where an existing substantive employee moves to undertake a training role and this would result in a reduction in earnings, the following arrangements will apply. The individual will remain on their existing band and earnings level, including any incremental progression and pay award uplifts, until the conclusion of their training period. The earnings level will include rostered shift allowances/unsocial hours and will be agreed in advance with the trainee. Normal rules such as PAIAW will apply.

In circumstances where the trainee's earnings (as per paragraph 6 of Annex 21) become greater than the protected earnings applied in line with the above, the trainee will revert to the appropriate salary/earnings, as per paragraph 6 of Annex 21.

### **3c) Completing eESS Transactions for Engagement and Change of Contract**

Managers are asked to clearly indicate on engagement and change forms if a trainee falls within Category 4(ii) of Annex 21 and provide the start date of training and expected end date. Managers are also required to ensure notification of any adjustments to the percentage payment throughout the training period are processed via eESS. Once the training is successfully concluded all change notification forms should be completed via eESS to inform payroll of this and to ensure any appropriate salary adjustment is implemented.

### **3d) Incremental Date**

There is no automatic incremental date for trainees. Trainees are paid a percentage of the pay band, therefore increases are in line with changes to the pay band.

## **4. STARTING SALARIES FOR STAFF RE-JOINING AFTER A BREAK IN SERVICE GREATER THAN 3 MONTHS**

### **4a) Break in Service**

A break in service for the purposes of determining incremental credit is 3 months or more.

### **4b) Salary Placement**

Employers can award incremental credit in complete years only i.e. the employee need not start at the minimum of the pay band however periods of less than 1 year or part years above 1 year will not be taken into consideration. In order to determine whether to grant increments for previous service this must be deemed to be relevant, and the following factors should all be taken into consideration:

- The employee has kept their continuous personal development (CPD) up to date.
- Consideration can also be taken of relevant experience outside the NHS.

Given the concerns about ensuring fair pay and consistent processes managers who wish to appoint above the minimum should discuss this with the Recruitment Manager and complete the form at [Appendix 2](#). This allows an appropriate audit trail for future reference should there be an equal pay claim. Where there has been a break greater than three months the Payroll Department will not apply a salary above the minimum of the band without an appropriately completed and authorised Incremental Credit Application Form.

### **4c) Incremental date**

The incremental date will be the anniversary of the date of appointment.

## **5. STARTING SALARIES FOR STAFF RE-JOINING WITHOUT A BREAK IN SERVICE OR WHERE THE BREAK IS LESS THAN 3 MONTHS**

### **5a) Appointment to the Same Band**

An individual returning after a break of less than 3 months to the same pay band will retain their previous incremental point – application of this will rest with Payroll and will require no input from Managers. The incremental date will be the previous incremental date deferred by the number of days of broken service.

### **5c) Promotion**

To ensure that all staff are treated equally and placed on the appropriate spine point confirmation of service is required and thereafter salary placement will be actioned by

Payroll. Placement on the appropriate salary will be in accordance with the promotion rules outlined at paragraphs 1.12 and 1.13 of the AfC Terms and Conditions. The incremental date will be the anniversary of the date of appointment.

## **6. STARTING SALARIES FOR EXISTING STAFF MOVING TO A NEW POST**

### **6a) Promotion**

Where an existing member of staff is promoted to a higher pay band they will normally move to the minimum of the new pay band.

Promotion increase rules apply to employees moving between all pay bands. The new incremental date will be the anniversary of appointment.

See section 8 where the employee has previously held a post in the higher grade and has been continuously employed or Section 10 where there has been a break in service exceeding 3 months after previously having held the higher grade.

Given the differences in shift enhancements payable to different bands of staff, this can mean that where these promotion rules are applied, this can be detrimental to staff. In these circumstances, and where the working pattern remains substantially the same, staff will move to the first incremental point producing an increase when basic pay, any long-term recruitment and retention premium and the unsocial hours payment, are combined.

Refer to Agenda for Change Handbook paragraphs 1.12 and 1.13.

### **6b) Promotion where Staff Member is receiving protection (existing NHS Lanarkshire employee)**

Staff will be placed on a pay point that takes into account their protected earnings to ensure no detriment. If the protected earnings exceed the top of the new pay scale they will move to the top and the balance of protected earnings will be paid on a mark time basis. Mark time means that element of pay that is still subject to protection following promotion to a higher level post will not attract any future cost of living increases.

