

Kent Scheme Pay and Progression Rules for Kent Schools

If you require this document in an alternative format, please contact your Line Manager.

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Executive summary

- Every School should have a pay policy explaining how pay progression operates for teaching and support staff. HR Connect has produced a model Pay Policy for Schools which can be viewed by contacting hradvisory@hrconnect.org.uk
- The Local Authority expects that all KCC Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools will use the model document as the basis of their Pay Policy.
- Support staff employed on Kent Scheme Conditions of Service can progress through the grade based on their performance in the role.
- Kent schools are able to exercise local discretion regarding certain elements of the pay and progression process where the Governing body has made provision within their pay policy to do so e.g. timescales for pay award

Introduction

This document outlines KCC's approach to pay and progression and explores various scenarios that have an impact on the pay award and progression through a grade. These are relevant for all employees on Kent Scheme terms and conditions and appointed to a Kent Scheme grade.

The approach: 1st April 2025 and beyond

Pay and progression through KCC's pay grades is based on performance in a role over a defined number of years. Progression through the grade is by steps and the length of time between steps is clearly defined. There is no accelerated progression through the grade.

Ongoing conversations and feedback about performance will inform an annual performance assessment by the line manager. This assessment will take place on the anniversary date of commencing the role.

If someone has met their objectives during the assessment year, this will count towards the required number of years to move to the next fixed salary point (where this is applicable). If objectives haven't been met, it will take a year longer before they can progress (e.g. three years instead of two).

There will be an annual pay award to increase the annual salary on 1st April. For employees at the maximum salary for the grade, if performance objectives have not been met the pay award will be withheld for that year only.

Managers can recognise exceptional performance in a number of ways, including cash throughout the year, as and when it happens. More details are available in the School pay policy.

For those Schools on a September pay cycle, any references to 1st April in the below rules should be replaced with 1st September instead.

The principles underpinning the approach to annual performance assessments

Below are the key principles of the approach. More details on how these apply can be found in the Rules section below.

- The annual performance assessment should be carried out for all employees contracted to Kent Scheme terms and conditions and appointed on a Kent Scheme grade at the time that the assessment is due. This will be on the employee's anniversary date.
- The annual performance assessment should be informed by ongoing conversations throughout the year, with no formal requirement to have an end of year review. Managers need to ensure there is sufficient evidence from these conversations to inform the assessment.

- Managers should use the performance criteria (see guidance How to guide – making an annual performance assessment) to make the annual assessment and submit a rating on the anniversary date. This will be a yes/no rating only. There is no option to defer a performance assessment beyond the anniversary date.
- A 'No' performance assessment should be made if someone has not met all their performance objectives, although there may be circumstances that mean an employee is unable to meet their performance objectives for reasons beyond their control and this should be considered as part of the assessment.
- If a person is at the top of their grade a "no" assessment means they will have the annual pay award withheld for that year only. For those people on any other salary point in the grade, it will take a year longer before you can progress (e.g. three years instead of two).
- If someone is subject to the Performance and Capability process (not health-related) or has a live conduct warning as a result of the formal process, a 'No' performance rating should be given.
- The approach to managing performance and making a performance assessment needs to be applied fairly and equitably regardless of grade, hours worked, contract type and protected characteristics.

Making the annual performance assessment

The performance criteria (see guidance How to guide – making an annual performance assessment) should be used to inform the annual performance assessment. This covers what the employee does in their job, how they do their job, and how they develop their capacity and capability.

In making an assessment, managers should be able to reflect on the conversations that have taken place with the employee, the objectives that have been set over that period, and any evidence as to how the employee has performed against them.

How a School tracks the anniversary dates, or records and advises the employee of the performance assessment outcome is at the Schools discretion, as is addressing any complaints around this. There are no deferrals of performance assessments as managers should have sufficient evidence at the anniversary date to make the assessment

Annual pay award

It is expected that employees will receive a pay award each year.

Kent Scheme Pay Scales

KCC determines annually any increases to be applied to the salary values of each grade (entry, middle points and top) and any changes are effective from 1 April.

Schools which follow Kent Scheme are required to apply these increases and new grade bandings effective from 1 April. For Schools operating a September pay cycle, an appropriate Pay Policy needs to be in place and changes will need to be applied from 1st September.

An employee's position in the pay scale will be maintained, and progression to the next salary point in the grade will be based on an accumulation of 'Yes' performance assessments, as determined by the grade.

For employees who are at the top of the grade/the maximum salary for their grade, their pay may fall outside the fixed point in the pay scale if they receive a 'No' performance assessment rating. Providing their performance improves, their salary will be moved back up to the relevant salary value for the point in the grade the following year. For employees on lower pay grades, their salary will not fall below the statutory minimum wage.

