

**HUMAN RESOURCES DIRECTORATE  
PAY AND EMPLOYMENT UNIT**

**Chief Executive of each HSS Board, HSS  
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each Special Agency**

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Your Reference:

Our Reference: HSS (AfC) (9) 2006

**10 November 2006**

**Dear Colleague**

**AGENDA FOR CHANGE: RECOGNITION OF PREVIOUS SERVICE FOR  
STARTING SALARY AND INCREMENTAL DATE**

**Introduction**

1. This Circular supersedes the previous guidance issued by the Department on 24 April 2006. This revised guidance can be retrospectively applied to those staff to whom the earlier guidance was applied. The Department has consulted regional recognised trade unions, and professional bodies on the terms of this Circular.

**Background**

2. The AfC handbook is silent on recognition of previous service (other than for redundancy, maternity, sick leave and annual leave as set out in section 12 of the handbook). This omission can have a detrimental effect on salary levels of experienced employees when joining the HPSS, returning to the HPSS following a break in service, or moving between HPSS employers.

**New Staff Joining From Outside The HPSS**

- 3.1 New staff joining from outside the HPSS will normally commence on the minimum of the pay band. However the following exceptions should be taken into account:

**Transitional points:** In cases where transitional points are in use in the same unit or equivalent work area, staff will normally start on the lowest transitional point currently in use.

**Relevant experience:** Relevant experience of the same level of responsibility as the new post may be taken into account in determining starting salary. However, while current salary should not be used alone as a way of determining starting salary, it may be used, at the discretion of the employer, as a factor in deciding to take relevant previous experience into account.

Before making a decision to offer a higher starting salary than the minimum point on the band, employers *should*:

- a) Confirm previous experience through written evidence.
  - b) Consider the impact of the decision on:
    - Staff who are already in post in the same unit or work area;
    - Staff who are already in post outside the immediate unit or work area;
    - Consistency for all new appointments.
- 3.2. If relevant experience outside of the HPSS/NHS is a consideration, new appointees should in the first instance commence employment on a salary point no higher than the second gateway. Subsequently, their knowledge and skills should be assessed against the KSF outline for their post. Employers should then be in a position to judge whether the individual should move through the second gateway.
- 3.3. Where the relevant experience has been in the HPSS/NHS, paragraph 4 below refers. However, a mix of HPSS/NHS and other employment may be considered in determining relevant experience.
- 3.4. The incremental date will be the date of appointment to the HPSS.

#### **Staff Returning To The HPSS After A Break In Employment**

4. For staff recommencing employment in the HPSS/NHS in the same pay band, any break in employment of less than 3 months should be disregarded. The previously held incremental date should be deferred by the length of the break. After a break in employment for a period longer than 3 months, staff should be treated as if they are joining from outside the HPSS and previous relevant experience in the HPSS/NHS should be considered in accordance with paragraphs 3.1. –3. 2.

#### **Movement Between HPSS/NHS Employers**

5. HPSS employers may permit staff on Agenda for Change rates of pay moving between employers (but remaining in the same pay band) and with either continuous HPSS/NHS employment or a break in HPSS/NHS employment of less than three months) to retain their existing basic salary on appointment. Consideration should also be given to the retention of the former incremental date where there is no break in employment. If the break is less than three months, the incremental date should be deferred for the period of the break. If the break is for a longer period staff should be treated as if they are joining from outside the HPSS for both salary and incremental purposes (paragraphs 3.1 –3. 2 will apply).

## **Starting Salary And Incremental Date For Staff Moving To A Higher Pay Band On Promotion: AfC Rates**

### **Starting Salary**

6. Pay on promotion should be set either at:-
- the minimum of the new pay band, *or*
  - special transitional points where these are in use, *or*
  - if neither would result in a pay increase, the first pay point in the band which would deliver an increase in basic pay. Paragraph 6.33 of the AfC Handbook refers.

Employers should ensure that staff are not financially disadvantaged as a result of promotion.

### **Incremental Date**

7. There is no flexibility on the application of the incremental dates for those staff that move either within their own Trust or to another Trust on promotion. In accordance with paragraph 46.28 of the NHS Handbook the incremental date will be the date they take up their new post.
8. Special arrangements apply to staff on temporary promotion see paragraph 6.32 of the AfC Handbook.

### **Section 12 Of The AfC Handbook**

9. No part of this guidance should disrupt the provisions of Section 12 of the handbook in relation to continuous service for the purposes of calculating annual leave, sick leave, maternity leave and redundancy entitlement.

### **Enquiries**

10. Enquires about the contents of this Circular should be directed to the Pay and Employment Unit of the Human Resources Directorate, Room D1, Castle Buildings, Upper Newtownards Road, Belfast, BT4 3SJ, telephone 028 90522832, email; [p&e@dhsspsni.gov.uk](mailto:p&e@dhsspsni.gov.uk).
11. **Employees should direct personal enquiries to their employer.**

### **Further Copies**

12. Copies of this Circular can be obtained from the Department's extranet site at <http://extranet.dhsspsni.gov.uk>.
13. A copy of the NHS Terms and Conditions of Service handbook can be downloaded from the NHS Employers website at the following web address [www.nhsemployers.org/payandconditions/agendaforchange.asp](http://www.nhsemployers.org/payandconditions/agendaforchange.asp).

