

## Frequently Asked Questions: Agenda for Change

### 2024/25 Pay Award Implementation

#### 2024/25 pay rates

#### 1. What is the pay award and am I due to receive it?

The Department of Health (DoH) has released the 2024/25 pay arrangements for Agenda for Change staff, including bank workers. The 2024/25 AFC Pay Award circular can be accessed via the below the link:



HSC (AFC) (4) 2025 -  
Agenda for Change

The pay award does **not** apply to staff on the following terms and conditions:

- Hospital Medical & Dental staff, Doctors and Dentists in Public Health, the Community Health Service and Salaried Dental Staff;
- Senior Executives;
- Staff who work in the HSC who have transferred under TUPE regulations e.g. those who remain on Northern Ireland Civil Service Terms and Conditions and have not transferred onto HSCNI Terms and conditions.

#### 2. What date will the Pay award be effective from?

The DoH have advised HSC Employers that the Pay Award is effective from the **01 April 2024**.

#### 3. Will I receive the Pay Award in March 2025?

Yes, all staff will receive the 2024/25 Pay Award in their March 2025 pay.

The new rates of pay are set out in question 5, the dates staff will receive the uplift and pay award arrears are set out below:

Pay frequency	Pay date
Weekly	20 March 2025
Fortnightly 1	27 March 2025
Fortnightly 2	20 March 2025
Monthly	27 March 2025

#### 4. What are the new pay rates?

The pay bands and pay points from 01 April 2024 are set out below:

Band	Entry step point	Years until eligible for progression	Intermediate step point	Years until eligible for progression	Top pay point
1	£23,615				£23,615
2	£23,615			2	£23,615
3	£24,071			2	£25,674
4	£26,530			3	£29,114
5	£29,970	2	£32,324	2	£36,483
6	£37,338	2	£39,405	3	£44,962
7	£46,148	2	£48,526	3	£52,809
8a	£53,755	2	£56,454	3	£60,504
8b	£62,215	2	£66,246	3	£72,293
8c	£74,290	2	£78,814	3	£85,601
8d	£88,168	2	£93,572	3	£101,677
9	£105,385	2	£111,740	3	£121,271

**To note:** For staff in Band 1 and Band 2 the Health Minister has approved an additional consolidated increase to ensure compliance with the new national minimum wage. The rate from the 01 April 2025 will be £12.21 per hour (new annual salary of £23,874). This was set out in correspondence from the DoH to the HSC employers in January 2025.

#### 5. I work in Bands 8 – 9, what does the Intermediate pay point mean for me?

This Pay Award has seen the addition of an intermediate pay step point for Bands 8 and 9 with effect from the 01 April 2024. Staff will move to the relevant pay step (intermediate or top) when they have completed the required number of years experience as set out in the above table. Arrears payable for those with the relevant years of service will be backdated to 01 April 2024.

#### 6. Does this pay award apply to agency workers?

Rates of pay on the Contracted Agency Framework have been increased in line with this pay award. Employing Agencies are responsible for paying the appropriate rate and any arrears due to agency workers. Queries relating to agency rates should be addressed with the employing Agency.

#### 7. Will the pay award affect the amount of deductions (i.e. tax, national insurance) from my salary?

Any increase to your gross pay may increase the amount deducted in tax, national insurance, pension contributions and statutory deductions such as student loans.

For staff enrolled in the HSC Pension Scheme, a review will take place of the percentage of pension contributions you pay. If the increase to your salary results in you paying more pension contributions, this will also be backdated to 01 April 2024 and any money owed recouped from your arrears.

#### **8. What will happen to any overtime or AFC enhancements I have been paid?**

Any enhancements (unsocial, Saturday, Sunday, bank holiday) or overtime worked from 01 April 2024 will be automatically recalculated based on the new rates. You will receive any arrears owed in your March 2025 salary.

