

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

January 2026

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Acting Arrangement and Related Issues
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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](#). Supporting evidence which can be considered will include the individual's application form, references, payslips and where appropriate a Staff Transfer Certificate.

In the interests of equity, incremental credit will not be given for reasons other than completed years of relevant experience. It will not be given due to market forces, for instance, as there is a need to justify the rationale for starting salaries and to make sure that equal pay standards are maintained.

2c) Incremental Dates

For all newly appointed staff, 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

Annex 21 of the AFC Handbook sets out the arrangements for pay and banding of trainees. This is attached as [Appendix 1](#).

Where there is a significant change in knowledge and skills during the training period, trainees will be paid a percentage of the pay for qualified staff.

The starting salary for any new trainee must be no less than the 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.

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(iii) 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. This includes the annual increase in percentage rates where the individual's training is longer than one year. 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. If the training is longer than one year, an eESS transaction will need to be generated at the appropriate time to increase the percentage payment.

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

A break in service for the purposes of determining incremental credit is 3 months or more. This is set out in PCS(AFC)2007/3.

Any individual who has a break in NHS Service which is longer than 3 months will be treated in the same way as a new employee. This is detailed in Section 2.

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

In line with PCS(AFC)2007/3, where a member of staff resumes NHSScotland employment after a break in service, for the purposes of determining the appropriate pay point under the Agenda for Change terms and conditions handbook, that break will be disregarded where it has been for less than three calendar months.

Where the individual was previously employed in NHS Scotland, Payroll will be able to view their service record on the centralised Pay system and can apply this automatically.

Where the individual was previously employed in NHS England, Wales or Northern Ireland, Payroll cannot automatically apply previous service. The individual needs to provide Payroll with either their previous employer details or a copy of their transfer certificate.

5a) Appointment to the Same Band

The individual's incremental date will be the previous incremental date deferred by the number of days of broken service.

5b) Promotion

This is set out in the Agenda for Change Handbook paragraphs 1.12 and 1.13. Further details are provided in Section 6a.

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

6a) Promotion

This is set out in the Agenda for Change Handbook paragraphs 1.12 and 1.13:

If, on promotion, the working pattern remains substantially the same, staff will move to the first point on their promoted band producing an increase when basic pay, any long-term recruitment and retention premium and the unsocial hours payment are combined.

If the working pattern changes on promotion, pay should be set either at the minimum of the new pay band or, if this would result in no pay increase, the first pay point in the band which would deliver an increase in pay (by reference to basic pay plus any recruitment and retention premium, if applicable).

Further information around previous service can be found in Section 8, if 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.

6b) Promotion where existing staff member is receiving protection

In line with PCS(AFC)2022/1, employees who are were given Organisational Change (no detriment) Protection after 1st April 2019 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 the protected earnings will be paid on a mark time basis.

Any employee who is receiving mark time protection or was given Organisation Change protection prior to 1st April 2019 will not have their protected salary taken into account for placement on the promoted pay scale.

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

A member of staff may seek to change their role and move to another post/different job family 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 and incremental date.

This is applicable to change in Job Families from 1 September 2025.

6d) Movement to a lower Band

Where an employee moves to a post at a lower band, they should be treated, for salary purposes, as if they had performed all their service in the lower band post. This does not apply in capability cases.

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

Movement into a temporary higher bands are usually from between 1 month and 6 months. This is set out in the Agenda for Change Handbook, sections 1.16 – 1.18:

Individuals may be moved into a higher pay band where it is necessary to fill a post on a temporary basis when a vacancy is unfilled, but being advertised, or the post is being held open for someone who is due to return, e.g. from long-term sickness absence, maternity leave, or from extended training.

Pay should be set either at the minimum of the new pay band or, if this would result in no pay increase (by reference to basic pay plus any recruitment and retention premium, if applicable) the first pay point in the band which would deliver an increase in pay. Temporary movement into a new pay band should not normally last more than six months or less than one month, except in instances of maternity leave or long term sickness absence, where a longer period may be known at the outset. In circumstances where the individual is not required to carry out the full responsibilities of the post, pay will be determined by job evaluation.

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.

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

8b) Extensions to Temporary Movement to Higher Banded Posts

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 UP

9a) The Agenda for Change agreement does not cover circumstances where acting up is necessary in response to an unplanned need for short-term cover. However, it has been recognised that such circumstances occur in NHSScotland, and when they do staff should be properly rewarded for taking on the extra responsibilities.

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).

9b) Conditions

Any acting up arrangements will be paid as below:

Where an individual provides short-term cover for a period of no less than one full shift, the individual will be paid for acting up during that shift.

Cover of anything less than a full shift will only attract an additional acting up premium with the approval of his/her appropriate Clinical/Business Manager or equivalent, or in the case of out of hours/weekends the appropriate designated Duty Manager where the individual takes the full range of duties and responsibilities of the grade senior to his or her own.

Where any period of acting up is agreed by the appropriate Clinical/Business 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.

Where any period of ad hoc or unplanned acting up continues for a period of more than five days then alternative arrangements should be put in place or the normal acting up rate or allowance will be paid where the individual is taking the full range of duties and responsibilities of a grade senior to his or her own.

9c) Notification of Unplanned Acting

The Payroll Department need to be notified of any unplanned acting arrangements. This can be done in the following ways:

- SSTS – input the details on to the rostering notes section detailing the reasons for this
- Optima – the system is not currently configured to allow this type of change. An email should be sent to Payroll with the employee's name, pay number, dates of acting up and reasons for this.

Unplanned acting is deemed to be a short-term arrangement of not more than 5 days

10. 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.

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. 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

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 log an enquiry on HR Service Now [HR Portal - NHS Lanarkshire HR](#).

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’ training¹ 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. 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.

Employee Name:		Post:	
		Band:	
Recruiting Manager:		Department:	
Interview Date:			
Interview Panel:			
Commencement Date:			

Number of increments requested:		Number of years relevant experience:		Annual Salary:	£
Rationale: See 2b of guidance notes	Impact on others in post in immediate team/department:				
	Impact outside immediate dept:				
	Consistency (with other staff):				
Supporting Evidence (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)	
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Requesting Manager

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Authorisation

Recruitment Manager

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