Yours sincerely

*Lorraine Owens*

**LORRAINE OWENS**  
**Acting Deputy Director**

## WORKFORCE POLICY DIRECTORATE



### Chief Executives of HSC Bodies<sup>1</sup>;

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Reference: HSC (AfC) (2) 2024

Date: 20 February 2024

Dear Colleagues

### **Agenda for Change Recognition of Previous Service For Starting Point, Incremental Date and length of time before moving to next pay step.**

#### **Summary**

1. This Circular supersedes the previous guidance issued by the Department on 10 November 2006 HSS (AfC) (9) 2006, it has no effect on the guidance issued under HSC (AfC) (2) 2023, which deals with continuity of service and Multi-Disciplinary Teams. This revised guidance should be applied from the date of this circular. The Department has consulted regional recognised trade unions on the terms of this Circular.

#### **Background**

2. The AfC handbook is silent on recognition of previous service (other than for redundancy, maternity, sick leave and annual leave as set out in section 12 of the handbook). This omission can have a detrimental effect on salary levels of

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<sup>1</sup> HSC Trusts, the Public Health Agency (PHA), the Business Services Organisation (BSO), the Northern Ireland Blood Transfusion Service Agency (NIBTS), the Children's Court Guardian Agency for Northern Ireland, the Northern Ireland Practice & Education Council for Nursing, Midwifery & Health Visiting (NIPEC), the Northern Ireland Social Care Council (NISCC), the Patient & Client Council (PCC), the Northern Ireland Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA) and the Northern Ireland Medical and Dental Training Agency (NIMDTA).

experienced employees when joining the HSC, returning to the HSC following a break in service, or moving between HSC employers. 'Salary' in the context of this Circular does not necessarily mean a higher monetary value. Depending on the number of completed years of experience it may lead to an employee reaching the first pay step date more quickly.

### **New Staff Joining From Outside The HSC**

- 3.1 New staff joining from outside the HSC will normally commence on the minimum point of the pay band. Relevant completed years' experience of the same level of responsibility as the new post may be taken into account in determining starting salary. However, while current salary should not be used alone as a way of determining starting salary, it may be used, at the discretion of the employer, as a factor in deciding to take relevant previous experience into account. Before making a decision to offer a higher starting salary than the minimum point on the band, employers **should:**
- a) Confirm previous experience through written evidence.
  - b) Consider the impact of the decision on:
    - Staff who are already in post in the same unit or work area;
    - Staff who are already in post outside the immediate unit or work area;
    - Consistency for all new appointments.
- 3.2. Staff are responsible for raising queries related to the starting salary/length of time before they can move to next pay step at the time of appointment. Request for recognition of previous service with non-direct NHS/HSC organisations towards starting salary and incremental credit must be made **within 3 months** from commencement of employment. Requests made after 3 months will not be considered.
- 3.3. For newly appointed or promoted staff the incremental date will be the date they take up their post. This also applies to temporary movements to a higher band.

### **Staff Returning to the HSC After a Break In Employment**

4. For staff recommencing employment in the HSC/NHS in the same pay band, any break in employment of less than 3 months should be disregarded. The previously held incremental date should be deferred by the length of the break.

Where the break exceeds 3 months, relevant completed years' experience at the same pay band will be used to determine starting salary.

### **Movement Between HSC/NHS Employers**

5. HSC employers may permit staff on Agenda for Change rates of pay moving between employers to retain their existing pay point on appointment to the same band. Staff should also retain their former incremental date where there is no break in employment. If there is a break in service of less than three months, the incremental date should be deferred for the period of the break.

In the case of moving employer to take up a post at a higher band, all relevant completed years of experience at that higher band, including those with a previous HSC/NHS employer, will be used to determine the starting salary.

In the case of an employee moving from a temporary post at a higher band to a permanent post in the same band, there will be no change to pay point.

Where a member of staff moves employer to take up a post at a lower band, their pay in this lower band will be determined by the combined years of service completed within both the higher and lower bands.

### **Section 12 of the AfC Handbook**

6. No part of this guidance should disrupt the provisions of Section 12 of the handbook in relation to continuous service for the purposes of calculating annual leave, sick leave, parental leave and redundancy entitlement.

### **Enquiries**

7. **Employees should direct personal enquiries to their employer.**

8. **Employers** should direct enquiries about the contents of this Circular to, Workforce Policy Directorate, Room D1, Castle Buildings, Stormont, Upper Newtownards Road, Belfast BT4 3SJ (or email: P&E@health-ni.gov.uk)

### **Further Copies**

9. Copies of this Circular can be obtained from the Department's website at [Workforce Policy Guidance](#)

A copy of the NHS Terms and Conditions of Service Handbook can be downloaded from the NHS Employers website at:

<https://www.nhsemployers.org/your-workforce/pay-and-reward/agenda-for-change/nhs-terms-and-conditions-of-service-handbook>



**CHRIS WILKINSON**  
**Head of Pay and Employment**