

Dear Colleague

## **ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE DISTINCTION AWARDS AND DISCRETIONARY POINTS SCHEMES FOR CONSULTANTS**

### **Summary**

1. This letter confirms the arrangements for the Distinction Awards and Discretionary Points schemes during 2023-24 and 2024-25.

### **Discretionary Points**

#### **Arrangements for 23/24.**

2. The current arrangements for the allocation of Discretionary Points is not impacted and will continue.
3. Boards are asked to arrange for the necessary processes to be put in place to enable Discretionary Points to be paid to eligible consultants for work done in 2023-24.
4. Boards should note that arrangements for the payment of Discretionary Points should continue to be put in place annually until advised otherwise.

#### **Arrangements for 24-25**

5. The Pay uplift agreed by Scottish Consultants for 2024/25 included an uplift in the value of Discretionary Points from £3204 per point to £3600.
6. This uplift takes effect from April 2024 and should be implemented accordingly, in line with existing arrangements.

**DL (2025) 01**

21 January 2025

### **Addresses**

#### For action

Chief Executives, NHS Boards and Special Health Boards and NHS National Services Scotland (Common Services Agency)  
Directors of Human Resources, NHS Boards and Special Health Boards and NHS National Services Scotland (Common Services Agency)

#### For information

Members, Management Steering Group;  
Members, British Medical Association, Scotland; Members, British Dental Association, Scotland

### **Enquiries to:**

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## **Distinction Awards**

7. The current arrangements for Distinction Awards will remain in place. Distinction Awards will therefore continue to be frozen with no increase in the value of awards, no new awards and no progression through the award scheme during 2024-25.

8. The information regarding existing Distinction Awards is included as an appendix to this DL

## **Action**

9. Boards are asked to arrange for the necessary processes to be put in place to enable Discretionary Points to be paid to eligible consultants for work done in 2023-24.

10. NHS Boards, Special Health Boards and NHS National Services Scotland (Common Services Agency) are asked to ensure that this letter is drawn to the attention of all interested parties.

11. Employers are asked to make their own arrangements for obtaining additional copies of this Director's Letters (DL) which can be viewed at [NHS Scotland - Publications](#)

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jane Hamilton'.

Jane Hamilton  
Deputy Director,  
Health Workforce Pay, Practice and Partnership Division

## **APPENDIX**

### **Holders of Distinction Awards**

As at 31 December 2023 there were **89** holders of awards in Scotland, which is 1.5% of the total number of consultants (6,006) in Scotland, as set out below:

| Award | Award Holders | % of all Consultants |
|-------|---------------|----------------------|
| A+    | 9             | 0.2                  |
| A     | 13            | 0.2                  |
| B     | 67            | 1.1                  |
| Total | <b>89</b>     | <b>1.5</b>           |

A list of all award holders in Scotland as at 31 December 2023 is at Appendix A and related statistical analysis is set out in Appendices B to I.

2023/24 saw a steady number of retirements amongst consultants, both award holding and non-award holding.

An analysis of Awards by age (Appendix C), Gender (Appendix G) and Ethnic Origin (Appendix H) has been made. However, it should be noted that as the Awards are closed, inequalities cannot be addressed and can only be analysed retrospectively with regard to the diversity of Awards Holders as at 2011. In addition, it should be noted that 53 (60%) Award holders did not declare ethnicity.

Due to the fluctuating workforce numbers in response to the needs of the Covid pandemic, the accuracy of the detailed demographic information from each Board cannot be held to the same expectations as in previous years. Equality and Diversity information was calculated based on the percentage reported from each Board as well as NHS Scotland as a whole that can be found here: Overall Staff in Post | Turas Data Intelligence ([nhs.scot](https://nhs.scot))

# ANALYSIS BY AGE GROUP (All Consultants)

Scotland as at 31 December 2023

| Age Group | Award Holders |    |    |       | Non-Award Holders | All Consultants                                                                                      |
|-----------|---------------|----|----|-------|-------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|           | A+            | A  | B  | Total |                   |                                                                                                      |
| No Answer | 0             | 0  | 2  | 2     | 0                 | Cannot be determined as the Non-Award Holders Data is only recorded as 34 and Under, 35 – 54 and 55+ |
| Under 35  | 0             | 0  | 0  | 0     | 1,717             |                                                                                                      |
| 35-39     | 0             | 0  | 0  | 0     | 2,931             |                                                                                                      |
| 40-44     | 0             | 0  | 0  | 0     |                   |                                                                                                      |
| 45-49     | 0             | 0  | 0  | 0     |                   |                                                                                                      |
| 50-54     | 0             | 0  | 0  | 0     | 1,358             |                                                                                                      |
| 55-59     | 0             | 4  | 21 | 25    |                   |                                                                                                      |
| 60-64     | 1             | 1  | 32 | 34    |                   |                                                                                                      |
| 65+       | 8             | 8  | 12 | 28    |                   |                                                                                                      |
| Total     | 9             | 13 | 67 | 89    | 6,006             | 6,095                                                                                                |
|           |               |    |    |       |                   |                                                                                                      |

