

NHS Wales

Band 2/3 HCSWs Framework Implementation

Frequently Asked Questions

March 2026

Background/Process to Date

Q1. Why is this process being implemented now?

A1. In August 2021, the UK Staff Council approved revised Job profiles and agreed updated guidance to clarify the difference between the roles of a Band 2 Health Care Support Worker (HCSW) and Band 3 Senior Health Care Support Worker (SHCSW). This clarified that Band 2 HCSWs mainly undertake personal care duties, while clinical care duties should be undertaken by a Band 3 SHCSW and other senior nursing colleagues. These revised profiles apply with effect from 5th August 2021.

Many HCSWs (or equivalent) will carry out a level of clinical patient care that has historically been defined in local Band 2 job descriptions. However, since the national review, it is now deemed that clinical care is the remit of Band 3 HCSW (or equivalent), whilst the Band 2 HSCW role is defined by personal care.

A collective agreement has been reached on an All-Wales basis to address this issue and was agreed at the Welsh Partnership Forum on 19 November 2025 but effective from 1 January 2026.

Q2. I am represented by a trade union. Have they been involved?

A2. Yes, we have worked in partnership with all recognised Trade Unions during this process and we have jointly agreed this process and how the changes will be implemented, through formal negotiating mechanisms.

Q3. Have the Job Descriptions for Band 2 and band 3 Health Care Support Workers been re-written and officially agreed?

A3. Yes, this has been done on All Wales basis in line with the All-Wales Job Evaluation policy. The All-Wales job descriptions can be found [here](#).

Q4. What is the timescale for this process to be completed and for payments to be made?

A4. All payments are expected to be made by 31 July 2026.

Payment Specific Queries

Q5. What is the recognition payment?

A5. This payment acknowledges the fact that there will be individuals who have been undertaking some clinical duties from the Band 3 Nursing Support Worker job description, prior to the re-banding effective from 1st January 2025.

The recognition payment will be made in accordance with individual length of service and will be paid pro-rata to current contracted hours.

Q6. How is the recognition payment calculated?

A6. The recognition payment will be paid pro-rata based on your contracted hours only on 1st January 2025.

Payments will be subject to Tax and National Insurance. The Recognition Payment is not pensionable.

Recognition Payment is represented in the chart below. It is based on full months and a month in arrears. There is no payment for January 2025. This should be read as 1 month's service as at 1st January 2025.

Start Date in Assessed Role	Length of Service (on 1 st January 2025)	Recognition payment range
Jan 24 – Jan 25	0 to 1 year	£0 - £949
Jan 23 – Jan 24	1 to 2 years	£949 - £1898
Jan 22 – Jan 23	2 to 3 years	£2000 - £3000
Jan 21 – Jan 22	3 to 4 years	£3000 - £4000
Jan 20 – Jan 21	4 to 5 years	£4000 - £5000
Before Jan 20	Over 5 years	£5000

*Full recognition payment can be found in Annex A of the framework.

Q7. What is the corrective payment?

A7. The corrective payment refers to back pay for the band 3 duties you've carried out between 1st January 2025 and up to the date of validation and move to your new banding.

Q8. How is the corrective payment calculated?

A8. The corrective payment is calculated based on an agreement between staff side and the Health Board. It covers arrears from 1st January 2025 up to your assimilation date. The payment is calculated using the agreed corrective payment percentage applied to basic pay, enhancements and other additional payments are not included. (the corrective payment is subject to tax, NI and pension contribution).

1. For people with 2 or more years' eligible service on 1st January 2025 a multiplier of 8.75% is applied.
2. For people with less than 2 Years' eligible service as of 1st January 2025 a multiplier of 1.95% is applied.

Q9. When should the corrective payments apply from?

A9. The corrective payments should apply from 1 January 2025. The date at which the agreement applies.

Q10. I started as a Band 2 HCSW after 1 January 2025. Will I be entitled to a recognition/corrective payment?

A10. You will not be entitled to a recognition payment as you were not in scope on 1 January 2025. You will be entitled to a corrective payment from your start date until validation is completed.

Q11. Will my recognition and corrective payments be paid together?

A 11. Yes, if eligible for both payments, your recognition payment and your corrective payment will be made at the same time.

Q12. Will my payslip show a breakdown of how my payment was worked out?

A12. You can find a sample payslip in the below link, showing what your payslip will look like below. Please note, this is a sample payslip for illustrative purposes only. The figures used are examples and not personalised to you.

