



Briefing notes 08

Agenda for change

Guide to Recruitment and Retention Premia

Agenda for Change proposes that additional payments may be made to an individual post or specific group of posts where market pressures would otherwise prevent the employer from being able to recruit and retain staff. These payments are described as Recruitment and Retention Premia. These premia would be:

- i short or long term
- ii awarded on a local or national basis

What would short-term Recruitment and Retention Premia do?

These payments would apply where the labour market conditions giving rise to a recruitment and retention problem were expected to be short-term and where the need for the premium was expected to disappear or reduce in the foreseeable future. Payments made under these circumstances would be awarded on a one-off basis or for a fixed term. These payments would be regularly reviewed and could be withdrawn or have the value adjusted subject to a notice period of six months.

What are long-term Recruitment and Retention Premia?

These payments would apply where the relevant labour market conditions are more deep-rooted and are not likely to change in the foreseeable future. These payments would have their values regularly reviewed and would be awarded to new starters at a different value to existing staff.

Would these payments be pensionable?

Short-term Recruitment and Retention Premia would not be pensionable or admissible as basic pay for the purposes of calculating overtime payments; unsocial hours payments; high cost area supplements or other payments linked to basic pay. Long term Recruitment and Retention Premia would be pensionable, and would be included when calculating any payment linked to basic pay.

Local Recruitment and Retention Premia

Employers would have the facility to agree both short and long-term premia locally in partnership with other local NHS employers, trade unions and the Workforce Development Confederation. Payments could be awarded if recruitment and retention difficulties were evident after the following measures had been taken:

- posts had been advertised in local regional and national press
- non-pay benefits had been sufficiently developed
- regular exit surveys had been undertaken to assess how far pay is a factor*

Once these local premia were awarded they would be reviewed annually to take account of vacancy rates, the impact of payments/withdrawal and any changes in the local labour market.

* The full protocol can be found in Annex D of the proposed agreement.

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Nationally agreed Recruitment and Retention Premia

Recruitment and Retention Premia could be awarded on a national basis on the recommendation of the Review Body and/or the Negotiating Council for non-review body staff (based on evidence or advice from NHS employers and from UNISON and other trade unions).

These payments would be awarded to particular staff groups and would apply where the normal job evaluated pay level is not enough to recruit and retain sufficient numbers for a particular post. The payment may be specified, or where the underlying problem varies across the country, guidance would be given on the appropriate level of payment.

It has been agreed that a premium would be necessary for the following posts:*

Chaplains
Clinical Coding Officers
Cytology Screeners
Dental Nurses, Technicians and Therapists
Estates Officers/Works Officers
Financial Accountants
Invoice Clerks
Medical Laboratory Scientific Officers
Payroll Team Leaders
Pharmacists
Qualified Maintenance Craftspersons
Qualified Maintenance Technicians
Qualified Medical Technical Officers
Qualified Midwives (new entrant)
Qualified Perfusionists

How much would these payments be?

These details have not been clarified. On implementation of the agreement at Early Implementer sites, management would work in partnership with UNISON and other staff side organisations to review evidence locally and set the appropriate level of payment for these staff groups.

This would allow UNISON to ensure payments are made at a level which would mean that staff in these posts do not require salary protection. The premia would normally not exceed 30% of their basic salary.

Note: In the case of qualified maintenance craftspersons and technicians, the premia has been set at £2635 per annum.

*Please note that job titles appear as published and may not reflect UNISON terminology.

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