### **6c) Pay where there is No Change of Band within the same Job Family**

A member of staff may seek to change their role and move to a post on the same pay band as their existing post. In this situation there is no entitlement to a promotion increase and the individual retains their existing salary. There is no change of incremental date in respect of the change.

### **6d) Movement to a lower Band**

In these cases the salary in the lower post will be assessed on the basis that all service in the higher banded post had been service in the lower band. This does not apply in capability cases.

### **6e) Movement to a Post within a Different Job Family**

Where an employee moves to a role within a different job family, their salary placement will be in line with new entrants to the NHS as set out in Section 2.

## **7. PROFESSIONAL STAFF AWAITING REGISTRATION**

Professional staff awaiting registration will be placed on the minimum or appropriate point of the non registered band for their professional group. Following receipt of registration staff will be placed on the minimum point of pay band 5. Payment will be backdated to the date of their registration.

### 7a) Incremental Date

The incremental date on appointment to band 5 will be the start date

## 8. TEMPORARY MOVEMENT INTO A HIGHER PAY BAND

### 8a) Conditions that apply

Members of staff may be moved into a higher pay band where it is necessary to fill a post on a temporary basis because:

- a) A vacancy is unfilled, or
- b) The post is being held open for the existing post holder who is due to return, e.g. from long term sick leave, maternity leave or from extended training.

Pay will normally be set at the minimum of the new band.

In order to qualify for pay at the higher level, the temporary movement into a new pay band must be for a minimum of **1 month and should not normally last more than 6 months** except where a longer period is known at the outset and is necessary to cover maternity leave or long term sick leave.

See section 10 where the employee has previously held a post in the higher grade.

### 8b) Incremental Dates

Where temporary movement into a higher pay band results in the staff member receiving only one extra pay point the incremental date remains the same. Where temporary movement results in movement to more than one extra pay point the incremental date for the period of the temporary movement becomes the date the movement began.

Extensions to this arrangement must be notified via a change to Terms and Conditions on eESS.

Subsequent promotion to a post directly following a period of acting into the same post will result in retention of both the salary paid during Temporary Move Into Higher Pay Band and the incremental date.

## 9. UNPLANNED ACTING

### 9a) Background

The AfC terms and conditions do not currently address the issue of short-term cover, which may be required from time to time for sound operational reasons. However, the Scottish Terms and Conditions Committee (STAC) have produced instructions in the form of a Circular: **PCS (AFC) 2006/2** (as amended on 16 October 2007) and a **Questions & Answers paper** to assist NHS Scotland deal with such issues.

### 9b) Conditions

It has been agreed in partnership that NHS Boards can pay acting up premium in the following circumstances:

- Where an individual provides short-term cover for a period of no less than one full shift
- Cover of anything less than a full shift will only be paid the acting up premium with the approval of the appropriate manager, or in the case of out of hours/weekends, the appropriate designated manager, providing the individual takes the full range of duties and responsibilities of the grade senior to his/her own

- Where any period of acting up is agreed by the appropriate manager or equivalent and the individual takes on the full range of duties and responsibilities of a grade senior to his or her own, then an acting up premium will be paid.
- Unplanned acting is not expected to be for more than 5 working days duration. If it is not possible to put other cover arrangements in place a manager can extend unplanned acting arrangements. If this was to extend beyond 4 weeks the conditions outlined in Section 8 above, i.e. temporary movement into a higher band, must be applied.

Managers are asked to note that unplanned acting payments will not normally apply:

- To staff whose job descriptions include provision to cover for their supervisor or manager
- During periods of annual leave or other planned leave such as parental leave, maternity leave, etc
- To official/rostered days off, unless there are unplanned circumstances which make this essential, e.g. someone else is on sick leave.

### **9c) Notification of Unplanned Acting**

Unplanned acting arrangements require to be notified on SSTS roster notes to the payroll department detailing the reasons in accordance with the guidance above. Unplanned acting is deemed to be a short-term arrangement (not more than 5 days see 9b above). Managers are expected to put in place arrangements in accordance with the provisions for temporary movement into a higher band as outlined in paragraph 11 above.

## **10. Guidance on completing the incremental credit application**

Managers are advised that difficulty in recruiting does not justify a starting salary above the minimum of the scale.

Managers require authorisation to offer a salary above the minimum of the scale. This applies to:

- new entrants to NHS with relevant experience
- re-entrants who have a break of more than 3 months
- existing staff on promotion who have previous service in a higher band before a break of more than three months.
- Staff moving job families

If a manager wishes to recognise relevant experience which equates directly with the competence requirements of the post in question, they must state the reasons and provide supporting evidence fully documented. Evidence may, for instance, be taken from:

- The application form
- References
- Payslips
- Staff transfer certificates.
- Verbal evidence provided at interview must be documented.

