

## CONSULTANTS' DISCRETIONARY POINTS GUIDANCE NOTES

2022-23

### NOTES ON COMPLETION OF THE DISCRETIONARY POINTS QUESTIONNAIRE

#### Summary of the Process

1. The purpose of the Discretionary Points (DP) system is to reward work carried out with NHS Tayside in accordance with the criteria as outlined in the Discretionary Points (DP) Form. The process is based on self-nomination and is reviewed annually by representatives of NHS Tayside and the Local Negotiating Committee. Please ensure you apply using the most up-to-date application form and following the most up-to-date policy and guidance. Discretionary Points are awarded on the basis of each applicant's position in a final overall ranking which takes account of the scores recorded by each scoring member of the Discretionary Points Committee (DPC).
2. The allocation of discretionary points will be based entirely on the information provided in the Discretionary Points forms submitted by you and your colleagues. If information is not included, it cannot be used in the assessment. It is important that information and achievements detailed in the application relates to the relevant years being assessed. Dates are essential information and you must provide the **relevant dates for each activity** to ensure they are included in your score; failure to give relevant dates may mean the entry is discounted and this will likely affect your overall ranking.
3. If this is your first application you may include all relevant activity since becoming a Consultant, with dates. If you have previously been awarded points the activity in your application should only be from the date of your last discretionary point, i.e., if you have had no Discretionary Point since the 2017-2018 application process, state this as can include information since April 2018 in your current application. Sustained additional workload (e.g., due to service development) across many years including the year of application is applicable to Section 3.
4. Do not include information and achievements undertaken beyond the date being assessed (31<sup>st</sup> March 2023). Any activity after 31 March 2023 will not be considered for scoring.
5. The form consists of 8 sections; sections 1 to 3 together are worth 70 points, section 4 to 8 are together worth 50 points. Please note the number of points awarded for each section, note that the first three sections have higher points totals available and proportionate space should be given to these sections. Applicants may wish to frame their applications around the areas of practice noted in the section subheadings. Repetition should be avoided across sections though different aspects of a piece of work may of course be appropriate in different sections.

7. The DP Form can be downloaded from NHS Tayside Staffnet Homepage at “*Working With Us>Medical Staffing>Discretionary Points>Links*”.
8. Only the agreed DP Form may be used, i.e., the form on Staffnet. Forms which differ from the agreed format will not be accepted. Please ensure you use the most up to date version available as the form may have changed from previous rounds.
9. The boxes in the DP Form may be expanded / contracted as you deem appropriate but the overall length of the form, sections 1-8 **must not exceed 4 (A4)** printed pages. It is important therefore that the text is concise or your application could be rejected. Questionnaires must be completed in **Arial** in **type size no less than 10**. Your application may be rejected if you do not comply with these stipulations.
10. All DP Forms must be countersigned by the appropriate Clinical Care Group Director/Clinical Lead/Associate Medical Director/Deputy Medical Director, who will validate the accuracy of the content of the entire DP Form including the front page of the application, especially in terms of remuneration. Clinical Directors must have their DP Form countersigned by an Associate Medical Director and the latter must have theirs signed by the Medical Director. It is your responsibility to ensure your Form is signed off by the appropriate medical manager and deliver the countersigned form within the timelines to the Workforce Directorate.

## **Key Points**

### **1. Probity**

The DP Form should be regarded in the same light as an application for a job. Applicants are reminded that it is their responsibility to ensure that all of the information that they submit is both accurate and truthful which includes the provision of dates the activity was undertaken and all remuneration received during the application period. The submission of any inaccurate or untrue information may lead to disciplinary procedures. All applications must be verified and countersigned by the relevant clinical line manager. Applicants must be aware that verification will take some time and that there is a deadline for submission of applications to clinical line managers. The responsibility of the clinical line manager is to confirm that the content of an application is accurate. An applicant and their manager may fail to agree that the content of an application is accurate and in this event the application may be submitted together with explanations from both parties regarding the disputed matter(s). If boxes are not included or left empty, no points will be awarded for that section.

### **2. Restrictions on scorers**

Scorers award a score for each section of the application. They may only award scores on the basis of the text within each section. A section which is left blank will receive no score. There can be no duplication or transfer of data for scoring purposes from one box to another. Scorers are asked to be vigilant for multiple use of the same task; it is recognised that some tasks contain elements for more than one box but this should be teased out. Scoring is undertaken independently by each scorer.

Scoring for each section should use the full range of scores; marking in the middle 50% of available points may seem fair but also fails to differentiate one applicant from another. It is considered reasonable to give maximum scores if there appears to be an outstanding level of contribution or to give the minimum or near minimum score if the contribution is not greater than could be expected to fulfil the consultant’s contract in that relevant area.