ASSIGNMENT NUMBER	EMPLOYEE NAME		LOCATION				
DEPARTMENT	JOB TITLE		PAYSCALE DESCRIPTION				
	SAL/WAGE	INC. DATE	STANDARD HRS.	PT SAL/WAGE			
	26999.00	01 JAN 2026	37.5	26999.00			
	TAX OFFICE NAME		TAX OFFICE REF	TAX CODE			
			C1271L	NI NUMBER			
			CUMUL				
PAY AND ALLOWANCES (- = MINUS AMOUNT)				DEDUCTIONS (R INDICATES REFUND)			
DESCRIPTION	WKD/EARNED	PAID/DUE	RATE	AMOUNT	DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT	BALANCE CF
Basic Pay	162.95	162.95	13.8077	2249.92	PAYE	1539.00	
Night Duty EN	48.00	19.68	12.7000	249.93	NI A	350.76	
Saturday EN	12.00	4.92	12.7000	62.49	NHS Pension 9.8%	407.96	
Sunday EN	12.00	9.96	12.7000	126.50	UNISON	17.25	
130 Band 2/3 Cor Pay				1419.15			
130 Band 2/3 Rec Pay				5000.00			
WTD Pay				54.87			

Q13. Will these changes affect my tax?

A13. Yes. Both recognition and corrective payments count as income, so they may affect the amount of tax you pay in the month you receive them.

Q14. Will these payments affect my pension?

A14. Yes. Corrective payments are pensionable; recognition payments are not pensionable. As your salary has changed the amount of Pension you pay may increase.

Q15. Will the payments affect Universal Credit?

A15. You will need to contact Universal Credit Directly for details.

Q16. Will the payment(s) affect Student Loan Deductions?

A16. Student Loan Deductions will be calculated based on the Student Loan Repayment Plan. If you think you will overpay Student Loan in 2025/26, please contact the Student Loan Company.

Q17. Will the payment(s) affect Attachment of Earnings Orders Deductions?

A17. Attachment of Earnings Orders deductions will be calculated based on the AEO calculation table unless there is an agreed fixed monthly payment in place.

Q18. Can I have my payment in instalments?

A18. Payments will be made in full through payroll. Instalment options are available in exceptional circumstances where individuals can demonstrate that receiving payment in one month would cause detriment, please discuss with your line manager.

Individuals are advised to seek independent financial advice regarding their own circumstances and the potential impact of any salary changes and the payment of the recognition payment on their financial circumstances.

For example, anyone in receipt of any benefits should seek advice on the potential impact of any salary increase/recognition payment to their benefit entitlement.

Q19. Will I pay more tax if I have my Recognition and Corrective payment split over the months or paid in one lump sum?

A19. Overall No, during the year you will pay the correct amount of Tax, you will not pay anymore tax than if you had received the payment split. Tax is worked out on tax brackets; most people will be in the 20% bracket.

To pay the 40% higher rate of UK income tax, you need to earn over £50,270 in taxable income (for the 2025/26 tax year in Wales), with the 40% rate applying only to the portion of your income above this threshold, You first benefit from the £12,570 tax-free Personal Allowance, then pay 20% on income from £12,571 to £50,270, and finally 40% on earnings from £50,271.

How it works in 2025/26

£0 - £12,570: 0% (Personal Allowance).

£12,571 - £50,270: 20% (Basic Rate).

Above £50,271: 40% (Higher Rate).

Example:

If you earn £50,000: £12,570 is tax-free, £37,700 (£50,000 - £12,570) is taxed at 20%, as you have not gone over the £50,271 you would not pay tax at the 40% level.

Q20. I requested to stay as a Band 2, what payment(s) am I entitled to?

A20. If during the validation process, it was determined that you met the Band 3 validation criteria, you will receive recognition and corrective payment for working at a Band 3 level, in line with eligible dates.

Q21. Will my enhancements change when I move to band 3?

A21. Yes, the multiplier used to calculate the rate of enhancement paid differs between band 2 and 3. Please refer to below table for details.

Pay band	All time Saturday (midnight to midnight) and any weekday after 8pm and before 6am	All time on Sundays and Public Holidays (midnight to midnight)
2	Time plus 41%	Time plus 83%
3	Time plus 35%	Time plus 69%

Q22. Will I receive recognition payment for bank shifts I worked?

A22. No, recognition payments only apply to your substantive contracted hours where you were working at band 3. Bank shifts are not included in the recognition payments.

Q23. Will overtime be included?

A23. No, overtime is excluded from the calculations of the corrective payment.