## ANALYSIS BY NATURE OF CONTRACT

Scotland as at 30 December 2022

| Nature of Contract |    |    |    |                   |
|--------------------|----|----|----|-------------------|
|                    | A+ | A  | B  | NON-AWARD HOLDERS |
| Honorary           | 3  | 6  | 20 | 2,726             |
| Fixed Term         | 0  | 0  | 1  | 403               |
| Permanent          | 6  | 7  | 46 | 2,877             |
| Total              | 9  | 13 | 67 | 6,006             |

**ANALYSIS BY NHS BOARD**  
**Scotland as at 30 December 2022**

| NHS Board               | Award Holders |            |     |            |     |            |       |            | Non-Award Holders |            | All Consultants |
|-------------------------|---------------|------------|-----|------------|-----|------------|-------|------------|-------------------|------------|-----------------|
|                         | A+            |            | A   |            | B   |            | Total |            |                   |            |                 |
|                         | No.           | % Per Area | No. | % Per Area | No. | % Per Area | No.   | % Per Area | No.               | % Per Area |                 |
| Ayrshire and Arran      | 0             | 0.0%       | 0   | 0.0%       | 1   | 0.3%       | 1     | 0.3%       | 291               | 99.7%      | 292             |
| Borders                 | 0             | 0.0%       | 0   | 0.0%       | 0   | 0.0%       | 0     | 0.0%       | 84                | 100.0%     | 84              |
| Dumfries and Galloway   | 0             | 0.0%       | 0   | 0.0%       | 0   | 0.0%       | 0     | 0.0%       | 114               | 100.0%     | 114             |
| Fife                    | 0             | 0.0%       | 1   | 0.3%       | 2   | 0.6%       | 3     | 0.9%       | 291               | 99.1%      | 294             |
| Forth Valley            | 0             | 0.0%       | 0   | 0.0%       | 2   | 0.7%       | 2     | 0.7%       | 273               | 99.3%      | 275             |
| Grampian                | 0             | 0.0%       | 1   | 0.2%       | 4   | 0.7%       | 5     | 0.9%       | 587               | 99.1%      | 592             |
| Greater Glasgow & Clyde | 3             | 0.1%       | 4   | 0.2%       | 23  | 1.3%       | 30    | 1.7%       | 1719              | 98.3%      | 1749            |
| Highland                | 0             | 0.0%       | 0   | 0.0%       | 0   | 0.0%       | 0     | 0.0%       | 274               | 100.0%     | 274             |
| Lanarkshire             | 0             | 0.0%       | 0   | 0.0%       | 2   | 0.4%       | 2     | 0.4%       | 530               | 99.6%      | 532             |
| Lothian                 | 5             | 0.5%       | 5   | 0.5%       | 22  | 2.0%       | 32    | 3.0%       | 1049              | 97.0%      | 1081            |
| National <sup>(1)</sup> | 0             | 0.0%       | 1   | 0.5%       | 6   | 3.2%       | 7     | 3.7%       | 183               | 96.3%      | 190             |
| Orkney                  | 0             | 0.0%       | 0   | 0.0%       | 0   | 0.0%       | 0     | 0.0%       | 10                | 100.0%     | 10              |
| Shetland                | 0             | 0.0%       | 0   | 0.0%       | 0   | 0.0%       | 0     | 0.0%       | 12                | 100.0%     | 12              |
| Tayside                 | 1             | 0.2%       | 1   | 0.2%       | 5   | 1.0%       | 7     | 1.4%       | 490               | 98.6%      | 497             |
| Western Isles           | 0             | 0.0%       | 0   | 0.0%       | 0   | 0.0%       | 0     | 0.0%       | 11                | 100.0%     | 11              |
| Total                   | 9             | 0.1%       | 13  | 0.2%       | 67  | 1.1%       | 89    | 1.4%       | 5917              | 98.6%      | 6006            |

Note: (1) Includes consultants working in National Organisations; NHS National Services Scotland (operating name for the Common Services Agency), NHS Education for Scotland, Healthcare Improvement Scotland, Public Health Scotland, the Scottish Ambulance Service, the State Hospitals Board for Scotland, the Mental Welfare Commission for Scotland, the Golden Jubilee National Hospital and NHS 24.

