

Specialty doctor contracts in England Pay comparison

2021



This pay explainer document has been updated to reflect the impact of the 2021 NHS pay award announcement. The Government has agreed to implement a 3% uplift for all doctors who are not subject to a multiple year pay award.

This means that the 3% uplift **will be applied to the 2008 contracts**, among others, but **will not be applied to the 2021 contracts**.

As such, in the first year of transition, moving to the new contract will be comparatively less favourable. We can only continue to speculate on what increases, if any, the Government might make in future years, which again makes it hard to compare moving to the new contract versus the status quo over the course of a career.

It is very important to bear in mind that, for many, transferring to the new contracts will still represent a benefit in terms of their basic pay over the course of their career. Even some of the pay points which will see a reduction in basic pay over the initial three years of the deal need to be considered in the context of an improved pay scale, with fewer pay points, and where the top of the pay scale can be reached earlier in your career. Over the longer term, it may still be more beneficial to transfer to the new contract – this is set out in **Table 1** below.

However, in the short term, the pay award has significantly changed the situation for SAS doctors on the old contracts when considering whether to move to the new contracts. When the 2021 specialty doctor pay scale was being designed, it was intended that no one would see their pay decrease through transferring to the new contract. However, the 3% increase on the 2008 contract, and it being backdated to April, has meant that, in the first year, a far greater number of individuals will be immediately seeing a reduction in their basic pay by moving to the 2021 contract – this is set out in **Table 2** below.

We have highlighted the negative impact that the pay award decision will have. We are calling upon the governments, as a minimum, to offering pay protection to those transferring so that they don't see their pay reduce in the short term and can continue to benefit from other aspects of the new contract.

Otherwise, the majority of existing specialty doctors will instead choose to remain on the 2008 contracts, receive the benefit of the 3% pay award, and then seek to transfer in the future when it becomes more financially beneficial for them to do so.

We would recommend that you consider carefully all aspects of the contract – such as the safeguards, the extension of plain time, the increase in on-call availability supplement values, etc. – rather than just basic pay to determine whether the contract is attractive to you and whether you would personally want to transfer to it.

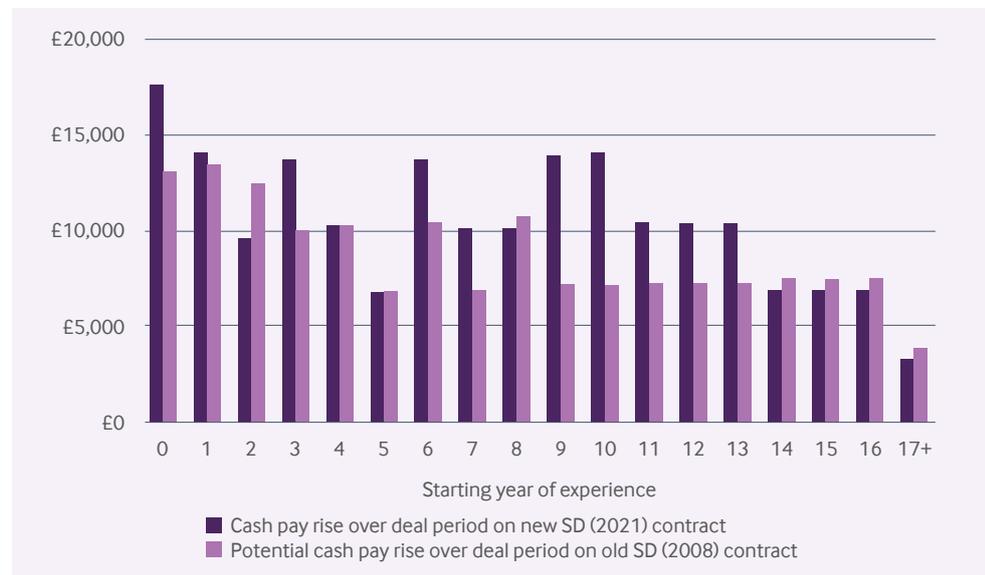
Basic pay examples

Figure 1 below illustrates the impact of choosing to move to the new Specialty Doctor (2021) contract on **basic pay**, for those on the old Specialty Doctor (2008) contract, at all starting years of experience along the current pay scale. This assumes that the doctor has progressed annually on the SD (2008) contract and will continue to progress according to full transitional arrangements in the deal. For example, the basic pay rise for a doctor who has completed 5 full years on the SD (2008) contract by 31 March 2021 should have progressed five times and is shown by the “**starting year of experience**” bars labelled 5 in the below graph. The starting pay expected for each “starting year of experience” is detailed in the second column of **Table 1**. This analysis also assumes that the doctor is full-time; pay rises for LTFT doctors would be pro-rata in the same manner as basic pay.

The “**cash pay rise over the deal period on new SD (2021) contract**” reflects the rise in basic pay that an SD (2008) would receive from 31 March 2021 (the day before the new contract would take effect) to the doctor’s progression date in 2023/24 (the final year of the deal), assuming the doctor expresses interest in choosing the new contract within the prescribed 6-month window of opportunity. The full detail of how pay changes for doctors on each of the current pay points is set out in the [BMA/NHSE individual pay journeys explainer document](#).

