

## THE NHS STAFF COUNCIL

*WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP*

### Paramedic pay and banding: development of the Newly Qualified Practitioner (NQP) role

The NQP package and other arrangements for the implementation of paramedic re-banding referred to in these FAQs apply in England only. However the new Band 5 Newly Qualified Paramedic profile and Band 6 Paramedic profile is available for all UK countries to use. Employers and employees in the devolved nations should seek guidance on policy from their administrations.

#### **Newly Qualified Paramedic (NQP)**

##### **What is the NQP programme and role for?**

NQPs will be registered practitioners working to HCPC standards. The programme will provide a period of structured and essential experiential learning, following successful completion of education and registration, to integrate paramedics into the ambulance workforce. It will complement and not replace, local preceptorship schemes.

##### **How long will the NQP programme be for?**

The NQP programme will ordinarily be for 24 months. In certain circumstances it may be shorter for those able to meet the requirements of the fast track programme. In exceptional circumstances it could be longer due to capability issues or long-term sickness absence.

##### **When will the NQP programme begin?**

The programme is under development and will be rolled out from April 2017.

##### **When will my 24 month period start?**

Your 24 month period will start from when you are registered and first employed as a paramedic, if this was on or after 1 September 2016. If your start date was between September 2016 and April 2017 where the programme is not yet in operation, your period will commence from your start date.

##### **Why is the NQP role in pay band 5?**

This is due to the extra support which will be provided by the employer, including on decision making. NQPs will not be deployed solo during the first six months of their practice. They will, for example, need to seek clinical advice before deviating from protocol. Paramedics in pay band 6 are autonomous within the scope of their clinical practice.

##### **What is the purpose of the NQP portfolio?**

The portfolio will contain nationally agreed learning outcomes which newly qualified paramedics are expected to meet in order to progress through and complete the consolidation of learning period. It will be a portfolio of practice in line with HCPC guidance to demonstrate competence against the programme requirements. NQPs will own their portfolios and will record their learning and progress through the

programme. Portfolios will act as passports for NQPs moving between trusts, enabling the receiving organisation to rely on the record of previous progress so that a new programme could be re-started from the appropriate point without duplication. NQPs will be supported by management and learning and development staff, the arrangement for this will be confirmed by each Trust. In certain circumstances they may progress more quickly and complete in less than two years.

**Will I get incremental pay progression in my band 5 NQP role?**

Yes.

**What happens if I am off work sick during my NQP programme?**

If you are sick for an extended period you and your line manager/mentor/assessor will need to consider what adjustments may need to be made to get you back on track. You should make use of the support mechanisms your employer provides during your sickness absence. In exceptional circumstances, the NQP period may be extended beyond 24 months where the employee is off on a long-term absence. This should be decided as part of supportive process to enable a return to work from a period of long-term absence, as defined in local policy.

**What happens if I take maternity leave during my NQP programme?**

Your progress up to the start of your leave will be recorded in your portfolio. On your return the programme will re-start where you left off. You and your line manager/mentor/assessor will need to consider what adjustments may need to be made to get you back on track. During your maternity leave period you will be entitled to 'keep in touch' days, these provide a useful opportunity for you to keep your competence and learning up to date.

**What happens if I work part-time in my NQP role?**

You will maintain a portfolio of experiential learning in the same way as your full-time colleagues and your progress will be assessed in the same way.

**Will I be required to work solo in my first six months?**

No, NQPs will not be asked to work solo in their first six months.

**Once I have successfully completed my NQP programme will my move into pay band 6 be automatic?**

Yes.

**If I have previous experience (e.g. as a technician/ECA) in an ambulance trust will I still need to go through the full 24 months of the NQP role?**

This is under discussion. Employers and trades unions will agree arrangements for fast track circumstances in which credits may be awarded towards the completion of the NQP portfolio of learning and development. This system will be jointly agreed and implemented by employers by April 2017.

**What support will be available from my employer during the NQP programme?**

Your employer will commit to providing preceptorship, clinical support and review process. The NQP will do their part to participate fully in the process. The employer will create an environment in which the NQP can practice their skills safely. Your operational line manager will create the conditions in which the NQP can flourish.

**In what circumstances would my NQP programme last longer than 24 months?**

In exceptional circumstances, where the NQP was advised that some part of their practice did not meet the required standard and further support, learning and experience was required the NQP programme may be extended. There should be no surprises around this and NQPs will be advised of such matters as early as possible in the programme so that an extension of the programme would be exceptional.

The transition from band 5 NQP to band 6 paramedic will be automatic unless in exceptional circumstances where issues are being dealt with under formal capability procedures and highlighted to the NQP in advance. Such issues should be identified as early on as possible and progressed within the consolidation of learning period.

**Will NQPs be deployed differently to other paramedics?**

The deployment of NQPs will be the same as for other paramedics, except that NQPs will be expected to work solely within trust guidelines and JRCALC and will be expected to seek advice and support for any expected deviation from these protocols. NQPs will not be required to respond solo for the first six months.

**How was the new job description for the NQP role developed?**

It was developed by employers and trades unions working in partnership and with input from NHS England, NHS Employers, NHS Improvement and the College of Paramedics.

**What are the requirements on the NQP?**

These will be set out in the portfolio and will include the need to reflect on their clinical practice, to be open to constructive feedback, work within their scope of clinical practice and to own their personal development.

**As an NQP how often will my progress be reviewed?**

Progress reviews will happen at regular intervals; e.g. 6, 12, 18 and 24 months with a suitable person (e.g. line manager, clinical supervisor, mentor etc.)

**Development of the band 6 role**

**How will my role change after I move to band 6?**

You will work to your trust's band 6 paramedic job description. The Urgent and Emergency Care Review (UECR) offers opportunities to develop the practice of paramedics. Trades unions and employers have agreed to work with NHS England and NHS Improvement to promote these developments. This will mean developing job descriptions in line with the UECR requirements to achieve greater national consistency in the scope of paramedic practice.