#### **9. Is there a change to availability allowances?**

Both on-call availability and sleep-in allowances have been uplifted to £30.74 and £40.06 respectively with effect from 01 April 2024.

#### **10. I have been on family leave (i.e. maternity, paternity, adoption, shared parental), will there be any change to my pay?**

For staff whose family leave commenced prior to 01 April 2024, arrears will be paid on all qualifying entitlement received since 01 April 2024.

For staff whose family leave commenced on or after 01 April 2024, arrears will be paid on all payments received to date and any future payments will be increased in line with the pay award uplift. This applies to all staff on various leave types which include maternity, paternity, adoption, shared parental.

#### **11. I am currently receiving a protection on my pay, will this be impacted by the Pay Award?**

The 2024/25 Pay Award will impact protected earnings differently depending on the reference period used to protect your earnings.

If your reference period includes time in 2023/24, all enhancements paid for the period since 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025 will be uplifted in line with the 2024/25 Pay Award.

If your reference period included April 2024 onwards for the purposes of the calculation the protection amount will be uplifted and the enhancements paid for the period since 01 April 2024 to 31 March 2025 will be uplifted in line with the 2024/25 Pay Award.

#### **12. How is any sick pay I have received impacted by the pay award?**

If you have been off on sickness absence since 01 April 2024 and received occupational sick pay, your pay will be recalculated based on the new rates. If you are owed arrears, these will be paid on the relevant pay date (see Q3) and appear as

'OSP \*\*' on your payslip. If you were on nil pay whilst off sick, you will not be due any payment for that period.

**13. I have an overpayment plan in place because I have previously been overpaid, will this affect the arrears I receive?**

If you have been overpaid and there is an agreed repayment plan in place, you will be paid any arrears owed to you.

If you have been overpaid and there is no repayment plan in place, or you have currently been invoiced for an overpayment, any arrears owing will be offset against the overpayment.

**14. What happens if I have moved employer since 01 April 2024?**

The increase to pay rates will be applied to all staff directly employed by the HSC from 01 April 2024. If you have subsequently left your post, your previous HSC employer will pay any arrears owed to you for the period that you worked for them.

If you have previously been overpaid by your previous HSC employer arrears from the pay award will be deducted from any outstanding monies in line with the Overpayment letter you will have originally received.

If you have any queries regarding this information, you need to speak with your previous HSC employer.

**15. Will the pay award affect benefits I receive?**

The increased pay rates may have an impact on benefits paid to you from 01 April 2024 and any benefits claimed going forward. If you are in receipt of benefits and concerned about the potential impact of the pay award, please contact your local advice centre (e.g. Advice NI).

**16. Will I receive a P60 once the 2024/25 Pay Award is paid to me in March?**

Your P60 for the financial year April 2024 to March 2025 will be issued to you before 31 May 2025. As the 2024/25 pay award is being paid in financial year April 2024 to March 2025 it will show in this year's P60.

The following questions are applicable to those that are members of the HSC Pension Scheme. Further information on pensions can be found on the HSC Pensions website (<https://hscpensions.hscni.net/>) or by clicking [here](#).

### 17. What are the contribution rates for my pension?

Both HSC employers and staff enrolled in the HSC Pension Scheme contribute to their pension. Up until the 31 March 2024 employers paid a flat rate of 22.5%. From the 01 April 2024 the employer's contribution rate has risen to 23.2%.

An employee's contribution rate is dependent on their total pensionable earnings - the higher your pensionable pay the higher your contribution rate may be.

- Table 1 shows the contribution tiers from 01 April 2024.

**Table 1: 01 April 2024 – 31 March 2025**

Tier	Pensionable earnings (based on actual salary)	Contribution rate (before tax relief) (gross)
1	Up to £13,259	5.2%
2	£13,260 to £26,831	6.5%
3	£26,832 to £32,691	8.3%
4	£32,692 to £49,078	9.8%
5	£49,079 to £62,924	10.7%
6	£62,925 and above	12.5%

From the 01 April 2025 the following rates will apply, staff should note these changes will be applied to their April 2025 Pay.