Please note, the annual pay award cannot be confirmed to Kent Schools until pay negotiations with KCC's recognised Trade Unions and County Council discussions have concluded. This process is usually concluded mid to end of March. Communications will follow once the decision and communications have been confirmed.

The Rules

New starters that commence a contract with KCC ¹ on Kent Scheme Terms and Conditions and placed on a Kent Scheme Grade

All staff will have a performance assessment each year on their annual anniversary date, which will be the date they start in the new role. If someone commences a role on 01 July, this will be their anniversary date and their first assessment should be made on the following 01 July. They will receive an annual pay award on 01 April or 01 September, depending on the school pay cycle.

The only exception to this is if the appointment is at the top of the grade (for example KSA and KSB) and then the annual anniversary date will be 01 April (refer to scenario 'On reaching the top of the grade')

Within probation

For most grades, the probation period (even if extended beyond 6 months) will have expired before the annual anniversary review date so normal pay and progression rules apply.

For grades KSA and KSB the annual anniversary date will be 01 April (or 01 September), in line with the top of grade scenario (below). Depending on when someone starts in the role, it may mean the performance assessment is made during

¹ Accumulated years of 'Yes' performance assessments obtained in the School will not be transferrable to either KCC or another School. This rule applies regardless of the school status, or if a KCC employee moved to a Community or Voluntary Controlled School.

the probation period and therefore a rating should be made based on their performance to 1st April or 1st September, depending on the school pay cycle

Kiera starts in a KSA role on 1st March. Her anniversary date is 1st April, as is the case for all employees on KSA. She will be 1 month into her probation period at the time the performance assessment is due on 1st April. Her manager submits a 'yes' rating based on her performance to date. This will result in the pay award on 1st April.

On reaching the top of the grade

Once someone has progressed through the pay grade and reaches the top of the grade, they will remain at the maximum salary for the grade and will receive a pay award annually thereafter, providing they are performing in their role. Their anniversary date will be reset to 1st April or 1st September, depending on the pay cycle.

If someone is at the top of the grade but is not performing, they will not receive the annual pay award on 1 April or 1 September.

Employees with more than one assignment/contract

A performance assessment should be carried out for each role/contract an employee holds, on the respective anniversary dates (which could be different). It is possible for someone to receive a different performance assessment rating for each contract depending on their performance in each role, which will impact on progression through the grade and receiving the pay award for each contract.

Moving to a different job on the same grade

Employees moving to a different job on the same grade should remain on the same salary. Their anniversary date will remain unchanged and therefore the performance assessment rating should be submitted on their existing anniversary date. Performance in the previous role counts towards the number of years needed for progression. They will receive the pay award on 1st April or 1st September depending on the pay cycle.

Josh moves from a KSE role to a different job on the same grade in a different team on 1st September. The new manager submits a performance assessment rating for Josh on his existing anniversary date of 1st December. Prior to making the assessment the new manager and previous manager have a conversation about Josh's performance to inform the performance rating.

Moving to a different role on a higher or lower grade

If an employee secures a promotion to a higher graded role, this change of grade will reset the anniversary date to coincide with the date of the new role commencing and this is when the length of time in the grade for progression purposes starts. They will also receive the annual pay award on 01 April or 01 September depending on the pay cycle

Jasmine is promoted from KSC to KSD within the same team on 01 December. Her annual performance assessment in the higher graded role will be on 1 December the following year. Jasmine has been performing well in her new role and her manager submits a 'Yes' performance rating on her anniversary date. This will count as the first year of good performance for progression in the grade. She gets the annual pay award on 01 April or 01 September.

If the change of role results in a lower grade, it may be appropriate to appoint at the top of the lower grade to reflect their skills and experience demonstrated in their higher grade, rather than at the entry point as per pay policy. In this case, the top of grade rules may apply (see above).

In receipt of a loss of earnings compensation payment but secures a promotion

The annual anniversary review date will be reset at the point of commencing the new role.

The only exception to this is if the appointment is to the top of the grade when the annual anniversary review date will be set to 01 April (in line with top of grade scenario). The pay award will apply on 01 April or 01 September as usual.

Internal Secondments

Employees who are seconded to a higher grade should not be placed at a detriment in their substantive post. Where the secondment role is at a higher grade than the substantive post, the secondment role will have its own annual anniversary review date which will commence at the start of the secondment.

The substantive role anniversary review date will be unchanged. On returning to the substantive role the salary should reflect the appropriate progression as if the employee had been in post (if this results in being placed on the top of the grade, the anniversary date will reset to the 01 April). However, decisions around performance may be informed by the secondment.

Caroline commenced a KSE secondment for a period of 13 months on the 1 November. Her anniversary date for her KSD substantive post is 1st April. The secondment manager makes a performance assessment on the anniversary date of 1st November. On her return from secondment, the substantive manager reflects the performance whilst on secondment in their performance assessment on 1st April and pay progression is unaffected.

