

# Associate Specialist and Specialist 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**. It was already the case that Associate Specialists on the 2008 national contract would see **no benefit in terms of basic pay** from transferring to the 2021 Specialist contract. After the 3% pay award, there is even less reason for them to transfer.

Indeed, because the pay protection offered to AS doctors seeking to transfer would be based on the salary they would have been earning on 31 March 2021, before the pay award was added, it is very clear that they would be better off remaining on the Associate Specialist contract in terms of basic pay.

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.

The agreed Specialist contract pay scale is simpler than the transitional pay scale that has been agreed for the 2021 Specialty Doctor contract.

The transitional arrangements for existing Associate Specialists on the national 2008 contract who meet the criteria for the new Specialist grade and choose to move to it is set out in Annex A of the [Framework Agreement](#).

For completeness, here is a full pay comparison table for existing Associate Specialists on the national 2008 contract upon transferring to the 2021 Specialist grade contract:

Starting Year of Experience	Basic Pay on:	Basic pay journey for new Specialist (2021) on:			Cash pay rise over deal period on the new Specialist (2021) contract	Basic pay journey for old AS (2008), if 1% annual pay uplifts awarded in 22/23 & 23/24, on:			Potential cash pay rise over deal period on the old AS (2008) contract	Potential basic pay difference between the Specialist grade and remaining on the AS (2008) 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	£57,705	£79,894	£80,693	£87,000	<b>£29,295</b>	£64,214	£69,681	£76,813	<b>£19,108</b>	<b>£10,187</b>
1	£62,344	£79,894	£86,139	£87,000	<b>£24,656</b>	£68,991	£76,052	£82,390	<b>£20,046</b>	<b>£4,610</b>
2	£66,981	£85,286	£86,139	£87,000	<b>£20,019</b>	£75,299	£81,574	£84,704	<b>£17,723</b>	<b>£2,296</b>
3	£73,106	£85,286	£86,139	£92,500	<b>£19,394</b>	£80,766	£83,866	£84,704	<b>£11,598</b>	<b>£7,796</b>
4	£78,414	£85,286	£91,584	£92,500	<b>£14,086</b>	£83,035	£83,866	£87,723	<b>£9,309</b>	<b>£4,777</b>
5	£80,617	£90,677	£91,584	£92,500	<b>£11,883</b>	£83,035	£86,855	£87,723	<b>£7,106</b>	<b>£4,777</b>
6	£80,617	£90,677	£91,584	£92,500	<b>£11,883</b>	£85,995	£86,855	£90,743	<b>£10,126</b>	<b>£1,757</b>
7	£83,490	£90,677	£91,584	£92,500	<b>£9,010</b>	£85,995	£89,845	£90,743	<b>£7,253</b>	<b>£1,757</b>
8	£83,490	£90,677	£91,584	£92,500	<b>£9,010</b>	£88,955	£89,845	£93,762	<b>£10,272</b>	<b>-£1,262</b>
9	£86,364	£90,677	£91,584	£92,500	<b>£6,136</b>	£88,955	£92,834	£93,762	<b>£7,398</b>	<b>-£1,262</b>
10	£86,364	£90,677	£91,584	£92,500	<b>£6,136</b>	£91,915	£92,834	£93,762	<b>£7,398</b>	<b>-£1,262</b>
11	£89,238	£90,677	£91,584	£92,500	<b>£3,262</b>	£91,915	£92,834	£96,782	<b>£7,545</b>	<b>-£4,282</b>
12	£89,238	£90,677	£91,584	£92,500	<b>£3,262</b>	£91,915	£95,824	£96,782	<b>£7,545</b>	<b>-£4,282</b>
13	£89,238	£90,677	£91,584	£92,500	<b>£3,262</b>	£94,875	£95,824	£96,782	<b>£7,545</b>	<b>-£4,282</b>
14	£92,112	92,112*	92,112*	£92,500	<b>£388</b>	£94,875	£95,824	£99,804	<b>£7,693</b>	<b>-£7,304</b>
15	£92,112	92,112*	92,112*	£92,500	<b>£388</b>	£94,875	£98,816	£99,804	<b>£7,693</b>	<b>-£7,304</b>
16	£92,112	92,112*	92,112*	£92,500	<b>£388</b>	£97,838	£98,816	£99,804	<b>£7,693</b>	<b>-£7,304</b>
17+	£94,988	94,988*	94,988*	94,988*	<b>£0</b>	£97,838	£98,816	£99,804	<b>£4,816</b>	<b>-£4,816</b>

\*Marked time pay protection, which means basic pay remains flat at the value on the 31 March

2021 until pay for the doctor on the Specialist contract would be higher than this value. The “**cash pay rise over the deal period on the new Specialist (2021) contract**” reflects the rise in basic pay that an Associate Specialist (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 meets the entry criteria for the role and expresses interest in choosing the new contract within the prescribed 6-month window of opportunity. The “**potential cash pay rise over the deal period on the old AS (2008) contract**” reflects the rise in basic pay that an AS (2008) would receive over the same period, if they remain on the old AS (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, 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 AS (2008) contracts in 22/23 and 23/24 is hypothetical; the actual pay rises awarded could be higher or lower.

Given that the national AS (2008) grade closed in 2009, it is expected that doctors with fewer than 11 years of experience completed by the 31 March 2021 are not on the national terms and conditions and therefore are not covered by the mandate for contract reform or the transitional arrangements.

However, we are aware of some employers that have offered local Associate Specialist contracts since the closure of the national grade that commit to treating such AS doctors in the same way as their AS colleagues on the closed national contracts. Where that has happened, the BMA would recommend using the table above to apply the same principle of pay transition to those on local contracts (those in the grey section of the table) as those on national contracts (from 11 years onwards).

In terms of basic pay, you can see from this table that for those at or near the top of the Associate Specialist scale, there is no financial benefit to moving to the new contract, particularly given the 3% award to closed SAS contracts in 21/22. However, those at the top of the current AS scale that choose to move across will have their pay as of 31 March 2021 protected on a mark-time basis, and their pay will therefore not reduce from that value but will remain static. To be clear, this mark-time pay protection would **not** include the 3% uplift applied to the AS (2008) pay scale from 1 April 2021.

However, if you chose not to transfer to the new Specialist contract, that would mean that you would not benefit from other aspects of the contract, such as the new safeguards or the increased on-call availability supplements. You will have to consider these features carefully and make the right decision for you.

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