Job Specific Queries - HCSWs

Q24. Can someone choose to stay working as a Band 2?

A24. Yes. The implementation process will involve all “in scope” staff being asked to declare their intention to their manager, detailing whether they want to progress to a Validation of Skill Set process. The manager will then capture the intention on the online form and will also include the reason(s).

Line Managers will meet with anyone that does not wish to be considered for the Band 3 role, and they will be provided with the relevant Band 2 Job Description and an explanation of the requirements that the role is focused on personal care. This will also be confirmed in writing by the People & Culture team.

Every effort will be made to support anyone wishing to remain working to the Band 2 job description in their current work area initially.

You will not be expected to undertake key elements of patient care. Please read the Band 2 HCSW job description and discuss this with your line manager if you have any queries.

Q25. How do I formally ‘opt-out’ of moving to a Band 3 HCSW role?

A25. You are advised to carefully consider your options before deciding. If you do wish to opt-out and remain a Band 2 HCSW, please discuss this with your line manager.

Q26. Is my job safe?

A26. Yes. No one will lose their job or be downgraded. No-one will be moved or asked to undertake a role that they are not comfortable with.

Q27. I recently became a qualified nurse — how does this affect my HCSW payment?

A27. If you were in a Band 2 role on 1st January 2025 you are in scope. You will receive recognition and corrective payments for the time you were in-scope as a Band 2 HCSW.

Once you begin working as a Registered Nurse, you are no longer eligible for HCSW recognition/corrective payments from that point onward.

Q28. I moved between substantive and bank roles — what does this mean for my payment?

A28. Only substantive Band 2 HCSW contracted hours count toward recognition or corrective payments. Periods worked bank are not included.

Q29. I've worked across multiple wards/departments — how is my payment calculated?

A29. Your payment has been calculated based on your band 2 status as a HCSW within the organisation up to a maximum of 5 years.

Your calculation includes:

- your current substantive post, and
- any other in-scope Band 2 HCSW roles since January 2020, where Band 3 duties can be evidenced.

Q30. Do I need to do anything to make sure my grade is changed to band three?

A30. No, you do not need to do anything. Once you have passed validation, your grade will be updated to Band 3 automatically as part of the payroll process.

Q31. I've been through validation with my line manager and been told I don't demonstrate the competencies for a Band 3 role. I disagree with this outcome, how do I appeal?

A31. You have the right to appeal the outcome of the validation outcome. You must do this in writing to the Head of Nursing/Midwifery in your area within 21 days of having the original outcome. For more information about the appeal process, you can use the [guidance for staff](#). You can also contact your Trade Union representative or management representative using the contact details at the end of these FAQs.

Q32. Will my job title change?

A32. Yes, if you have successfully been validated to Band 3 your job title will change to either Nursing Support Worker or Maternity Support Worker from the 1st December 2025.

If you are remaining a Band 2 then your job title will remain as HCSW.

Q33. Will my Job Description change?

A33. Yes, your manager will have provided you with a copy of your new Band 3 or Band 2 job description. If you have not received one, please speak to your line manager who will ensure you receive the new job description. This will apply from the 1st December 2025 in line with the changes.

Q34. Will I receive a new contract?

A34. You will receive a contract variation letter, not a new contract. Your band three status will be held on ESR.

Q35. I have recently been promoted to a Band 3 HCSW, will I be moved to the top of pay scale?

A35. Individuals who have been promoted from an "in scope" Band 2 role to a Band 3 role within the 24 months prior to 1st January 2025 who can evidence that they were undertaking elements of the Band 3 role for 2 years prior to promotion, may be eligible for progression to the top pay point. You will be notified of this process as part of your organisation's implementation plan.

Q36. I started after 1st January 2025 as a Band 2, which job description should I follow?

A36. You should keep working to your current duties, nothing changes for you at the moment. Continue with usual practice already in place until advised otherwise. If you have been assessed as working at a Band 3 level, you will be issued with a variation letter and revised Job Description.

Line Manager Queries

Q37. As a manager, I have HCSW vacancies I am currently recruiting to. What will happen with these?

A37. All new Band 2 and Band 3 HCSWs should be recruited and appointed on the new NHS Wales job descriptions.

Q38. What will happen if more individuals choose to stay working to the new Band 2 Healthcare Support Worker job description than the service requires?

A38. In these circumstances, the organisation will need to consider skill requirements, in particular, for Nurse Staffing Act areas, operational delivery, future workforce planning requirements and local circumstances. Where possible, every effort will be made to support anyone wishing to remain as a Band 2 in their area of work initially, but this may not be possible for the above reasons indefinitely. Impact assessments will be undertaken where required.

