

Changes to the local clinical excellence awards scheme

Joint statement from the British Medical Association and NHS Employers

The British Medical Association (BMA) and NHS Employers have reached a collective agreement on changes to the local clinical excellence award (CEA) scheme, which has been endorsed by the Department of Health and Social Care.

The local CEA agreement announced today provides stability and clarity for consultants and employers on the availability of awards for quality and excellence, acknowledging exceptional personal contributions to the design and delivery of NHS care. The national terms and conditions of service will be amended to ensure that all parties will have a clear understanding of the contractual status of the scheme.

The agreement covers two periods. The first is the period between 1 April 2018 and 31 March 2021. The second part of the agreement sets out some specific features that will apply from 1 April 2021, should a consensus on wider scheme reform not be reached.

From 1 April 2018, all employers in England who employ consultants on the 2003 terms and conditions of service will be contractually obliged to run regular local CEA rounds. Awards rounds will largely run as before, and the parties are in the process of agreeing revised supporting guidance to clarify details of the scheme. All new awards will be non-pensionable to reflect pensions changes that have taken place since the current consultant contract was introduced; the parties recognise that retaining pensionability for CEA may not always be in consultants' best financial interests. Similarly, all new awards will be non-consolidated and time-limited to better reflect current performance. These changes have enabled the parties to increase the funds available to invest in the scheme, meaning that greater numbers of consultants will be able to access the awards.



All local CEA made prior to 1 April 2018 will be retained by award holders, though they will be subject to a nationally agreed review process from 2021 onwards. These awards will remain pensionable and consolidated.

Consultants will continue to have access to national CEA where they can demonstrate outstanding contributions to the NHS. For any individual consultant who is unsuccessful at retaining their national CEA, the parties have agreed a reversion mechanism that allows them to be assessed for a local award in recognition of their ongoing contribution.

From April 2021, or sooner if the parties agree a new scheme before then, it is the intention of the parties that a new, jointly agreed local CEA scheme will be introduced. If a scheme has not been agreed as part of the ongoing negotiations, employers will have the flexibility to amend existing schemes or introduce new schemes in conjunction with the local negotiating committee (LNC). However, the following features will be maintained, whatever other changes they may make:

- awards rounds will continue to be run
- the overall level of investment in the scheme will be maintained
- existing awards (those granted before 1 April 2018) will be retained, subject to a nationally agreed review process
- a national award reversion mechanism will remain
- there will continue to be an appeals process.

The BMA and NHS Employers are pleased to announce this agreement and will be publishing guidance in the coming weeks. Both parties believe the agreement sets a positive context for further negotiations around a new consultant contract, which will be resumed in early spring. These negotiations and the subsequent implementation timeline will be informed by the outcome of the Review Body on Doctors' and Dentists' Remuneration (DDRB) for the 2018 to 2019 pay round. Consultants and employers will be consulted on any proposals developed by the negotiation partners.

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