Frequently asked Questions- Scottish Government Bonus Payment

PCS (COV) 2020/1 and PCS (COV)2021/1 Circulars set out NHS Scotland’s agreed qualifying criteria for the £500 one off payment announced by First Minister Nicola Sturgeon.

Each circular (including the FAQ section) can be accessed by following the link below:

PCS (COV) 2020/1
https://www.sehd.scot.nhs.uk/pcs/PCS2020(COV)01.pdf

PCS (COV) 2021/1

Update

The Opt Back In deadline of the 5th March 2021, detailed within PCS (COV)2021/1 has now been extended until the 5th July 2021 as per PCS(COV)2021/2 Circular

Unless otherwise stated the following FAQ is based on full time contracts 37.5 hours (Agenda for Change) or 40 hours (Medical).

Q. Am I eligible to receive the £500 bonus payment?

Payment will apply to:

- All directly employed NHS staff,
- Bank workers Locums paid through NHS Payrolls
- The payment is also payable to contractor staff covered by the Two Tier Agreement,
- Staff working on honorary contracts with the same qualifying criteria as directly employed staff
- The payment will also be made to staff on:
  - Covid Special Leave
  - Shielding,
  - Sick leave for other reasons
  - Maternity leave
As long as you have one month’s continuous service within NHS Scotland between the 17th March 2020 and 30th November 2020.

Payment will not apply to

- Agency Staff
- Board Chairs and Non-Execs
- People working under IR35 arrangements or Direct Engagement models
- Workers paid on a “fee” basis
- People on career breaks
- Employees dismissed for gross misconduct

Q. I do not want the Bonus can I refuse it?
No - Scottish Government have confirmed that the opt out only applies to staff on universal credit who may have an impact on their benefits

Q. Why did I not receive the £500 bonus payment in full?

How Payment is calculated

For both substantive staff and bank workers, the payment will be based on average hours over the qualifying period, or over the time in service during the qualifying period, capped at a maximum of £500.

Staff working full time during the whole qualifying period will therefore automatically receive the £500 and part time staff who worked excess hours or on the bank will also have this reflected, subject to the £500 cap

Examples of how payments are calculated are provided below:

I worked full-time: £500

I worked full time and also worked hours on the bank: £500

I worked 30 hours per week, and didn’t work any additional hours: £400.00

I worked 30 hours per week, and also worked additional hours: The total hours worked by you, including your additional hours, will be used to calculate your bonus – so you may receive more than £400.00, but no more than £500.00

I worked 20 hours per week, and didn’t work any additional hours: £266.67

I worked 20 hours per week, and also worked additional hours: The total hours worked by you, including your additional hours, will be used to calculate your bonus – so you may receive more than £266.67, but no more than £500.00
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Agenda for Change Guide – based on contracted hours only

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<thead>
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<th>Weekly Hours</th>
<th>Bonus</th>
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<tr>
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Q. The payment is capped at £500. How will the service prevent someone who has moved post during the qualifying period receiving two payments in excess of £500?

NHS Payroll department are setting up a process to match ammonised payroll records across Boards to ensure consistent application of the £500 cap, meaning no-one should receive a double payment in excess of £500.

Q. Why does someone who only worked for 5 weeks during the qualifying period (17 March 2020 to 30 November 2020) get the same as someone who worked for the whole of that period?

Providing someone fulfils the criteria of one month’s continuous service within the qualifying period, their payment is based on their average hours whilst working in NHS Scotland. Employers and Staff Side representative (at STAC) discussed in detail what the most practical and logistically feasible way of allocating the payment would be and this is the approach which was arrived at in partnership.

Q. Will this payment be included in my holiday pay calculation?

No, the additional £500 stands in isolation and will not be included in the calculation of any payment which is based on a reference period, such as holiday pay, sick pay or occupational maternity pay.

Q. I was full time during the qualifying period and worked overtime, will this be reflected in my payment?

No, overtime hours above full time are excluded for the purpose of the calculating the payment. Your payment will be capped at £500.
Q. I worked full time and part time during the qualifying period, how will this affect my payment?

A pro rata calculation will be done, based on the period you were full time and the period you were part time. Any excess hours worked when you were part time will also be taken into account.

Q. I was part time during the qualifying period and worked additional hours, will this be reflected in my payment?

Yes, your part time hours, including additional hours worked, will be averaged over the qualifying period. Your payment will therefore be based on your average hours worked per week, pro rata to the full time payment of £500.

Q. I am in receipt of a protection payment, will the Covid payment be offset against my protection earnings?

No, the payment will not be offset against protection earnings

Q. Will the payment be used in any future Organisational Change protection calculation of earnings?

No, the bonus payment will not be included as earnings for any Organisational Change protection.