Q39a. Where a post and job description are currently advertised at Band 2, what clause should be included in the job adverts?

A39a. "This post is currently advertised at Band 2. The role is under review within the Health Board as part of a national review and may, in future, progress to Band 3 with an updated job description. If appointed, your manager will ensure you are kept informed and will support you through any changes, including discussing relevant training requirements".

Q39b. Where a post and job description is currently advertised as a Band 3, what clause should be included in the job advert?

A39b. "This role is currently under review within the Health Board and will result in the issuing of a revised band 3 job description. If appointed, your manager will ensure you are kept informed and support you through any changes, including discussing relevant training requirements."

Q40. How should leavers who have left since 1 January 2025 be treated?

A40. Given that the in-scope date is 1 January 2025, leavers who have left since 1 January 2025 are entitled to the recognition payment and a part corrective payment based on their leaving date. Organisations may want to wait until they are contacted by the individual before acting.

Leavers who left before 1 January 2025 are not in scope are not entitled to either payment.

Q41. How do we handle individuals who have been promoted from an “in scope” Band 2 role to a Band 3 role within the 24 months prior to 1st January 2025 who can evidence that they were undertaking elements of the Band 3 role for 2 years prior to promotion? Are they eligible for progression to the top pay point.

A41. For those individuals who can demonstrate that they have been undertaking band 3 duties within the 24 months prior to 1 January 2025, the period 31 Dec 2022 – 31 Dec 2024 should be used as the reference period to calculate if they are eligible. For those not eligible at the time of review, it would be appropriate to accelerate their movement to the top of the pay band 2 years from when they began undertaking the band 3 duties.

Payroll will be unaware of these dates and so organisations will need to advise the, accordingly.

Other Issues

Q42. What is the status of those who have been in an in-scope role but have moved employment between Health Boards?

A42. Continuous service would apply in this instance and therefore colleagues would be eligible for both the recognition payment (covering their full continuous service if necessary) and the corrective payment. Employers are expected to liaise to validate assessment against the band 3 duties and to arrange payment either by the new employer or both employers as appropriate.

Q43. I have taken maternity/paternity/adoption/shared parental etc leave during the recognition period (2020-2025) will this impact on any decision?

A43. No, colleagues will not be disadvantaged.

Q44. For those colleagues who are on migrant worker visas and sponsorship arrangements, what happens if their employer will no longer sponsor Band 3 workers or will withdraw their offer of sponsorship once they have gone through validation?

A44. Employers have indicated that they have no intention of taking this approach.

Q45. In terms of bank workers moving forward, at what point should bank workers be assimilated from the top of band 2 to the bottom of band 3?

A45. Bank workers will not automatically be assimilated. This will be dependent upon the nature of the work they may be required to undertake and the assessment of their experience to date (in line with the NHS Wales bank Worker Terms of Engagement).

Q46. For those individuals who have retired and returned during the reference period for the recognition payment, what should the break in service be and how should this be applied to the recognition payment calculation?

A46. Organisations should apply the terms of the NHS Wales Flexible Working Policy or if the break was prior to approval of this policy, the organisations Pension or Retire and Return Policy.

In the event that an individual has taken the minimum required break for pension purposes, their service will not be broken for the purposes of this calculation.

If an individual has retired and then later decided to return, service will be broken for the purposes of this calculation.

Q47. Who do I contact within my organisation if I have any queries about the payments or any other issues?

A47. The management and staff side contact emails for each organisation are listed below: -

Aneurin Bevan UHB

ABB.HealthcareSupportWorkerValidation@wales.nhs.uk

Betsi Cadwaladr UHB

BCU.HCSWSkillSetValidationPan@wales.nhs.uk

Cardiff and Vale UHB

Cav.Job.Evaluation@wales.nhs.uk

Cwm Taf Morgannwg UHB

CTM.AccessPeopleServcies@wales.nhs.uk

Hywel Dda UHB

Human.Resources.HDD@wales.nhs.uk

Powys THB

[Powys Teaching Health Board - User Portal - I need something](#)

Swansea Bay UHB

sbu.hcswvalidation@wales.nhs.uk

Velindre NHS Trust

Management: Nicola Williams, Director of Nursing, AHPs & Healthcare Scientists/Tina Jenkins, Head of Quality, Safety & Assurance, Nursing

Trade Union: Alison Cleaton (Unite)