

Summer 2005

How to help your members through the AfC banding review process

- Many NHS staff are being informed of the band their posts have been matched to under Agenda for Change.
- Whilst local and regional consistency checking ensures that matches are robust, there will be some members who feel that their post may not have been matched to a profile at the correct level.
- This note gives advice to branches about how you can help members identify if they should apply for a review and how to go about it.
- Branches may wish to use the information in this note as the basis for their own newsletters so that any locally agreed procedures can be incorporated.

The Job Evaluation handbook contains two routes by which members can challenge their AfC matching or evaluation outcome – review and appeal. The two processes are described below

Review of matching outcome

References

The review procedure is listed in Chapter 8, Paragraphs 7.1 – 7.4 and Chapter 10, Paragraph 2.6 of the Job Evaluation handbook.

Purpose

Members should use this route to challenge banding outcomes that they think under score the levels required for their post.

You may want to give your members the attached information sheet “**Have I been banded correctly**” in order that they can identify if they have a realistic case.

Process

A request for a review must be made in writing by the postholder within **three months** of formal notification of the initial banding outcome. There may also be locally agreed forms to complete in order to register a review request, so check your local procedures with your AfC project manager.

The postholder must provide evidence of where they disagree with the match and evidence to support claims for higher levels for one or more factors.

A matching panel with the majority of members different to the first should examine the original matching documentation along with the evidence submitted by the

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postholder. They will confirm the original match; re-match to a higher level profile or refer the post to local evaluation

You must inform your members that there is no right to a further review of their matching outcome.

Group reviews

If you have a group of members who all have the same basis for a review, they may wish to consider applying as a group. However, if there is a whole staff group (e.g. A&C 3 Medical Secretaries) who have had matches they consider unfair, there may be other reasons for this which can be resolved without using the review process. These could include:

- Outdated job descriptions being submitted for the matching process
- Job descriptions which have not been agreed being submitted for the matching process
- Job descriptions used which are set at recruitment level
- Publication of a new and suitable job profile

In these cases, extra information or revised job descriptions should be submitted and the jobs should be matched again.

Appeal via grievance procedure

Postholders can also use the **local grievance procedure** to appeal against any unfair application of the process for job matching/evaluation, or to address panel bias. The official processes can be found in Chapters 8-12 of the Job Evaluation handbook.

Ends

Have I been banded correctly?

This paper is intended for use by branches to help members identify whether and how to apply for a review of their AfC matching or evaluation outcome

- Many NHS staff are being informed of the band their posts have been matched to under Agenda for Change
- Whilst many matches are reportedly robust, with a good spread of matching across all pay bands, there will be some members who feel that their post may not have been matched to the correct level
- This note is intended to help members identify if their matching outcome is a fair reflection of the job and provides advice about the kind of evidence needed

References:

Job Evaluation Scheme – The sixteen factors against which all posts will be compared as a means of moving staff over to the Agenda for Change pay scale

Job Evaluation handbook – this contains the JE scheme along with the nationally approved processes for use plus guidance and advice

Download your copy from:

<http://www.dh.gov.uk/PolicyAndGuidance/HumanResourcesAndTraining/ModernisingPay/AgendaForChange/fs/en>

National profiles – descriptions of the JE levels of commonly occurring NHS posts. The profiles provide a means of “matching” postholders and moving them over to the AfC pay spine.

Website – the Department of Health Website has the official job profiles and copies of the job evaluation handbook to print and download.

http://www.dh.gov.uk/PolicyAndGuidance/HumanResourcesAndTraining/ModernisingPay/AgendaForChange/AgendaForChangeArticle/fs/en?CONTENT_ID=4079277&chk=KCeZ3I

You can access these links via the UNISON AfC pages

What to do if you think your banding is unfair

- Request a copy of the CAJE matching sheet for your job (if this has not been supplied with your outcome) - this will give a summary of the rationale which the

matching panel have used so you can understand why you have been matched to a particular profile

- Look again at your job description and the job profiles for your staff group - if you have a “generic” job description then it is possible that your initial outcome may not reflect the skills and responsibilities of the post
- Is your job description set at lower levels of skill than postholders are expected to use? The job evaluation handbook cites recruitment-level job descriptions as a reason why matching results are sometimes lower than expected. It is often the section on knowledge, training and experience (weighted most highly in the NHS JE scheme) which is understated as this is frequently based on what can be realistically expected within the labour market. This differs from what would be expected from a fully developed postholder - frequently, staff are recruited and trained up within an organisation to match the real needs of a post, so there is a clear step in knowledge between the recruitment level JD and that for the developed role.
- Examine the factor levels of the job profile you have been matched to and read the descriptions and notes for the factors in the Job Evaluation Handbook, including the extra guidance on Knowledge in Chapter 3:
 - Are these levels an accurate assessment of your role?
 - Does your job fit more easily into a higher level for any factor?
- Make a note of what you believe to be the appropriate levels for your job
- Look at the factor level score chart on page 50 of the JE handbook:
 - Add up the scores you believe apply to your job
 - Check the Pay bands and job weight chart on page 51 in the JE handbook
 - Does the revised score for your job take you over the boundary into the next pay band?
- If “yes”, you should seek a review of your initial job match

How to apply for a review

- Talk to your manager, steward or AfC project lead to find out your local JE review procedure, as there may be specific forms you need to complete.
- Put together your evidence for the review. You will have to submit this within three months of the notification of your initial outcome.

