1. **What are discretionary points?**

Discretionary points are awarded to those eligible individuals who can evidence that they meet the criteria at a level beyond that which is expected of the grade.

2. **What ‘conditions’ have to be satisfied before I am eligible to apply?**

- If you are a **nurse, midwife/health visitor** you need to be on the **top increment** of your F, G, H or I grade scale for one year.

- If you are a **PAM member of staff**, you need to be on the **top increment** of your Senior II, Senior I, Supt./Head/Chief IV or III grade scale for one year.

3. **For how long are these awards given?**

These awards would normally be given on a permanent basis. There are various reasons why awards may be time limited, for example, short-term project posts, research posts. The decision to award 1 or 2 discretionary points and whether they are time-limited or permanent is the responsibility of the panel.

4. **How far back does it apply, for example, if an innovation was initiated 5 to 10 years ago?**

Applicants will be expected to demonstrate that the evidence they are submitting applied at the time of their eligibility to apply for discretionary points.

5. **Does this mean performance appraisal every six months?**

No. An application for discretionary points is only considered by the discretionary points panel and will not be used as part of your normal PDPR (Performance Development & Review) process.

6. **Can staff who are currently on protected earnings apply for these awards?**

Staff on protected grades can only apply for discretionary points if they meet the eligibility criteria through their current contracted grade, not their protected grade. However, if discretionary points are awarded the benefit of the additional points would only commence once the protection had ceased.

7. **What is the role of a verifier?**

The role of the verifier is only to confirm that the information contained within the application is factually correct. They can make no judgement on the merit of the award. This individual would be the applicant’s line manager or supervisor.

8. **How might I improve my chances of being successful in applying for a point?**

By submitting a focussed application form which clearly and concisely presents the panel with appropriate evidence of how your time, effort and inspiration has improved the quality of patient care and/or working life. You will have displayed evidence of skills, responsibility and knowledge beyond that required routinely for your grade.

9. **Is an applicant required to submit additional evidence?**

The evidence an applicant submits should reflect their chosen criteria. It is the applicant’s decision to decide what appropriate additional evidence should be attached to their application to demonstrate this.
10. If you are already receiving additional remuneration for an additional responsibility, for example, training, can you apply to have this responsibility also recognised through the discretionary points exercise?

No. You cannot be remunerated twice for holding the same responsibility.

11. How will the results be given to applicants?

All applicants will receive a copy of the written rationale as recorded by the discretionary points panel.

12. Will individuals know who the panel members are?

Yes. A list of panellists will be available.

13. Will all applications be considered anonymously?

Yes.

14. Can a decision by the discretionary points panel be appealed?

No, there is no level of appeal. Any applicant however has the opportunity to submit a new application when the panel meets again to consider applications.

15. What happens to my Discretionary Points if I am promoted?

They may be taken into account in calculating the pay point on the promoted pay scale in accordance with circular PCS (NM) 98/2 and PCS (PAM) (PTA) 98/2.

16. What happens to my Discretionary Points if I choose to move to a post of the same grade either in my own Trust or in another trust?

Discretionary points are allocated on a personal, individual basis and relate to the duties being performed by a particular individual in a particular post. An individual transferring from one job to another has no automatic right to transfer discretionary points belonging to their old post. A new application would have to be made at a new post for a discretionary points award.

17. Do the extra increments the Pay Review Body added to some pay scales last year affect my eligibility?

No, periods of service on the maximum of the grade shall count towards qualifying service for discretionary points.

18. Can I apply for Discretionary Points if I am acting into a higher grade?

Yes, you can apply for Discretionary Points for your substantive grade but you will not be awarded a Discretionary Point for any additional duties and responsibilities associated with your acting grade.