

Final Offer for Specialty, Specialists and Associate Specialists doctors (SAS) in NHS Wales

This sets out the 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 SAS doctors can return to work to continue delivering care and treatment to patients.

The Welsh Government will invest in the SAS 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 SAS workforce in Wales.

This offer, if agreed is outside of the DDRB recommendation for 2024/25. If DDRB recommendations in relation to SAS doctors are below the annual inflation rate 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 SAS Doctor Committee regarding pay for 2024/25.

Our starting point for formal negotiations has been to only direct funding available to those on the 2021 contracts and not those on the closed 2008 contracts. However, we have listened to the negotiators from the Welsh SAS Committee during these negotiations and their views around the Associate Specialists on the 2008 contract and recognise the need to consider this group of doctors in our offer.

Specialty Doctor 2021 contract

Invest in the 2021 Specialty Doctor pay scale

In 2021 a new Specialty Doctor contract was agreed in social partnership and implemented; the new contract was part of a multi-year pay deal. This offer addresses the unintended imbalances in the pay scale for these doctors on the 2021 contract and the 2008 contract to ensure consistency and fairness across the Specialty doctor workforce.

This investment will encourage more existing doctors to take up the new contracts which offer modernised terms and conditions to ensure that the doctors and patients benefits from the reformed contract and working conditions.

The details of the updated pay scale can be found in Annex A.

Back dating of the updated pay scale

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

The offer to backdate the pay recognises the balance between the funding available, affordability of the offer going forward, the 1% from the DDRB recommendation not

paid during 2023/24 on the 2008 contracts and the additional consolidated 1.5% paid on top of DDRB in 2022/23 on all contracts.

Career Progression from Specialty to Specialist grades

It is recognised by the Welsh Government, the BMA Welsh SAS Committee and NHS Wales Employers that a clear commitment to career development is required for Speciality doctors to create opportunities for doctors to progress in their careers which in turn will improve patient care and access to services.

If this offer is accepted the Welsh Government, the BMA Welsh SAS Committee and NHS Wales Employers will work in social partnership through the Medical and Dental Business Group to develop an All-Wales policy that enables specialty doctors (2021 and pre-2021 contracts) to request that their employer assesses them against the generic capabilities of the Specialist grade. If the doctor is assessed as eligible against the skills and experience required for the grade and the grade is required against service need, then the doctor will automatically progress to the Specialist grade.

The All-Wales policy will also consider the process for NHS organisations to follow when an Associate Specialist grade role becomes vacant and why this should become a Specialist grade to be advertised.

Contractual Terms & Conditions changes to the 2021 Specialty Contract

To ensure that Specialty doctors are incentivised to transfer onto the 2021 contract, changes are required to the terms and conditions of service to ensure that the benefits of the 2021 contract are fully realised by the workforce and the service.

The key change agreed as part of this offer is to amend the agreed definition of Out of Hours if this offer is accepted. Welsh Government, Welsh SAS Committee and NHS Wales Employers have agreed that the definition of OOH will change to 'any time that falls outside of the period 07:00 to 19:00 Monday to Friday and any time on a Saturday or Sunday, or public holiday'.

Furthermore, it has been agreed via collective agreement for an implied contractual right for doctors on the 2008 contract to transfer to the 2021 Specialty Doctor contract. Doctors wishing to transfer will apply in writing to their employer, any increase in pay will be backdated to the date of expression of interest.

All parties have also agreed to consider other contractual changes through the Medical and Dental Business Group to ensure the 2021 contract remains fit for purpose to encourage doctors to transfer.

Specialist Doctor 2021 Contract

Invest in the 2021 Specialist Doctor pay scale

In 2021, a new Specialist Doctor contract was agreed in social partnership and implemented; the new contract was part of a multi-year pay deal. This offer addresses the unintended imbalances between the Specialty Doctor and Specialist

pay scales to ensure a career progression pathway is maintained across the workforce.

This offer will resolve the current issue that exists where the top pay point of the 2008 Specialty doctor pay scale is higher than the starting salary for the Specialist grade.

The details of the updated pay scale can be found in Annex B.

Back dating of the updated pay scale

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

The offer to backdate recognises the balance between the funding available, affordability of the offer going forward and the additional 1.5% paid on top of DDRB in 2022/23 on all contracts.

Associate Specialist (2008 contract)

The Welsh Government has listened to the Welsh SAS committee and whilst recognising that this is a closed grade, understands the rationale regarding Associate Specialists receiving comparable levels of pay against the consultant pay scale given the skills and experience of Associate Specialist's working on consultant rotas.

It is also recognised that the option to transfer over to the 2021 Specialist contract may not be a reasonable option for those doctors who still remain on this grade which has been closed since 2008.

Therefore, an offer of uplifting the 22/23 pay scales by a further **4% so in total for 2023/24 a 9% uplift** backdated to **1st January 2024** is made to Associate Specialist.

The details of this offer can be found in Annex C.

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 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 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 SAS doctors 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, the BMA Welsh SAS 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 SAS doctors with a view to being implemented during 2024/25.

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

Annex A Specialty Doctor 2021

PayScale 1st April 2023 (prior to 1.5% uplift for 23/24)	Proposed Pay Scale (1st Jan 2024)	Additional % increase including the 1.5% uplift for 2023/24
£51,765	£56,346	8.85%
£59,637	£64,915	8.85%
£66,482	£72,366	8.85%
£73,587	£80,099	8.85%
£81,200	£90,000	10.84%

Annex B Specialist Doctor 2021

Pay Scale 1st April 2023 (prior to 1.5% uplift for 23/24)	Proposed Pay Scale (1st Jan 2024)	Additional % increase including the 1.5% uplift for 2023/24
£82,722	£91,500	10.61%
£88,305	£95,079	7.67%
£93,887	£101,089	7.67%

Annex C Associate Specialist 2008

Pay Scale as at end of March 2023	Proposed Pay Scale (1st Jan 2024)	Additional % increase including the 5% pay award for 2023/24
£63,352	£69,054	9.00%
£68,444	£74,604	9.00%
£73,535	£80,153	9.00%
£80,258	£87,481	9.00%
£86,087	£93,813	9.00%
£88,502	£96,467	9.00%
£91,659	£99,908	9.00%
£94,815	£103,348	9.00%
£97,968	£106,785	9.00%
£101,125	£110,226	9.00%
£104,282	£113,667	9.00%