Q Is the £500 bonus payment taxable?

Yes. Tax and national insurance are payable on the sum.

Q. What does “non-consolidated” mean?

Non-consolidated means it is not pensionable and does not create a new baseline for future pay calculations.

Q. Will I receive this payment if I have left or retired from NHS Scotland?

Everyone who meets the qualifying criteria is eligible for the payment. In this case at least one month’s continuous service in NHS Scotland between 17 March and 30 November is required. So former NHS Scotland staff who retired between 17 April and 30 November are eligible, providing they meet the qualifying criteria. NHS Boards will contact leavers/retirees who are due a payment to advise of this and to confirm bank details.

Q. Will I receive this payment if I left one NHS board and commenced employment in another NHS Board?

Providing you meet the qualifying criteria in either of your employments then you will receive the payment, but will be capped at £500 if appropriate. Any payment due from the leaver Board will be processed by your current employer, subject to the £500 capping.
Q. I left half way through the qualifying period. How will my payment be worked out?

For staff who left during the qualifying period, providing they had at least one month’s continuous service during the period 17 March 2020 and 30 November 2020, the payment will be worked out according to their average hours during the period of service.

Q. I started employment half way through the qualifying period. How will my payment be worked out?

For staff who join during the qualifying period, providing they have at least one month’s continuous service during the period 17 March and 30 November 2020, the Covid payment will be worked out according to their average hours during the period of service.

Q. I started with NHS Scotland on 15 November this year. Will I get the payment?

The qualifying criteria stipulates one month’s continuous service in NHS Scotland between 17 March and 30 November 2020 so anyone who joined the service after 31 October 2020 will not qualify.

Q. What about situations where someone has died in service or left and subsequently died?

Everyone who meets the qualifying criteria is eligible for the payment. In this case at least one month’s continuous service in NHS Scotland between 17 March and 30 November is required. In situations where staff died in service between 17 April and 30 November or left in that time having fulfilled the qualifying criteria and subsequently died, the payment would be payable to their estate.

Q. I am a student. Will I receive the payment?

Those students who had paid contracts in the NHS during the qualifying period, providing they meet the other qualifying criteria, will be eligible. Students on normal placements for their courses will not be eligible as they are not directly employed by the NHS during this time.

Q. I am not sure how the £500 Bonus payment will interact with the benefits I receive. What should I do?

Nobody should be financially worse off as a result of the payment. However, individuals in receipt of Universal Credit had the following options:

- Receive one payment of £500
- Or spread payment over three months
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- To opt out and opt back in after discussing any potential impact with your work coach

Please note employees can no longer opt out after the 5th February 2021. Any employee who submitted their opt form to payroll have until the 5th July 2021 to opt back in to receive the bonus payment.

Q. If I decide to opt back in, can I still have the payment spread over three months? Or as one payment

Yes. The form allowing staff to opt back in, also allows individuals to choose to either receive one payment of £500 or to spread it over three months

To opt back in, staff should informing their employer by 5 July 2021 and complete the form here forward this to their Payroll Department by e mail:

GGCEPayroll.Team@ggc.scot.nhs.uk

This can also be posted to: Payroll Services, Caledonia House, 140 Fifty Pitches Road, Cardonald, G51 4EB.

Why can’t NHSGGC as my employer do the following for me?

Q. Pay me this as an expense?

An expense claim is the reimbursement of costs incurred by an employee where they have personally paid for something whilst working on behalf of the Board, such as accommodation, fuel or food expenses.

The bonus payment is not a Business Expenditure and therefore does not meet that criteria.

Q. Pay me the £500 bonus in vouchers?

Scottish Government offered the payment as a one off £500 bonus payment.

Q. Extend the payment over a longer time frame

Employers and Staff Side representative (at STAC) discussed in detail what the most practical and logistically feasible way of allocating the payment would be and this is the approach which was arrived at in partnership.

Q. I receive a Council Tax Reduction. Will this be reduced if I receive a bonus payment?

No, this payment will be fully disregarded in the calculation of Council Tax Reduction. However, staff in receipt of Council Tax Reduction should inform their local authority that they have received the COVID payment in order to ensure that it does not affect their reduction
Q. Do I need to tell my local authority that I have received a COVID payment?

Yes, if you currently receive a Council Tax Reduction, and have been paid either a lump sum payment or have selected to receive this payment by monthly instalments you should contact your local authority to make them aware of this payment. This will make sure that this payment does not reduce your level of Council Tax Reduction. As your local authority may request verification of the payment you have received, please retain your payslip for this purpose.

Further information has been provided in your February 2021 payslip which will confirm that a Covid Payment is included in this pay period