

Dear

### **ATISN 19319 – Doctors Pay**

Thank you for your emails received on 21 November 2023 which will be dealt with under the Freedom of Information Act (2000). You have requested the following:

- *I would be grateful if you could provide me with all information and emails supporting the decision to freeze the payscale of 2008 SAS Doctors in July 2022. This decision was made without completing an impact assessment, and contrary to the advice and recommendations of the DDRB. Please provide the information and emails required by the guidance in support of this decision. I am particularly interested in the response to the DDRB's comments about inadequate Welsh data on retirements; allegations of institutional racism; and the need to address issues of equality and discrimination previously highlighted by DDRB.*
- *I would be grateful if you could provide me with all information relating to the April 2021 decision not to complete an equality impact assessment prior to making a decision on the reform of the SAS Contract in April 2021. Please provide all information which explains why this impact assessment was completed in November 2022, an extraordinary 18 months after the decision was made.*

### **Our Response**

In accordance with Welsh Governments retention policy emails are deleted from the system after 12 months, therefore no information is held regarding emails in relation to the decision to freeze the top pay point of the 2008 Speciality Doctors.

The advice to the Minister at the time included the following paragraphs regarding the decision to freeze the top pay point:

- Officials have also considered the unintended consequence of a 4.5% pay award on the old (2008) Specialty doctor contract as this now means the old contract top salary point will be even higher than the new contract, as it is currently £296 higher.
- Therefore, for the same reasons as set out above (see last 3 bullets below) from a policy intention officials consider that the top salary on the 2008 contract should be frozen to maintain the integrity of the new contract and pay scales.
- To mitigate the negative impact for those doctors' current on the top pay point, officials advise that they also receive a non-consolidated payment of 4.5%.
- Whilst this may not be seen a positive step by the BMA and the doctors this affects, this is only a relatively small group number of doctors (circa 198), and officials consider the policy intention outweighs any drawbacks. Also the non-consolidated payment for those may mitigate the negative impact as it is seen that Welsh Government fully supports the implementation of the new contract and pay should not be a barrier to this. This group of

doctors will receive a consolidated pay award next year when the top pay scales of the 2008 and 2021 align however this will be within a tighter fiscal context in 2023-24 as a result of the front loaded settlement in 2022-23.

- This will ensure that those who have moved or are in the process of transferring to the new contract will not be discouraged to do so solely from a pay perspective given the unprecedented cost pressures on take home pay this year.
- This decision also supports the policy intention of implementing the new contract with improved terms and conditions for doctors, patients, and the service so the contract benefits can be fully realised.
- Paying a non-consolidated payment also ensure the integrity of the pay structure.

Welsh Government holds no information relating to the reasons for the delay in undertaking an Integrated Impact Assessment on the new SAS contracts introduced in April 2021.

### **Next steps**

If you are dissatisfied with the Welsh Government's handling of your request, you can ask for an internal review within 40 working days of the date of this response. Requests for an internal review should be addressed to the Welsh Government's Freedom of Information Officer at:

Information Rights Unit,  
Welsh Government,  
Cathays Park,  
Cardiff,  
CF10 3NQ

or Email: [Freedom.ofinformation@gov.wales](mailto:Freedom.ofinformation@gov.wales)

Please remember to quote the ATISN reference number above.

You also have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office,  
Wycliffe House,  
Water Lane,  
Wilmslow,  
Cheshire,  
SK9 5AF.

However, please note that the Commissioner will not normally investigate a complaint until it has been through our own internal review process.

Yours sincerely,