External Secondments

Employees who are on Kent Scheme terms and conditions but are externally seconded to another organisation have the same entitlement to have their performance assessed.

Assuming the employee continues to be paid via your payroll, if the external secondment role attracts a higher basic pay than the substantive post, the external secondment role will have its own annual anniversary review date which will commence at the start of the external secondment.

The substantive role anniversary review date will be unchanged. On returning to the substantive role the salary should reflect the appropriate progression as if the employee had been in post. However, decisions around performance may be informed by the secondment, and it is the responsibility of the substantive line manager to liaise with the employee and secondment manager to make the assessment and inform the pay award (if the employee remains on your payroll).

If the employee is paid by the external organisation, their pay will be frozen and manually adjusted on their return from the secondment and reflect the appropriate progression.

Acting Up/Additional responsibility

There will be no impact on the annual anniversary review date for someone who is acting up or takes on additional responsibilities, as this is a short term arrangement. (This assumes the Acting Up is recognised via an additional pay element attached to the substantive role.)

In the event that acting up arrangements are set up contrary to this then please refer to the nearest appropriate scenario that matches the arrangement.

Regrading due to a Job Evaluation process

Employees in a post that has been regraded through the Job Evaluation process and results in a higher grade will have their anniversary date reset to coincide with the change of grade. They will be put on the entry salary of the higher grade or receive a minimum of 2.5% increase to salary, in line with Kent Scheme Terms and Conditions. The annual pay award will be applied 01 April or 01 September, depending on the pay cycle.

Downgrading due to a change exercise/restructure

If someone moves to a lower graded role as part of a restructure/change exercise, the anniversary review date will reset to the effective date of the change.

In line with KCC's current practice, the expectation is that the employee would be appointed to the top of the grade and receive loss of earnings compensation. The resetting of the anniversary date will not result in a material detriment. Assuming the appointment is to the top of the grade the anniversary review date will be set to 01 April or 01 September (in line with the top of the grade rule).

Any future pay award will be dependent on receiving a 'yes' performance assessment rating on the anniversary.

Employees receiving loss of earnings compensation will still receive an annual pay award if they are performing but any increase in their salary will result in a reduction in the protected element of their salary. Therefore, any annual pay increases will not be reflected in actual pay increases until the protection has been removed. Once the protection is removed, annual pay awards will be applied as normal.

Downgrading as a result of a sanction

If someone is downgraded as a result of a sanction, the anniversary review date will reset to the effective date of the change. The expectation is that they would be appointed to the top of the grade. Assuming the salary is at the top of the grade the anniversary date will be set to 01 April or 01 September (in line with the top of the grade scenario).

Any future pay award will be dependent on receiving a 'yes' performance assessment rating on the next anniversary.

Permanent Relief

Anyone holding a permanent relief contract with zero hours will be assessed on the anniversary review date, regardless of how often they have worked, in line with staff with contracted hours and all other rules applied.

Casual staff (for Schools only)

The anniversary date will be reset each time a new period of work commences.

Fixed Term Contracts

Anyone holding a fixed term contract should be treated consistently to employees on a permanent contract.

A performance assessment may not be required if the fixed term contract is due to end before the anniversary review date. It is the Manager's responsibility to make sure that ongoing conversations about performance continue for the duration of the fixed term contract in order they can make an assessment should circumstances change and the fixed term contract is extended beyond the anniversary date.

Darren has a fixed term contract covering maternity leave which is due to end on 14 February. The manager is not expecting to make a performance assessment as the fixed term contract is due to end before his anniversary date on 1 April. However, Darren's fixed term contract was extended to 30 May to cover extended maternity leave. Therefore, the Manager submits a performance assessment rating when on 1 April.

Flexible Retirement

Employees who choose to flexibly retire and reduce their hours are entitled to be assessed in the normal way and their anniversary review date remains unchanged.

Those who flexibly retire to a lower graded post, will have a new contract and therefore the anniversary review date will be reset to coincide with the contract start date. If the appointment is to the top of the grade, the anniversary review date will be set to 01 April or 01 September (in line with the top of grade scenario).

Formal Performance and Capability Procedures

Anyone who is under the formal performance and capability procedure for poor performance (non-health related) at the time of the performance assessment on the anniversary date should receive a 'No' performance rating.

If someone has been in the formal performance and capability procedure during the assessment year, but this has concluded because they have met the required standard and they have been performing for at least 6 months, the manager should submit a 'Yes' performance rating at the anniversary review date if they have met all performance objectives.

Sarah was in a formal performance and capability procedure earlier in the year. The procedure closed in June as Sarah was working at the required standard. Sarah has shown sustained improvement in her performance since June. At her anniversary review date in January, the manager submits a 'Yes' performance assessment rating.