**ANALYSIS BY SPECIALTY**  
**Scotland as at 30 December 2022**

| Specialty                         | Total No. of Consultants in Specialty | % of All Consultants | Award Holders |                |     |                |     |                |       |                | Non-Award Holders |                |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------|---------------|----------------|-----|----------------|-----|----------------|-------|----------------|-------------------|----------------|
|                                   |                                       |                      | A+            |                | A   |                | B   |                | Total |                |                   |                |
|                                   |                                       |                      | No.           | % of Specialty | No. | % of Specialty | No. | % of Specialty | No.   | % of Specialty | No.               | % of Specialty |
| Anaesthetics                      | 554                                   | 9.3%                 | 0             | 0.0%           | 0   | 0.0%           | 4   | 0.7%           | 4     | 0.7%           | 550               | 99.3%          |
| Cardiothoracic Surgery            | 33                                    | 0.5%                 | 0             | 0.0%           | 0   | 0.0%           | 1   | 0.3%           | 1     | 0.3%           | 32                | 99.7%          |
| Chemical Pathology <sup>(2)</sup> | 22                                    | 0.4%                 | 1             | 4.5%           | 0   | 0.0%           | 2   | 9.0%           | 3     | 13.5%          | 19                | 86.5%          |
| Child & Adolescent Psychiatry     | 42                                    | 0.7%                 | 0             | 0.0%           | 0   | 0.0%           | 0   | 0.0%           | 0     | 0.0%           | 42                | 100.0%         |
| Clinical Genetics                 | 9                                     | 0.1%                 | 0             | 0.0%           | 0   | 0.0%           | 0   | 0.0%           | 0     | 0.0%           | 9                 | 100.0%         |
| Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery      | 24                                    | 0.4%                 | 0             | 0.0%           | 0   | 0.0%           | 0   | 0.0%           | 0     | 0.0%           | 24                | 100.0%         |
| Dentistry <sup>(1)</sup>          | 274                                   | 4.7%                 | 0             | 0.0%           | 1   | 0.4%           | 2   | 0.8%           | 3     | 1.2%           | 271               | 98.8%          |
| Public Health Medicine            | 50                                    | 0.8%                 | 0             | 0.0%           | 2   | 4.0%           | 1   | 2.0%           | 3     | 6.0%           | 47                | 94.0%          |
| General Practice                  | 426                                   | 7.2%                 | 0             | 0.0%           | 0   | 0.0%           | 3   | 0.7%           | 3     | 0.7%           | 423               | 99.3%          |
| Occupational Medicine             | 9                                     | 0.1%                 | 0             | 0.0%           | 0   | 0.0%           | 0   | 0.0%           | 0     | 0.0%           | 9                 | 100.0%         |
| Blood Transfusion                 | 1                                     | 0.0%                 | 0             | 0.0%           | 0   | 0.0%           | 1   | 100.0%         | 1     | 100.0%         | 0                 | 0.0%           |

