



Starting salary

1 What this policy covers

This policy sets out the process for agreeing starting salaries to ensure that all staff receive equal pay for work of equal value, in line with the Agenda for Change terms and conditions of employment.

2 Principles

This policy is based on the principle of providing fair and equitable remuneration to those who work for GHC and applies to all staff employed on Agenda for Change terms and conditions, including bank workers. In accordance with Agenda for Change, every post has a salary band that has been determined in accordance with GHC's job evaluation procedure. Decisions about starting salaries on the national pay bands must demonstrate fairness and equity.

3 Responsibilities

- Recruiting managers should familiarise themselves with this policy before making any salary offer to a candidate.
- Recruiting managers will ensure that any Request For Starting Salary Above Minimum Request forms are submitted and approved before making any verbal offer of a salary to a candidate.
- The Recruitment team will advise recruiting managers and monitor this policy's implementation.
- The Recruitment and Workforce teams will seek confirmation of previous NHS service and salary for candidates.

4 Policy in practice

Ordinarily, starters new to GHC will be placed on the lowest pay point within a band. New starters with

previous reckonable NHS service may be appointed to a higher pay point within a band. The step at which they are appointed will depend on years of relevant experience within that band.

Incremental credit will not be given for reasons other than years of experience, qualifications or significant knowledge and skills beyond the person specification requirements. It will not be given due to market forces or for extra responsibilities. If there are difficulties in recruiting staff, the recruiting manager should discuss with HR other options that can assist with recruitment and retention.

4.1 Validating starting salary requests

All requests for starting salaries above the minimum must be made and validated before a salary offer is made to a candidate. Otherwise the candidate will be appointed to the minimum of the band.

The recruiting manager must complete and submit a Request For Starting Salary Above Minimum Request form, ensuring that they include the salary being sought and detailing the evidence to support the request, such as:

- relevant experience
- where the previous relevant experience was acquired
- the nature and content of the role being appointed to
- knowledge previously acquired
- transferability of the skills.

Evidence may come from the application form, interview process, references or the job descriptions of the candidate's previous posts. Any application for a starting salary higher than the minimum that is likely to have an impact across a profession must be referred to and countersigned by the appropriate Professional Lead.

The request will be reviewed by HR and either authorised or rejected. The recruiting manager will be

informed of the decision as soon as possible or if there are any significant delays to forms being reviewed.

If a request is rejected, the recruiting manager may be asked to provide additional evidence to support the incremental credit being sought. After this, if the starting salary cannot be agreed between the recruiting manager and HR, the request will be passed to a senior member of the HR team, who will discuss it with the recruiting manager's line manager and reach a final decision.

4.2 Internal applicants

GHC employees moving from one post to another on the same pay band, and where the recruiting manager deems the experience is directly relevant to the new role, may enter the band at the same incremental point they are currently on.

Internal candidates who have applied for a post that is a promotion will be offered a salary in accordance with the Agenda for Change terms and conditions.

If a candidate is taking up a post in a different profession or staff group, they must have years of relevant experience in line with existing post-holders and external applicants to be offered a salary above the minimum. Otherwise it could result in an inexperienced member of staff being paid more than a more experienced member of the team.

Internal candidates offered a second or subsequent post at the same band as another post they already hold will be paid:

- at the same pay rate as their existing post, where the two posts are directly comparable; they should retain their existing incremental date
- the same as an external candidate if the post is significantly different the candidate, including the need for a starting salary above minimum request to be made if appropriate; they will acquire the incremental date of the appointment to the new post.

Where someone has a part-time post with GHC and applies for a second or subsequent post within GHC, their appointment and starting salary will be applied in accordance with this policy.

4.3 Existing NHS staff joining from other NHS trusts

Where a candidate joins GHC from another NHS employer, the following should be used to agree a salary above the minimum:

- if the post with GHC is a promotion, national terms and conditions will be applied
- if the post with GHC is at the same banding as the previous post, proof of current banding and salary must be obtained
- a check to ensure that the previous post and the new post with GHC are sufficiently similar and to establish the individual's knowledge, skills and experience are directly relevant
- a check to ensure that the candidate's previous salary does not reflect any locally agreed salary uplift
- the candidate must meet significant aspects of the desirable criteria on the person specification.

4.4 Returnees to the NHS

For a candidate returning to NHS employment, any breaks in NHS service may be disregarded when deciding the incremental point. This means the candidate does not necessarily need to start again at the bottom of the scale if they have had a break in service.

When deciding if incremental credit is given for some or all previous NHS service, recruiting managers should consider:

- the nature of previous experience
- if the candidate has kept their continuous professional development up to date, if relevant
- when the experience was gained. Experience acquired five or more years ago should be scrutinised to ensure that it is directly relevant, given any changes to service delivery, approaches to clinical care or improvements in technology.

Sometimes recruiting managers may also be able to accept relevant experience gained outside the NHS. Recruiting managers should consider where and when the experience was acquired, the actual content of the role and the knowledge and skills acquired.

4.5 Candidates without previous NHS experience

Candidates without previous experience of working in the NHS will normally be appointed on the minimum point of the pay band.

There may be cases where candidates have relevant and quantifiable experience, knowledge and skills that go significantly beyond the essential criteria set out in the person specification, and meet all of the desirable criteria. Where appropriate, recruiting managers may be able to recognise this by offering new entrants a salary above the minimum of the scale. The reasons for making this decision, supported by evidence, must be fully documented on the Request For Starting Salary Above Minimum Request form. The recruiting manager must be able to justify their decision, including the impact on:

- others already in post
- others outside the immediate department
- local consistency.

4.6 Appointments to a post at a lower band

If a candidate is voluntarily applying for a post at a lower band, they will need to demonstrate years of relevant experience to be appointed above the minimum of the pay band. This is the case for both internal and external candidates.

NHS candidates (external or internal) may keep their existing incremental date where their existing NHS post and the lower-banded post they are applying for are significantly comparable. Where the posts are significantly different, the incremental date will be the date they commence in the new post.

4.7 Appointment to posts requiring a specific qualification

Where a post requires a specific professional or registerable qualification, credit will only be given for experience and years of experience post-qualification on the basis that it is unlikely that the candidate would have been working at the required level without the qualification.

There may be occasions when equivalent experience can be considered as an alternative to a specified qualification. The person specification should make it clear where experience 'equivalent' to a qualification will be acceptable.

4.8 Bank workers

Employees with a substantive contract of employment with GHC and a bank assignment for a similar role of the same band will be paid the same rate of pay as their substantive post for any bank assignment undertaken.

Those who leave GHC's employment, return to work on the bank and are offered an assignment that is significantly similar to the substantive post they previously held, can be offered a salary that reflects their pay point at the date they left. Individuals who leave GHC and subsequently are offered an assignment for a different role will need to have their salary agreed using the normal starting salary procedure.