

Not All Salaried GP Contracts are the Same

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The term “salaried GP” can be used to describe any GP who is employed by a practice or a Primary Care Organisation, such as assistants, associates and Flexible Career Scheme GPs. Practice-employed salaried GPs are usually funded through the practices’ global sum payments. The salaries of Flexible Career Scheme GPs are reimbursed from the PCO.

It is essential to carefully negotiate every element of your contract before accepting a salaried GP post. The nationally agreed **model salaried GP contract** should form the basis of your terms and conditions.

GMS practices and PCOs that offer employment to a new salaried GP must do so on terms and conditions no less favourable than the Model contract. PMS salaried GPs should not be disadvantaged in relation to their GMS and PCO employed colleagues and the GPC recommends that PMS practices also offer the same terms and conditions for their employed GPs.

The GPC has also published a model contract of employment for FCS GPs. This model contract uses the same model salaried GP contract as its basis, with amendments to incorporate the terms of the Scheme and some enhanced conditions.

Retainer scheme GPs will shortly have their own model contract available from the GPC.

How should I negotiate a contract?

The following are some extracts from the Model contract, which are essential when negotiating terms and conditions in your contract of employment.

Hours of Work

Full-time is defined as 37.5 hours (9 notional sessions of 4 hours and 10 minutes). Working hours should be carefully defined in a job plan. The salary of part-time employees should be calculated pro rata in relation to this definition of full time hours – i.e. a GP employed for five sessions should receive 5/9ths of the full-time salary. If a salaried GP accepts a contract of more than 37.5 hours then the extra time must be recognised by a pro-rata increase in salary, pensionable service, annual leave and CPD entitlement.

Practitioners employed in salaried posts will have the same basic rights and protection as the Working Time Regulations provide.

FCS GPs can work between 2 and 5 sessions a week. In addition they can undertake other work such as out of hours and locums.

Job Plan

This is an appendix of the model contract and should form the framework on which to agree every aspect of your work whilst incorporating an agreed level of flexibility. It should outline the duties, workload and important non-clinical roles undertaken within paid work time, such as participation in practice meetings, clinical governance, primary health care team meetings, report writing, undertaking medicals, private fees, seeing ‘extras’, on call duty, covering sick leave, home visiting, following up results, repeat prescriptions, length of surgery, start time, finish time, appointment length and so on.

At first seem this might pedantic, however some seemingly minor tasks are rarely straight forward in practice and often the cause of major problems years or months down the line.

Continuing Professional Development

Full-time salaried GPs are entitled to one session per week annualised of protected professional development time. This is adjusted on a pro-rata basis for part-time workers. FCS GPs are entitled to a minimum of 8 protected sessions per year for CPD regardless of working hours.

If you are within 2 years of receiving your Joint Committee Certificate (or equivalent) you will qualify for the Higher Professional Education Scheme (HPE). This entitles you to 10 days of higher professional education, in addition to the 8 sessions of education in the FCS contract.

The use of the CPD time will depend on the educational needs of the doctor as specified by their appraisal and personal development plan (PDP).

It may include time spent on courses, private study, specific clinical refresher experience, audit, preparation for appraisal, practitioner group meetings and participation in practice educational meetings.

The Salary for Employed GPs

The DDRB's suggested range for 2004/2005 is £47,710 to £72,478 for full-time salaried GPs (an overall uplift of 2.6% on the 2003/04 figures). This is only a minimum range, PCO and practice employers have the flexibility to offer enhanced pay rates to aid recruitment, but cannot offer less than this range in assessing the appropriate salary.

The GPC has published guidance to assist salaried GPs in their salary negotiations. This is available at

<http://www.bma.org.uk/ap.nsf/Content/negotiatingSalary>

The GPC recommends that salaried GPs should ensure that they receive an annual pay uplift (e.g. based on the DDRB suggestion for salaried GPs) as well as an annual pay increment (e.g. to reflect seniority). The details of this and how this will be calculated should be included in negotiating a contract.

Professional Expenses

The PCO will pay a fixed annual amount of £1,050 towards the costs of your professional expenses (including medical indemnity) if you are on the FCS. This does not apply to other salaried posts but it would be worth trying to include this in a PCO salaried GP contract.