### 3. **Front sheet of application**

The front sheet of the application contains non-scoring information only but it is **essential** that it is completed fully and accurately to allow the scorers to interpret the scoring sections of the application appropriately. Applicants must not leave sections blank: if the response to a heading is “no response” or “not applicable” then this must be stated as such. The award of any discretionary point must be clearly stated including the year of each award. (If dates are not included it will be assumed the award was in the last round of eligible application. If the front sheet is not complete the application will be invalidated.)

### 4. **Provide context**

Applicants must be aware that scorers are unlikely to be familiar with all areas of practice relevant to each applicant’s DP application. It is highly recommended that applicants outline the priority areas for their own speciality and indicate the work which they have performed towards the achievement of the relevant goals in those priority areas.

### 5. **Dates of work under consideration**

Dates are very important, and you must include dates for each activity. If this is your first application you may include all relevant activity since becoming a consultant /honorary consultant with dates: if you have previously been awarded points the activity in your application must only be from the date of your last discretionary point.

Research information may include all work (including grant application, actual research and writing publications), and should include appropriate dates and authorship.

Dates of Management responsibilities must be clearly stated along with any PAs paid for management during the timeframe and clearly stated on the front sheet of the application.

### **Additional Points**

1. The DP Form will be anonymous, so please ensure that you do not write your name anywhere on the form itself. However, please ensure that you do complete **both** the Countersign Form and the Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form.
2. Completed forms will be photocopied. Please ensure clear originals are provided, and do not include any embedded links.
3. Only one document should be enclosed with the DP Questionnaire:-
  - Research and Innovation reference list.
4. Canvassing will disqualify the applicant.
5. The Senior Advisor to the Discretionary Points Committee (DPC) [non-scoring] will collate the scores. The median scores will then be used to assist the Panel in awarding the discretionary points.
6. Each applicant is allowed to view (but not take away from the site) three successful anonymised applications, at least one (if such exists) from their own discipline (or closest discipline). Arrangements will be made to do this virtually if required. Any applicant wishing to do so should email: [lorraine.smith7@nhs.scot](mailto:lorraine.smith7@nhs.scot)

7. Through applying for a discretionary point each applicant is agreeing to have their anonymised application, if successful, potentially viewed by other applicants, in this and subsequent years, as part of this process.

### **DP Questionnaire - Section 1 to 8**

1. The wordings used in the headings in the DP Questionnaire are those used in the circular.
2. Statements must be accurate and wherever possible should be quantified and verifiable. Vague platitudes will not count. To clarify the criteria in NHS Circular PCS(DD)1995/6 (Appendix I) as amended by the SEHD in its letter to Trusts dated 12 January 2000 (Appendix II), the following guidance is offered to complete the DP Form:

Professional Excellence: In this section, include those areas where you have brought about change with resulting improvement in patient care – e.g., adoption of new techniques, or change in the pattern of service provision. Activities in this section should relate to your main clinical work and will typically include activities within your immediate department. Accurate dates are important.

Significant contribution towards the achievement of local NHS service priorities: Here you might include contributions that have enabled NHS Tayside to achieve its annual goals, and may often be working between directorates or liaison with the community. Also include details of contributions to local NHS management and administration.

Undertaking recognised significant heavy workload or responsibilities in pursuit of local NHS service goals: Include here details of high workload or on-call commitment, perhaps comparing to College norms. Give dates where appropriate.

Contribution to professional and multi-disciplinary team working: In this section you might mention multi-disciplinary team meetings, liaison with other groups of health care workers within NHS Tayside or in the immediate locality or the setting up of cross specialty groupings.

Innovation and improvement in the service and research: Describe the main areas of research that you are, or have been, undertaking with dates of involvement. Please submit as full a list of publications / theses / articles as you see fit, using internationally recognised referencing systems, on a separate sheet. Please remember that the process is assessing your contribution whilst a Consultant within the United Kingdom publicly funded health care system, not the work that you did to achieve that status. If the work being described resulted in the receipt of external funding (i.e., more than expenses) that should be declared.

Clinical Audit: Give details of any relevant projects with which you have been involved. Where possible, show how the “loop” has been closed and practice improved. Include any work that you might have been doing for NHS Tayside or related organisations.

Teaching and training: In addition to the teaching and training of your Junior Staff, give details of education activities affecting wider groupings.

Wider contribution to the work of the NHS nationally: Include here details of Regional / National NHS and College Committees, with particular regard to NHS management and administration. Give the years in which you were involved in that activity, and details of the commitment involved such as the number of meetings per year, details of any office held. Contributions to other professional organisations should also be included.

3. In summary, please ensure the form is completed fully and accurately, giving as much information as you can, with dates and, where appropriate, some quantification of the time involved. If the contribution being described has been remunerated, or had sessional time allocated, then this should be clearly stated, either within the preliminary pages, or within the body of the DP Form. Ad hoc lecturing fees within accepted scales can be omitted.
- NB Applicants should be aware that any applicant formally appealing against the decision of the DPC will be given access to appropriate records, which will include the anonymised DP Forms of other applicants.**

**JUNE 2023**