



HCSA member briefing

Northern Ireland Government offer to Consultants

July/August 2024

This briefing has been prepared for HCSA consultants in Northern Ireland to assist with your understanding of the recent offer from the Department of Health NI. It will be for HCSA members to vote whether to accept or reject the offer.

This is separate from the annual DDRB pay review process. The pay review body has recommended a 6% uplift for consultants. However, at the time of writing, the Health Minister has not confirmed this award and awaits more information on funding implications.

The sums below would therefore require revision to reflect the 6% in the event that it is agreed.

Pay uplifts achieved through pay scale reform

The offer proposes to reduce the pay spine from 8 points to 5. The starting point on the scale would become £100,400 and the top of the scale would be £132,000.

The offer provides pay uplifts averaging 5.25%, however this varies dependant on paypoint. See table overleaf to understand how your pay would be affected.

Pay uplifts would be backdated to 1st March 2024.

These awards are in addition to the 6% already awarded in the 2023/24 pay review process, and any award arrived at through the 2024/25 pay review process.

Year as a consultant	Existing pay point	2023/24 pay scale	New pay point	Proposed pay scale	Difference in pay as £	Difference in pay as %
1	1	94127	1	100400	6273	6.66%
2	2	97076	1	100400	3324	3.42%
3	3	100024	1	100400	376	0.38%
4	4	102970	2	105400	2430	2.36%
5	5	105908	3	108400	2492	2.35%
6	5	105908	3	108400	2492	2.35%
7	5	105908	3	108400	2492	2.35%
8	5	105908	3	108400	2492	2.35%
9	5	105908	4	118900	12992	12.27%
10	6	112912	4	118900	5988	5.30%
11	6	112912	4	118900	5988	5.30%
12	6	112912	4	118900	5988	5.30%
13	6	112912	4	118900	5988	5.30%
14	6	112912	4	118900	5988	5.30%
15	7	119912	5	132000	12088	10.08%
16	7	119912	5	132000	12088	10.08%
17	7	119912	5	132000	12088	10.08%
18	7	119912	5	132000	12088	10.08%
19	7	119912	5	132000	12088	10.08%
20	8	126907	5	132000	5093	4.01%

Other aspects of the offer

DDRB reform

A series of DDRB reforms intended to benefit the medical profession as a whole were arrived at during the consultant pay negotiations in England. The Department of Health in Northern Ireland has given its support to all of those changes. Additionally, the Department commits that its remit letters shall not include any information in regard to inflation, economic performance or wider financial pressures; that it will participate in the review process in a timely manner in accordance with the timelines set out by the DDRB; and undertakes to implement the recommendations of the DDRB as rapidly as local processes allow upon publication.

Shared Parental Leave

The Consultant (NI) Ts and Cs (2004) will be updated to include the right to shared parental leave in line with other staff groups.

Employer contribution recycling

The Department previously issued guidance to HSC Employers in January 2024 on the recycling of employer contributions. On 1st April 2024 amendments to scheme regulations came into operation, including the introduction of partial retirement from the 1995 scheme. HSC Employers undertake to work at pace to ensure that employer contribution recycling and the new regulations are enacted in a timely manner to enable those consultants who would benefit from these developments to take advantage of them. HSC Employers will endeavour to have agreed regional policies in place for use by 30 September 2024.

Clinical Excellence Award scheme

A consultation has been carried out and findings are currently being collated.

Next steps

HCSA senior doctors returned a resounding vote for strike and action short of strike over our dispute for pay parity with neighbouring jurisdictions.

Now that this offer has been received, HCSA is consulting consultants in Northern Ireland on the offer. Eligible members will receive a link by email to vote in an online referendum. We urge you to familiarise yourselves with this package before casting your vote. The referendum will close on 21st August.

Next steps will be led by our members. If members vote to accept the offer, this would draw the immediate pay dispute to a close.

We will also keep a watching brief on progress with this year's DDRB pay award and its implementation in Northern Ireland.

If you have any questions, contact conspec@hcsa.com