

## **Final Offer for Consultants in NHS Wales**

This sets out Welsh Government's offer to resolve the industrial dispute over pay during 2023/24. As a government we have listened and understand the concerns from doctors, we have worked together in social partnership to find a solution to the dispute so that consultants can return to work to continue delivering care and treatment to patients.

The Welsh Government will invest in the consultant pay bill and additional funding has been identified in 2024/25 budgets to enable this to happen. This additional investment will be subject to additional contractual and operational reform which seeks to address productivity and efficiency along with reducing inequalities across the consultant workforce in Wales.

This offer if agreed is outside of the DDRB recommendation for 2024/25. If DDRB recommendation in relation to consultants is below the annual inflation rate as at April 2024 (as defined by the main measure used by the Office of National Statistics), then the Welsh Government commit to further talks with the BMA Welsh Consultant Committee regarding pay for 24/25.

Our starting point for these formal negotiations has been the revised pay structure that was developed during the informal talks and a consideration of how far back that revised pay structure should be implemented, taking into account that the revised pay structure agreed by consultants in England was backdated to 1<sup>st</sup> March 2024.

We have listened to the negotiators from the Welsh Consultants Committee and accept the rationale for a slightly higher investment in the revised pay structure and also have taken into account that the DDRB recommendation was not met in 23/24 in arriving at this offer.

### **Reform of the Consultant (Welsh amended 2003 contract) pay scale**

The Welsh Government and the BMA Welsh Consultant Committee have agreed that the time is right to reform the current pay structure which is over 20 years old. A modern pay structure is required to better support recruitment and retention, better reward performance, address the gender pay gap, and support progression throughout the career of consultant in Wales.

The following principles were agreed in social partnership and applied to reform the pay scale within the funding available:

- Increase starting pay to ensure NHS Wales can attract and retain doctors in training in Wales
- Maintaining pay at the top of scales as current expected equivalent levels
- Reducing the number of pay points in the pay scale
- Reducing the length of time to reach the top of scale with progression faster in early career
- Incorporating the protracted Commitment Awards into a single basic pay structure

The details of the newly reformed pay scale can be found in Annex A. This offer to reform the consultant pay scales is represented by an additional 5.2% investment into the consultant pay bill which is in addition to the 5% pay uplift for 2023/24 already paid to consultants.

### **Back dating of the reformed pay scale**

The Welsh Government recognised the strength of feeling from consultants in Wales over the pay award in 2023/24, therefore if the offer is accepted the new pay scales will be effective from the **1<sup>st</sup> January 2024**.

The offer to backdate recognises the balance between the funding available, affordability of the offer going forward, the 1% from the DDRB recommendation not paid during 2023/24 and the additional 1.5% paid on top of DDRB in 2022/23.

Backdating for three months equates in the region of the same level of funding required to pay the 1% from DDRB recommendations from 2023/24.

### **DDRB Reform**

The Welsh Government recognises and has engaged with the BMA on concerns regarding the independence of the Review Body for Doctors' and Dentists' Pay (DDRB) and is committed to restoring the profession's confidence in the pay review body. As part of this, from the 2025/26 review round, the Welsh Government commits to progressing the actions in the report produced in social partnership by the BMA and the Welsh Government in late 2023, including taking actions within their own power or, where appropriate, writing to the UK Government to confirm that they are supportive of further changes within the remit of that government. These actions include but are not limited to:

- Support for all changes to the pay review process agreed as part of the England Consultants pay deal in April 2024.
- To ensure that any remit letter is neutral and solely to start the process and indicate that Wales wants pay recommendations without reference to affordability.
- To agree that recommendations of the DDRB are only rejected rarely and due to a compelling reason.
- To ensure that the Welsh Government participates in the review process in a timely manner in accordance with the timelines set out by the DDRB.
- To promptly implement the recommendations of the DDRB upon publication.

**However, this offer is dependent on the following being agreed -**

### **BMA Rate Card**

As part of this offer, the BMA agrees to not promote the BMA rate card for consultants in Wales while the offer is out for referendum. If the offer is accepted by the membership, the BMA will withdraw the rate card with immediate effect at both local and all Wales levels. The BMA reserves the right to reintroduce the rate card during a period of future industrial dispute.

The Welsh Government, BMA Welsh consultant Committee and NHS Wales Employers have agreed to work in social partnership through the Medical and Dental Business Group to develop All-Wales extracontractual rates for consultants with a view to being implemented during 2024/25.

### **All Wales Job Planning Policy**

The Welsh Government, BMA Consultant Committee and NHS Wales Employers through the Medical and Dental Business Group will develop an All-Wales Job Planning Policy with a view to it being implemented during 2024/25.

### **Consultant Recruitment Template**

It has been agreed that the Medical and Dental Business Group will work towards developing for newly recruited consultants in NHS Wales a recruitment template which will establish options for agreement of SPA levels taking into account the skills experience of the appointee and the requirements of the speciality team and service delivery. The development, introduction and adoption of a new All-Wales policy and template with a view to being implemented during 2024/25.

### **Contract Reform**

The amended Welsh consultant contract has been in place for just over 20 years. It has been agreed by the Welsh Government, the BMA Welsh Consultant Committee and NHS Wales Employers that scoping work will be undertaken during 2024/25 regarding contract reform talks. Any reformed contract will need to be fully modernised against current and future requirements of the NHS in Wales for the benefit of patients and the wellbeing of consultants. This scoping work will consider the need for reform, timetable, and level of investment required for Welsh Government to consider implications with a view to developing a future mandate.

**BMA Recommendation** - all offers are subject to the three BMA branches of practice recommending the offer to members for acceptance.

### **Annex A**

Proposed reformed pay scale

New Pay Point	Years at pay point	Proposed pay point value
1	1	£100,000
2	1	£105,000
3	1	£110,000
4	1	£115,000
5	5	£123,000
6	7	£130,000
7	7	£138,000
8		£146,000