Your evidence should be in writing and should explain why you match higher levels for a particular factor/s

Examples

Factor 12 - FREEDOM TO ACT

If you are challenging your Freedom to Act score, you will need to identify the level of discretion that you are required to employ within your post and give clear examples of where you act above the level of your initial score. It will also be helpful to identify if and how your work is supervised or managed.

In this example, the postholder is a community therapy assistant who wants a rematch on the basis that the freedom to act factor has not been correctly assessed:

"I have been matched to level 2, which describes roles where postholders work under supervision. However, I frequently undertake sole home visits and have discretion to adapt activities dependent upon the psychological and functional needs of the patient/client at that time. I discuss my work with my line-manager during weekly one-to-one meetings. I am responsible for an ongoing caseload of work and (aside from emergency situations where I am asked to cover a colleague's work) do not have work allocated to me on a daily basis.

I therefore feel that a level three score more accurately reflects my freedom to act."

Factor 2 - KNOWLEDGE TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE (KTE)

If you are challenging your KTE score, you will need to demonstrate:

- What the knowledge is
- How you have acquired it
- What it is used for

In the following example, an administrator has had Factor 2 assessed as level three and feels this significantly underscores the knowledge s/he has acquired since his/her recruitment:

"I have been matched to a level 3 for KTE, on the basis that I was required to have an RSA level 3 qualification on recruitment and agree that this is a fair assessment of the knowledge, training and experience needed for new recruits.

However, I believe this level does not recognise the level of knowledge and experience gained in the 7 years since my recruitment. The knowledge and skills I have acquired are all used to fulfil the current requirements of my role. I would like my job re-matched, taking into account the following evidence:

- *My 7 years experience within this post*
- *The different administrative and technical systems and programmes which I have learnt as part of this role which include:*
 - *Patient admissions*

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- *Patient records*
- *Payroll systems*
- *Clinical test processing systems*
- *Invoicing and purchase order systems*
- *Powerpoint presentations*
- *Excel spreadsheets (used to monitor departmental training and other budgets)*
- *SPSS statistics package (used to store data for clinical audit purposes)*

I have acquired this knowledge through a combination of attendance at formal training courses, self study and learning from more experienced staff within the trust

- *My extensive knowledge of the clinical procedures delivered by the healthcare staff within the units which enables me to:*
 - *Answer detailed questions regarding admission times; likely length of hospital stay; patients' post-operative needs etc*
 - *Liaise with social care teams and other community clinical teams regarding post-discharge care provision*
 - *Liaise with other outside agencies e.g. nursing homes*
 - *Provide efficient liaison with other clinical departments*
 - *Resolve queries raised by other staff on non-clinical appointment, admission and treatment issues*
 - *Flag up any likely problems with clinical staff based on conversations with e.g. patients, carers, other clinical staff*
 - *Provide reassurance to patients and carers regarding forthcoming treatment.*
- *I have acquired this knowledge through working closely with clinical and medical colleagues and undertaking relevant periods of work shadowing. I have also attended short courses (approx two per year) on relevant topics. In addition, I have undertaken a year-long course in counselling skills and techniques (for my own development purposes) and have learnt about research methodology from academic colleagues.*
- *In addition to the knowledge described above, I also administer the training budget, which requires detailed knowledge of the academic systems and levels of qualification/courses and knowledge of our internal procedures.*
- *I am responsible as day-to-day manager for a team of a 6 permanent staff with regular temporary staff being drafted in as "spare hands" during times of acute pressure. This requires me to have a good working knowledge of our internal HR practices and policies as well as management and motivation techniques. I have acquired this knowledge through a combination of short courses, self-study; on-the-job experience and learning from more experienced managerial staff (includes my participation in the internal mentoring scheme as both a mentee and a mentor).*
- *In addition, I am often required to give advice, information and instruction to other administrative staff who have been evaluated with the same level of knowledge.*

This guidance was written by UNISON Health Service Group 2005

I therefore feel that this combination of additional theory and practical experience takes me above level 3 knowledge and that level 4 (Diploma level equivalent) more accurately reflects the Knowledge Training and Experience which my post requires."

Tips

- **Group reviews**

If there are more than one of you with the same issues, you can apply for a review as a group. This is often a more effective means of challenging outcomes. However, members should be aware that a review on behalf of a large group of staff within an existing grade may fail to identify the unique skills and knowledge which set a post or smaller group of posts aside from the norm.

- **Requirements of the post**

Before submitting your information, it will be helpful to differentiate those tasks that you have undertaken for purely development purposes and those which are necessary to the post. This is a distinction that is confusing many people. The general rule of thumb is that where the organisation benefits from your extra skills, these should be acknowledged. This needs to be discussed pragmatically at a local level, as there will be extra skills that have been undertaken because of the postholders wishes (e.g. a nurse asks to attend a short course on alternative therapies), but where the service has later used these new skills on a regular basis and benefits from them (e.g. where the same postholder now provides alternative therapies as part of his/her clinical interventions).

- **Managerial/Professional advisor support**

The matching panel will want to check that the evidence you have submitted to them is correct. They will do this by contacting your manager/professional advisor. We would therefore recommend that you are up front and let your manager know that you intend to apply for a review. (Your local review procedure may require you to do this anyway). Managerial endorsement of your application will help to strengthen your case.

Ends