|                                     |     |       |   |       |   |      |    |      |    |      |     |         |
|-------------------------------------|-----|-------|---|-------|---|------|----|------|----|------|-----|---------|
| Haematology                         | 77  | 1.3%  | 0 | 0.0%  | 0 | 0.0% | 2  | 2.5% | 2  | 2.5% | 75  | 97.5%   |
| Medical Microbiology & Virology     | 33  | 0.5%  | 0 | 0.0%  | 0 | 0.0% | 0  | 0.0% | 0  | 0.0  | 33  | 100.0%  |
| Histopathology                      | 70  | 1.2%  | 0 | 0.00% | 0 | 0.0% | 2  | 2.8% | 2  | 2.8% | 68  | 97.2%   |
| Dermatology                         | 58  | 1.0%  | 0 | 0.0%  | 0 | 0.0% | 1  | 1.7% | 1  | 1.7% | 57  | 98.3%   |
| General Medicine <sup>(3)</sup>     | 934 | 16.1% | 5 | 0.5%  | 5 | 0.5% | 24 | 2.6% | 34 | 3.6% | 900 | 96.4%   |
| Geriatric Medicine                  | 228 | 3.9%  | 0 | 0.00% | 0 | 0.0% | 1  | 0.4% | 1  | 0.4% | 227 | 99.6%   |
| Paediatrics <sup>(4)</sup>          | 363 | 6.0%  | 1 | 0.2%  | 0 | 0.0% | 2  | 0.4% | 3  | 0.6% | 360 | 99.4%   |
| Palliative Medicine                 | 35  | 0.6%  | 0 | 0.0%  | 0 | 0.0% | 0  | 0.0% | 0  | 0.0% | 35  | 100.00% |
| Neurology                           | 49  | 0.8%  | 0 | 0.0%  | 1 | 2.0% | 1  | 2.0% | 2  | 4.0% | 48  | 96.0%   |
| Rehabilitation Medicine             | 14  | 0.2%  | 0 | 0.0%  | 0 | 0.0% | 0  | 0.0% | 0  | 0.0% | 14  | 100.0%  |
| Respiratory Medicine                | 92  | 1.5%  | 0 | 0.0%  | 0 | 0.0% | 1  | 1.0% | 1  | 1.0% | 91  | 99.0%   |
| Genito Urinary Medicine             | 16  | 0.2%  | 0 | 0.0%  | 0 | 0.0% | 1  | 6.3% | 1  | 6.3% | 15  | 93.7%   |
| Obstetrics & Gynaecology            | 270 | 4.5%  | 1 | 0.4%  | 1 | 0.4% | 4  | 1.6% | 6  | 2.4% | 264 | 97.6%   |
| General Psychiatry                  | 301 | 5.0%  | 0 | 0.0%  | 0 | 0.0% | 2  | 0.7% | 2  | 0.7% | 299 | 99.3%   |
| Psychotherapy                       | 16  | 0.2%  | 0 | 0.0%  | 0 | 0.0% | 0  | 0.0% | 0  | 0.0% | 16  | 100.00% |
| Forensic Psychiatry                 | 25  | 0.4%  | 0 | 0.0%  | 0 | 0.0% | 1  | 4.0% | 1  | 4.0% | 24  | 96.0%   |
| Psychiatry of Learning Disability   | 27  | 0.4%  | 0 | 0.0%  | 0 | 0.0% | 0  | 0.0% | 0  | 0.0% | 27  | 100.0%  |
| Old Age Psychiatry                  | 49  | 0.8%  | 0 | 0.0%  | 0 | 0.0% | 0  | 0.0% | 0  | 0.0% | 49  | 100.0%  |
| Diagnostic Radiology <sup>(5)</sup> | 217 | 3.6%  | 0 | 0.0%  | 0 | 0.0% | 1  | 0.4% | 1  | 0.4% | 216 | 99.6%   |



|                                   |             |             |          |      |           |      |           |      |           |      |             |        |
|-----------------------------------|-------------|-------------|----------|------|-----------|------|-----------|------|-----------|------|-------------|--------|
| Radiotherapy (Clinical Oncology)  | 66          | 1.1%        | 0        | 0.0% | 0         | 0.0% | 0         | 0.0% | 0         | 0.0% | 66          | 100.0% |
| Emergency Medicine <sup>(6)</sup> | 364         | 6.1%        | 0        | 0.0% | 0         | 0.0% | 1         | 0.3% | 1         | 0.3% | 363         | 99.7%  |
| ENT Surgery (Otolaryngology)      | 69          | 1.1%        | 0        | 0.0% | 0         | 0.0% | 0         | 0.0% | 0         | 0.0% | 69          | 100.0% |
| General Surgery                   | 399         | 6.6%        | 1        | 0.3% | 1         | 0.3% | 3         | 0.9% | 5         | 1.5% | 394         | 98.5%  |
| Neurosurgery                      | 33          | 0.5%        | 0        | 0.0% | 0         | 0.0% | 0         | 0.0% | 0         | 0.0% | 33          | 100.0% |
| Ophthalmology                     | 92          | 1.5%        | 0        | 0.0% | 0         | 0.0% | 1         | 1.1% | 1         | 1.1% | 91          | 98.9%  |
| Trauma & Orthopaedic Surgery      | 275         | 4.6%        | 0        | 0.0% | 2         | 0.7% | 0         | 0.0% | 2         | 0.7% | 273         | 99.3%  |
| Plastic Surgery                   | 51          | 0.8%        | 0        | 0.0% | 0         | 0.0% | 0         | 0.0% | 0         | 0.0% | 51          | 100.0% |
| Paediatric Surgery                | 31          | 0.5%        | 0        | 0.0% | 0         | 0.0% | 1         | 3.2% | 1         | 3.2% | 30          | 96.8%  |
| Urology                           | 76          | 1.3%        | 0        | 0.0% | 0         | 0.0% | 1         | 1.3% | 1         | 1.3% | 75          | 98.7%  |
| Communicable Diseases             | 38          | 0.6%        | 0        | 0.0% | 0         | 0.0% | 3         | 7.9% | 3         | 7.9% | 35          | 92.1%  |
| Not Specified                     | 193         | 3.3%        | 0        | 0.0% | 0         | 0.0% | 0         | 0.0% | 0         | 0.0% | 193         | 100.0% |
| <b>Total of all consultants</b>   | <b>6006</b> | <b>100%</b> | <b>9</b> |      | <b>13</b> |      | <b>67</b> |      | <b>89</b> |      | <b>5917</b> |        |