Tier	Pensionable earnings (based on actual salary)	Contribution rate (before tax relief) (gross)
1	Up to £13,259	5.2%
2	£13,260 to £27,288	6.7%
3	£27,289 to £33,247	8.5%
4	£33,248 to £49,913	10.0%
5	£49,914 to £63,994	10.9%
6	£63,995 and above	12.7%

## 18. How are total pensionable earnings calculated?

In order to establish your total Pensionable Earnings for the period 01 April 2024 to 31 March 2025 the following calculation is used:

$$\begin{aligned} & \underline{\text{New Actual Basic Pay (from 01/04/2024)}} \\ & + \underline{\text{Prior Year's pensionable Enhancements}} \\ & \quad - \underline{\text{Salary Sacrifices}} \\ & = \underline{\text{Pensionable Earnings}} \end{aligned}$$

## 19. What elements of pay form part of pensionable earnings?

Unsocial hours enhancements (evenings, weekends, bank holiday) are included in your pensionable earnings. BSO Payroll Services Centre (PSC) will use the enhancements paid to you in the previous year to calculate your total pensionable earnings.

Not all payment types are pensionable and these will not form part of your pensionable pay e.g. overtime payments, payment for work done on call. Further information can be found on HSC Pension Service website for further information.

[Section 5: Pensionable Pay and Contributions – HSC Pension Service \(hscni.net\)](https://www.hscni.net/section-5-pensionable-pay-and-contributions-hsc-pension-service)

## 20. Does my salary sacrifice affect pensionable earnings?

Yes, a salary sacrifice is deducted from your salary thus reducing your total pensionable earnings. Active salary sacrifice (i.e. childcare vouchers, cycle-to-work scheme, and lease car) from 01 April 2024 will be taken into consideration when calculating your total pensionable earnings.

## 21. Is there any impact on the amount of pension contributions I pay?

As a result of the pay award, the percentage you pay on your contributions may change following a change to your pensionable earnings. An assessment will be undertaken by PSC on each individual employee to determine the correct contribution rate. Any refunds or additional contributions will be paid or deducted as part of the arrears paid to you.

It is anticipated most staff will continue to pay the same rate for the year 2024/25.

**22. If I have moved to a higher pension contribution tier, is money owed to my pension recouped from my pay award arrears?**

Yes, if the increase to your pensionable earnings results in you moving to a higher pension contribution tier you will owe money on your pension which will be deducted from your arrears.

**23. What happens if the amount of arrears owed to me is less than the pension contributions I owe?**

Most staff affected by the pension band review will not owe monies in excess of arrears owed to them. However, there may be a small number of staff will not have sufficient arrears from the pay award to cover their underpaid pension contributions.

Recovery of this will be in line with the regional overpayment policy and will be specific for each individual employee affected.

If you find you are affected in this way by more than 10% of your normal net pay, an automatic salary advance will be paid to you to offset this. This means you will receive monies to cover what is owed by you in the month of March 2025. Any arrears will be used to reduce your overpayment, and the remainder will be recovered in line with the regionally agreed Overpayments Policy.

For those who owe less than 10% of your net pay, the amount owed will be recouped from your March salary.

You will not have to ask or apply for this. Individual arrangements will be communicated to you separately.

Should you be happy to pay the deficit without putting in place a repayment plan, you can make arrangements to do this by contacting PSC directly and the repayment plan will be cancelled.

**24. How will I know if my arrears from the pay award are less than the pension contributions I owe?**

If it is determined that you will not receive arrears due to the recalculation of pension contributions Payroll Service Centre will endeavour to write to you in advance of you receiving your March pay.

**25. When will my payslip be available to me?**

Your payslip is available on HRPTS within 2 days of pay day, and printed payslips will also be posted in advance of payday.