A manager must be able to justify their decision, including the impact on:

- Others already in post (bearing in mind equality issues)
- Others outside the immediate department
- Consistency locally
- Comparison with the KSF Outline for the post.

Any decision likely to have an impact across a profession may only be taken by the professional lead.

In fairness to existing staff or staff who may be internally promoted, care must be taken that incremental points awarded in recognition of relevant experience only recognise completed years of experience at the level of the pay band in question, or higher, and not below it.

**Incremental credit will not be given for reasons of market forces.**

Where market pressures would otherwise prevent the ability to recruit staff to and retain staff in sufficient numbers for the posts concerned, a recruitment and retention premia may be applicable. This will be agreed nationally. Further guidance should be taken from Employee Relations where the manager feels this may be appropriate.

## **11. OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES**

AfC Terms and Conditions are not explicit in the treatment of employees who are promoted into a post having previously held a position at that grade. Paragraph 10 applies where the service has not been continuous. Paragraph 11 applies where there has been no break in service. The following sets out guidance for payroll staff in determining the promoted salary:

Where an employee is promoted into a post having previously held a position at that grade, the Payroll Department will assess placement in the promoted post as if the lower post did not exist – i.e. resurrect the placement and incremental date held previously in the higher grade and apply that to the new post. So if, for example, the employee held incremental point 04 previously and would have received an increment after a further 90 days then promotion will be to point 04 and the incremental date will be set at the date of appointment plus 90 days.

- Where applying the above rule provides a poorer outcome than applying the normal promotion rules as described at paragraphs 1.12 and 1.13 of the AfC handbook then the normal promotion rules will apply
- Where the employee has held the lower graded post for more than two years the Payroll Officer must confirm with the manager that the time spent previously in the higher grade is still relevant to this appointment. If the previous service is deemed relevant then the above rule can be applied and where it is not deemed relevant then the normal promotion rules described at paragraphs 1.12 and 1.13 of the AfC terms and conditions will be applied.

## **12. ADDITIONAL SUPPORT AND GUIDANCE**

Managers who require any additional support and guidance in the application of the terms and conditions covered by this document should contact Employee Relations.



## Annex 21 Arrangements for pay and banding of trainees

1. The NHS has a wide range of people described as trainees, working and studying within its services. The arrangements set out below describe how those trainees employed by the NHS should be supported. These provisions deal with individuals who join the NHS as a “new entrant”, as well as the position of existing employees who take up a trainee role.
2. The application of Annex 21 to any role within a Board must be agreed and monitored in partnership and a local process should be implemented to ensure that this is in place. In circumstances where a local partnership is unable to reach agreement, the existing STAC referral process could be utilised.
3. It is recognised that when someone commences in a new role a period of training and development within that role is inevitable and necessary. Annex 21 must not be used in situations where an individual is commencing within a standard Job Evaluated role, with the normal arrangements for training and development that would be required within that role. It must only be used where it is agreed in partnership that the post meets the criterion contained within 4 (i) or (ii), below, and in circumstances where ‘formal’ training<sup>1</sup> is required.
4. Trainees fall into two broad categories:
  - (i) Trainees studying and/or working in the NHS, who are already in possession of qualifications at a high level. Such staff are often studying for a higher level qualification and undertaking a role that can be assessed using the NHS Job Evaluation Scheme.
  - (ii) Trainees who enter the NHS and undertake all their training whilst an employee. Typically, these staff develop their knowledge and skills significantly during a period of time measured in years. Given the significant change in knowledge and skills during the training period, the use of job evaluation is not appropriate. Pay should be determined as a percentage of the pay for qualified staff as set out in paragraph 6.
5. It is not possible to provide a prescriptive list of posts/roles to which Annex 21 should be applied, as there has to be the ability to adopt different approaches within Boards, dependent upon local workforce challenges and any other relevant factors. It is therefore important that the partnership arrangements described in paragraph 2 above are in place to ensure that any decisions made in terms of application are done on a partnership basis. However, the kinds of roles covered would include:
  - (i) Trainee Psychologist.
  - (ii) Trainee Paramedic, Trainee Advanced Paramedic, Trainee Ambulance Technician (Higher Level), Trainee Biomedical Science Roles, Trainee Pharmacy Technicians.
6. For trainees covered by paragraph 2(ii) above, where periods of training last for between one and four years, pay will be adjusted as follows:
  - (i) up to one year (365 days) prior to completion of training: 75 per cent of the pay band maximum of the fully qualified rate;
  - (ii) more than one (366 days+) but less than two years prior to completion of training: 70 per cent of the pay band maximum of the qualified rate;
  - (iii) more than two but less than three years prior to completion of training: 65 per cent of the pay band maximum for the qualified rate;
  - (iv) more than three years from completion of training: 60 per cent of the pay band maximum for the qualified rate.
7. The above is defined as the standard period of training. Where circumstances arise within the training period which may necessitate an extended period of training (e.g. sick leave, repetition of learning modules) this will be the subject of discussion between the employee and employer in terms of approval of this extension in the normal manner.