LMC Levy

Under the Model contract, the employer (i.e. the practice or the PCO) will pay the LMC voluntary levy for the salaried GP.

Golden Hello

This is payable by the PCO on undertaking a 'substantive' post by the PCO. You will need to check with your PCO to confirm entitlement.

Maternity Leave Benefits

Under the terms and conditions of the Model contract, salaried GPs are entitled to the provisions of the Whitley Council Handbook (Section 6). Details are available on the Department of Health's website at

<http://www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/06/24/69/04062469.PDF>.

The website also explains entitlements to paternity, adoption and related leave.

Sickness Leave Benefits

You should be entitled to receive sickness benefit in accordance with the NHS scale contained in paragraph 225 of the Hospital Conditions of Service.

Further details are contained in section 57 of the Whitley Council Handbook as previously referenced. (Writing a contract can be simplified by referring to the relevant documents as above.)

Continuity of Service with Respect to Various Benefits

(E.g. maternity and sickness benefits) - Under the Model contract, the level of entitlement to maternity, sickness and some other benefits is based on a GP's previous NHS employment and not just on the duration of their employment with their current employer.

Leave Entitlements

The table below has been taken from the GPC website and is an invaluable tool for calculating leave entitlement.

Number of sessions per week	Total number of sessions per annum	Number of sessions of annual leave per annum	Number of sessions of statutory and public holidays per annum	Remaining number of sessions per annum	CPD sessions per annum	Clinical sessions per annum
X	X x 52	X x 6	X/9 x 20	Y	Y/9 = Z	Y - Z
9	468	54	20	394	44	349
8	416	48	18	350	39	310
7	364	42	16	306	34	272
6	312	36	13	263	29	234
5	260	30	11	219	24	195
4	208	24	9	175	19	156
3	156	18	7	131	15	116
2	104	12	5	87	10	77
1	52	6	2	44	5 (8*)	36

Appraisal for Salaried GPs Employed by GMS Practices

It is compulsory for all medical practitioners performing services under the new GMS contract to participate in appraisal. The funding for appraisal for salaried GPs employed by GMS practices will be in the practices' global sum. PMS and PCT-employed salaried GPs must negotiate funding for time taken in preparation and undertaking appraisal with their employer. LMCs can be helpful in these negotiations.

All salaried GPs must be allowed sufficient protected time to prepare for appraisal. The appraisal interview should take place during a salaried GP's normal working hours. If this is not possible the salaried GP should be sufficiently reimbursed. The English Department of Health has agreed that no GP should be out of pocket as a result of participating in appraisal.

For Further Information

- GPC: info.gpc@bma.org.uk.
- BMA: www.bma.org.uk
- AskBMA telephone 0870 60 60 828 askbma@bma.org.uk
- GPC's Non-principals subcommittee:
[http://www.bma.org.uk/ap.nsf/content/ Hub+gpc+nan-principals](http://www.bma.org.uk/ap.nsf/content/Hub+gpc+nan-principals)
- National Association of Sessional GPs (NASGP):
www.nasgp.org.uk
- Deanery contact details (for FCS applications):
www.copmed.org.uk/deaneries/index.html
- BMA members can contact their local BMA office.
Mr Richard Griffiths, Industrial Relations Officer, Exeter Office
Tel: 0845 844 0106 - Fax: 01392 446246
- Devon LMC: 01392 834020 – www.devonlmc.org

Tips for Successful Negotiation

- Use the GPC's Model Salaried Contract as your basic framework.
- Construct a mutually acceptable, detailed job plan.
- Allow plenty of time prior to commencing post.
- Do not accept a contract without detailed scrutiny first.
- Join the BMA who will scrutinise contracts for you and support you in a dispute.
- Keep your composure and remember there are plenty of other jobs around.

This article was written by Dr Mark Selman, originally published in Registrar Update (October 2004) and they have generously given us permission to reproduce the item. Mark is a member of Torbay LMC, Deputy Chairman of NASGP and Deputy Chairman of the GPC Non-Principals Sub Committee, he can be contacted by email at maselman@yahoo.com