The “**potential cash pay rise over the deal period on old SD (2008) contract**” reflects the rise in basic pay that an SD (2008) would receive over the same period, if they remain on the old SD (2008) contract *and the government awards a 1% annual pay rise in each year 22/23 – 23/24, on top of the 3% that has been awarded in 21/22* (see above). Whilst the government has not currently imposed a pay freeze on NHS doctors’ pay and awarded a higher than initially expected pay award in 21/22, the current economic climate may suggest this to be a reasonable assumption for comparison. However, the assumption that the government will award 1% annual pay rises to those on the old SD (2008) contracts in 22/23 and 23/24 is hypothetical; the actual pay rises awarded could be higher or lower.

Figure 1: Basic pay rise over deal reference period (31 March 2021 – 23/24 progression date)



The basic pay journeys that result in these pay rises are detailed in **Table 1** below. As noted above, the shift from the SD (2008) pay scale with 11 pay points to the SD (2021) pay scale with only 5 pay points, to enable swifter progression to the top of the scale, is significant. As a result, the basic pay rises achieved during the deal period and the difference between them and what may potentially be paid on the old contract vary with starting years of experience. Nevertheless, for all starting points of experience, the deal represents *either* a higher basic pay rise over the deal period than remaining on the old contract *or* basic pay that is less than 1% lower than the counterfactual by the doctor’s progression date in 23/24, *except for doctors who have completed only 2 years of experience*.

However, this is a function of time; a doctor at 2 years of starting experience on 31 March 2021 would be expected to advance to the 3rd point on the SD (2021) pay scale on their progression date in 24/25, significantly surpassing their expected basic pay level by then had they remained on the old contract. Early in their career, this doctor would also benefit from being able to reach the top of the pay scale more quickly.

Table 1: Basic pay journeys over the deal period

Starting Year of Experience	Basic Pay on:	Basic pay journey for new SD (2021) on:			Cash pay rise over deal period on new contract	Basic pay journey for old SD (2008), if 1% annual pay uplifts awarded in 22/23 & 23/24, on:			Potential cash pay rise over deal period on old contract	Potential basic pay benefit of the deal in cash terms
	31-Mar-21	Progression 21/22	Progression 22/23	Progression 23/24		Progression 21/22	Progression 22/23	Progression 23/24		
0	£41,158	£45,124	£50,373	£58,756	£17,598	£46,017	£51,237	£54,326	£13,168	£4,430
1	£44,677	£49,745	£56,906	£58,756	£14,079	£50,730	£53,788	£58,038	£13,361	£718
2	£49,252	£55,790	£56,906	£58,756	£9,504	£53,255	£57,463	£61,735	£12,483	-£2,979
3	£51,704	£55,790	£58,756	£65,500	£13,796	£56,894	£61,124	£61,735	£10,031	£3,765
4	£55,237	£58,756	£64,237	£65,500	£10,263	£60,519	£61,124	£65,517	£10,280	-£17
5	£58,756	£62,978	£64,237	£65,500	£6,744	£60,519	£64,868	£65,517	£6,760	-£17
6	£58,756	£62,978	£64,237	£72,500	£13,744	£64,226	£64,868	£69,299	£10,542	£3,201
7	£62,355	£62,978	£71,654	£72,500	£10,145	£64,226	£68,612	£69,299	£6,944	£3,201
8	£62,355	£66,614	£71,654	£72,500	£10,145	£67,933	£68,612	£73,080	£10,725	-£580
9	£65,954	£66,614	£71,654	£80,000	£14,046	£67,933	£72,356	£73,080	£7,126	£6,920
10	£65,954	£70,249	£75,361	£80,000	£14,046	£71,640	£72,356	£73,080	£7,126	£6,920
11	£69,553	£70,249	£75,361	£80,000	£10,447	£71,640	£72,356	£76,861	£7,308	£3,139
12	£69,553	£70,249	£75,361	£80,000	£10,447	£71,640	£76,100	£76,861	£7,308	£3,139
13	£69,553	£73,883	£75,361	£80,000	£10,447	£75,347	£76,100	£76,861	£7,308	£3,139
14	£73,152	£73,883	£75,361	£80,000	£6,848	£75,347	£76,100	£80,643	£7,491	-£643
15	£73,152	£73,883	£78,759	£80,000	£6,848	£75,347	£79,844	£80,643	£7,491	-£643
16	£73,152	£77,519	£78,759	£80,000	£6,848	£79,054	£79,844	£80,643	£7,491	-£643
17+	£76,751	£77,519	£78,759	£80,000	£3,249	£79,054	£79,844	£80,643	£3,892	-£643

Table 2: Basic pay on transfer to the 2021 contract

Starting year of experience	Basic salary 2008 contract (1 April 2021)	Basic salary 2021 contract (1 April 2021)	Difference on transfer to 2021 contract
0	£42,393	£45,124	+£2,731
1	£46,017	£45,124	-£894
2	£50,730	£49,745	-£985
3	£53,255	£55,790	+£2,534
4	£56,894	£55,790	-£1,104
5	£60,519	£58,756	-£1,763
6	£60,519	£62,978	+£2,459
7	£64,226	£62,978	-£1,248
8	£64,226	£62,978	-£1,248
9	£67,933	£66,614	-£1,319
10	£67,933	£66,614	-£1,319
11	£71,640	£70,249	-£1,391
12	£71,640	£70,249	-£1,391
13	£71,640	£70,249	-£1,391
14	£75,347	£73,883	-£1,464
15	£75,347	£73,883	-£1,464
16	£75,347	£73,883	-£1,464
17+	£79,054	£77,519	-£1,535

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