

<b>Reference:</b>	FOI.1499.19
<b>Subject:</b>	Application and authorisation of incremental credit for registered nurses
<b>Date of Request:</b>	27 August 2019

**Requested**

I would like to know how many newly appointed Registered Nurses (Child and Adult) had incremental credits awarded and salary increases and/or back pay authorised in the Trust in the last 3 years.

In other words I wish to know how many newly appointed nurses who had previously worked elsewhere in the NHS, or in non NHS sector were given advancement up the pay scales in Hywel Dda - commensurate to their previous pay level or increment under different employer or in previous employment. Please note I am not requesting any identifiable staff data or information simply the number of nurses who were awarded incremental credits in accordance with the Policy Document 042.

I would also like to know how many - or what proportion of these were authorised more than 2 months after commencement of their post in the Trust.

Furthermore I would like to know how many nurses had their applications delayed initially due to perceived lack of supporting evidence, or insufficient evidence pertaining to previous service - and how many of these in turn were eventually awarded incremental credits more than 2 months after commencement of their post with Hywel Dda.

**Response:**

Hywel Dda University Health Board (UHB) is unable to provide you with the information relating to staff who were awarded incremental credit, as it is estimated that the cost of answering your request would exceed the “appropriate level” as stated in the Freedom of Information (Fees and Appropriate Limit) Regulations 2004. The “appropriate level” represents the estimated cost of one person spending 18 hours or (2 ½ working days) in determining whether the UHB holds the information, and locating, retrieving and extracting the information.

In order to provide you with the number of staff awarded incremental credit, the UHB would be required to conduct a manual search of all employees’ payroll files. During the search the UHB would be required to identify those who submitted an application for incremental credit, along with their job title, when the award was approved, their previous NHS experience and supporting evidence. The UHB has approximately 10,000 employees, it is estimated that the cost of collecting the information requested would exceed the ‘appropriate limit’ as detailed within the 2000 Act:

10,000 @ 15 minutes per patient record = 666.67 hours  
666.67 hours @ £25 per hours = £16,666

The UHB is therefore applying an exemption under Section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, which provides an exemption from a public authority’s obligation to comply with a request for information where the cost of compliance is estimated to exceed the *appropriate limit*.

Under Section 16 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the UHB has an obligation to provide advice and assistance. The UHB has therefore provided some information relating to how

entitlement to incremental credit is assessed and why most newly appointed registered nurses would not be eligible, as is detailed within policy 042 'Guidance on Starting Salaries'.

The incremental credit application forms part of Policy 042 – 'Guidance on Starting Salaries' and is part of the recruitment process that informs NHS Wales Health Board managers of the appropriate procedures to be followed when appointing members of staff. This policy is applied to all staff groups and is not exclusively for the purpose of the nursing and midwifery workforce.

Newly appointed registered nurses would not be eligible for incremental credit if they are newly qualified and therefore new to the profession, these members of staff would therefore start on the minimum of the pay scale (Policy 042 - Section 6).

Appointed nurses who have previously worked elsewhere within the NHS are given advancement up the pay scales within Hywel Dda University Health Board (UHB), providing they make available to the organisation the requisite evidence of previous NHS reckonable service. Applications should be submitted with all relevant evidence as soon as possible once the provisional offer of employment has been made.

The incremental process is carried out routinely and very often even before the staff member starts employment. Many new recruits request receipt of their offered salary in writing before handing in their notice with their current employer. Therefore, when policy is adhered to very few applications are delayed due to lack of supporting evidence, as the incremental credit application form is initiated by the new recruit when joining the UHB and once countersigned by the appointing officer prior to its submission.

Previous service can be evidenced from an Inter Authority Transfer (IAT) through the Electronic Staff Record (ESR) system at the staff member or managers request, or by providing their most recent NHS/ESR payslip, or alternatively by producing a letter from their previous NHS employer to quantify their period of service. Each individual with previous NHS service after securing an offer of employment and providing their evidence in a timely manner will transfer on their existing salary and retain their incremental date.

Implementation of incremental credit is undertaken by our payroll team, and the evidence supplied by the new recruit is then filed immediately on their personal file in line with GDPR regulations; therefore, this information is not collectively held.

Where an increment credit application form has not been completed, or an IAT raised and there is also insufficient evidence, the incremental credit application is delayed. Applications should be received within 2 months of the date of appointment. If this timeframe is not met, applications are then deemed to be 'outside of policy'.

All out of policy claims are then submitted to the Workforce and Organisational Development (W&OD) Control Panel, chaired by the Director of W&OD. If extenuating circumstances surround the untimely submission of the application the decision to allow dispensation is reached by the panel.

To date, this financial year there has only been one application considered by the W&OD Control Panel as an out of policy incremental credit application; this was not for a qualified nursing post.