Formal Disciplinary Procedures

KCC would not expect someone who has received a conduct warning to receive a 'Yes' performance assessment rating for the year that warning was issued as, by receiving this warning, it is an indication that they have not met the required performance standards. This is because the performance criteria to assess someone against includes how the work is delivered, including the values, behaviours and conduct exhibited.

Long-Term Absence

A 'Yes' performance rating should be given to any employee who is, or has been, on extended absence during the assessment period unless there is evidence which suggests otherwise. HR advice should be sought if a manager wants to submit a 'No' performance rating for an employee who is/has been absent long-term.

Short-Term Absence

If an employee has had a number of short term, frequent absences during the assessment period, a rating still needs to be submitted. HR advice should be sought if a manager wants to submit a 'No' performance rating for an employee who has high, frequent absences.

Family Leave

KCC needs to ensure that people who have been absent for a period of time are not inappropriately disadvantaged in terms of pay progression and therefore will count

towards progression through the grade. A 'yes' performance assessment rating should be given to any employee who is on maternity leave/shared parental leave, or who has been on maternity leave/shared parental leave during the period being reviewed.

Emily is on maternity leave from 1 April to end November. She returns to work in December. Her performance assessment anniversary date is 01 February. At the anniversary review the manager considers Emily's performance in the role between 01 February and 1 April, and since she has returned in December. Emily's performance is consistently good. The manager submits a 'Yes' rating.

Apprenticeships

The process where traditional apprentices (i.e. those appointed on the KS Entry Apprentice grade) automatically progress to KSA after successfully completing their probationary period, is a separate pay increase mechanism which happens outside of the pay progression rules. Once they progress to KSA grade/contract, normal rules apply and they should be subject to an annual performance assessment on being appointed to the KSA grade.

For those employees who are undertaking Apprenticeship Training but remain on the standard Kent Scheme terms and conditions, the normal pay progression rules apply and will receive an annual pay award providing they are performing.

Pay falling outside of the grade

Employees who are at the top of the grade/maximum salary for the grade and receive a 'No' performance rating will not receive the annual pay award that year and this could result in them falling outside one of the fixed points in the grade. Providing the employee receives a 'Yes' assessment rating at their next performance review, their pay will be automatically adjusted to the salary value they should have been at, on 01 April (or 01 September, depending on pay cycle) when the pay award is applied to pay scales.

Timeout from work

An employee taking timeout from work (career break) will not be paid during their break and there will be no pay progression within their grade. The length of time away from work will not count towards the time needed to progress to the next point in the grade (not applicable for those already at the top of their grade). Therefore, it is added on to the total time needed to progress e.g. if 2 years/24 months performance are required to progress to the next point and the period of timeout was 8 months, it will take 32 months instead.

Sophie takes Timeout from work for 12 months from 01 October 2027 – 30th September 2028. Her anniversary review date was 01 April. She works for 6 months of her performance review period from 01 April 2027 – 30th September 2027 before she takes timeout, and then works a further 6 months on her return from 01 October 2028 to 301 March 2029. Therefore, her next performance assessment would be made on her anniversary date of 01 April 2029 once she has worked for 12 months.

Aisha takes Timeout from work for 6 months from 01 July 2027 to 31st December 2027. Her anniversary review date was 1st April. She works for 3 months of her performance review period from 1st April 2027 to 30 June 2027 before she takes timeout, and then needs to complete a further 9 months on her return to work from 1st January 2028 to 30th September 2028 before the assessment is due. Therefore, her next performance assessment would be made on her new anniversary date of 1st October thereafter.

Approved Unpaid Leave (exceeding 30 calendar days)

As outlined in Kent Scheme Terms and Conditions, any unpaid leave which exceeds 30 days suspends the full conditions of service. Therefore the anniversary count will be suspended for unpaid leave exceeding 30 calendar days and will not recommence until unpaid leave ceases (this does not apply if someone is at the top of the grade).

Anya takes a period of Unpaid Leave for 2 months from November – December. Her anniversary date for her performance assessment is 01 April. She works for 7 months before taking unpaid leave (April to October) and is required to work a further 5 months on her return (January to May) before her performance can be assessed. This will reset her anniversary review date to June.

Strike Day (s)

The anniversary review date is not impacted by the strike days, unless this exceeds 30 days.

In the unlikely event that an employee accumulates more than 30 strike days within the performance assessment period, on the 31st strike day and all other strike days taken thereafter within that assessment period, the annual anniversary date will be suspended for each strike day taken (this does not apply if someone is at the top of the grade).

Kevin engages in a total of 32 strike days within his performance assessment period. This will mean his annual anniversary review date will be delayed by 2 days.