8. Starting pay for any trainee must be no less than the rate of the Scottish Living Wage. Where the calculation above results in the Scottish Living Wage being payable for year two and beyond, an addition to pay should be made on top of the minimum wage. The addition should be equal to the cash value of the difference between the percentages of maximum pay in the year of payment and the previous year. For example, the supplement in payment in year two of a four year training period would be the value of 65 per cent of the pay band maximum, minus 60 per cent of pay band maximum.

9. Where an existing substantive employee of the employing NHS Board moves to undertake a training role and this would result in a reduction in earnings, the following arrangements will apply. The individual will remain on their existing band and earnings level, including any incremental progression and pay award uplifts, until the conclusion of their training period. The earnings level will include rostered shift allowances/unsocial hours and will be agreed in advance with the trainee. Normal rules such as PAIAW will apply.

10. In circumstances where the trainee's earnings (as per paragraph 6 above) become greater than the protected earnings applied in line with paragraph 9 above, the trainee will revert to the appropriate salary/earnings, as per paragraph 6.

11. On assimilation to a substantive pay band following completion of training, the trainee should be placed on the next pay point of the appropriate band which provides an increase in salary, taking into account their earnings as a trainee at completion of their training.

12. If there are exceptional situations within Boards where Annex 21 may be in use for Modern Apprenticeship roles, this should continue on an interim basis. Any future guidance or framework for Modern Apprentices will be considered for implementation as this becomes available.

**1<sup>1</sup>. Formal or accredited training generally means organised teaching or learning and can be delivered through classroom-based teaching, online learning, a study programme, structured on the job learning or equivalent. Some kind of assessment will generally be required.**

## Appendix 2

### **STARTING SALARIES FOR STAFF NEW TO THE NHS, FOR STAFF RE-JOINING AFTER A BREAK IN SERVICE GREATER THAN 3 MONTHS, AND FOR CURRENT STAFF WITH PREVIOUS NHS SERVICE IN A HIGHER BAND PRIOR TO A BREAK IN SERVICE OF MORE THAN THREE MONTHS**

In the circumstances described in paragraph 10 of the Starting Salaries Guidance Document, Managers may offer a salary above the minimum of the scale to recognise relevant experience. The reasons and supporting evidence should be fully documented, in particular the links to the KSF Outline. Evidence may, for instance, be taken from the application form, references and job descriptions and staff transfer certificates. Verbal evidence provided at interview must be documented.

**Refer to paragraphs 2, 4, and 10 in the Starting Salaries Guidance document for guidance on the completion of this form.**

<b>Employee Name:</b>		<b>Post:</b>	
		<b>Band:</b>	
<b>Recruiting Manager:</b>		<b>Department:</b>	
<b>Interview Date:</b>			
<b>Interview Panel:</b>			
<b>Commencement Date:</b>			

<b>Number of increments requested:</b>		<b>Number of years relevant experience:</b>		<b>Annual Salary:</b>	£
<b>Rationale:</b>	<b>Impact on others in post in immediate team/department:</b>				
<b>See 2b of guidance notes</b>					
	<b>Impact outside immediate dept:</b>				
	<b>Consistency (with other staff):</b>				
<b>Supporting Evidence</b> (please link to KSF Competencies and attach KSF Outline):					

Evidence to quantify salary (experience must be equivalent to appointed band. 1 years' experience = 1 increment)	
--	--

**Requesting Manager**

--	--	--

**Authorisation**

**Recruitment Manager**

<b><i>Print Name</i></b>	<b><i>Signature</i></b>	<b><i>Date</i></b>
--------------------------	-------------------------	--------------------