**NOTES:**

(1) Includes: oral medicine, orthodontics, paediatric dentistry, restorative dentistry, community dentistry, oral pathology, dental public health, dental and maxillofacial radiology, surgical dentistry and oral surgery

(2) Includes: immunology

(3) Includes: cardiology, clinical pharmacology and therapeutics, clinical genetics, endocrinology and diabetes, gastroenterology, general (acute) medicine, medical oncology, rheumatology, audiological medicine, medical ophthalmology, clinical neurophysiology and renal medicine

(4) Includes: paediatric cardiology

(5) Includes: clinical radiology and nuclear medicine

(6) Includes: intensive care

**ANALYSIS BY GENDER**  
**(Of All Current Award Holders)**  
**Scotland as at 30 December 2023**

|                             | Male        |            | Female      |            | Total       |
|-----------------------------|-------------|------------|-------------|------------|-------------|
|                             | No.         | %          | No.         | %          | No.         |
| <b>All Consultants</b>      | 2,855       | 48%        | 3151        | 52%        | 6006        |
|                             |             |            |             |            |             |
| A+                          | 5           | 55.5%      | 4           | 44.5%      | 9           |
| A                           | 11          | 84.6%      | 2           | 15.4%      | 13          |
| B                           | 57          | 85%        | 10          | 15%        | 67          |
| Total Awards <sup>(2)</sup> | <b>73</b>   | <b>82%</b> | <b>16</b>   | <b>18%</b> | <b>89</b>   |
| Non-Award Holders           | <b>2782</b> | <b>47%</b> | <b>3135</b> | <b>53%</b> | <b>5917</b> |

**NOTES:**

- (1) No. of Male or Female Award Holders as a % of the number of Awards at same Award Level  
(2) No of Male or Female Award Holders as % of Total number of Awards

**ANALYSIS BY ETHNIC ORIGIN**  
**Scotland as at 30 December 2022**

| Ethnic Group                   | Awards Holders |           |           | Non-Award Holders |
|--------------------------------|----------------|-----------|-----------|-------------------|
|                                | A+             | A         | B         |                   |
| White - Other British          | 1              | 1         | 12        | 539               |
| White - Irish                  | 1              | 0         | 0         | 77                |
| White - Scottish               | 0              | 2         | 8         | 3365              |
| White – Other                  | 1              | 0         | 5         | 225               |
| African                        | 0              | 0         | 0         | 47                |
| Mixed or Multiple Ethnic Group | 0              | 0         | 0         | 30                |
| Asian - Bangladeshi            | 0              | 0         | 0         | 6                 |
| Asian - Chinese                | 0              | 0         | 1         | 24                |
| Asian - Indian                 | 0              | 0         | 1         | 71                |
| Asian - Other                  | 0              | 0         | 0         | 41                |
| Asian - Pakistani              | 0              | 0         | 1         | 35                |
| Caribbean or Black - Black     | 0              | 0         | 0         | 0                 |
| Caribbean or Black - Caribbean | 0              | 0         | 0         | 6                 |
| Caribbean or Black - Other     | 0              | 0         | 0         | 6                 |
| Other Ethnic Group - Arab      | 0              | 0         | 0         | 6                 |
| Other Ethnic Group - Other     | 0              | 0         | 2         | 18                |
| Declined                       | 4              | 5         | 17        | 503               |
| Unknown                        | 2              | 5         | 20        | 918               |
| <b>Total</b>                   | <b>9</b>       | <b>13</b> | <b>67</b> | <b>5917</b>       |