

Reformed National Clinical Impact Awards open for applications

- Applications for the National Clinical Impact Awards open today following reforms to broaden access to the scheme and ensure it rewards excellence across the health service
- Health Minister Edward Argar calls for under-represented groups including women, younger consultants and those from ethnic minority backgrounds to apply to make awards more accessible, fair and inclusive

High-performing consultant level doctors, dentists and academic GPs in England and Wales can apply for the National Clinical Impact Awards from today (Thursday 27 April).

Applicants will benefit from a newly reformed awards scheme, which better reflects the modern NHS workforce whilst remaining relevant to the increasingly varied roles doctors undertake.

This year's renamed National Clinical Impact Awards has been reformed to make it more accessible, inclusive and fair – particularly for under-represented groups such as women and people from ethnic minority backgrounds – ensuring the scheme continues to reward national impact and incentivise excellence across the NHS.

Data from the previous Clinical Excellence Awards scheme shows that while 38% of consultants are women, they held just over 21% of awards as of January 2020.

This is despite having an equal chance of receiving an award when they apply – with a success rate of nearly 36% for both men and women. There are also disparities among ethnic minority groups – 39% of consultants are from an ethnic minority background but received 30% of the awards last year.

Minister of State for Health Edward Argar said:

“It's vital we celebrate the teachers, trainers, innovators and researchers of best practice across the NHS, who act as role models for their peers and colleagues, these awards do just that; and we have now made these awards for senior doctors more accessible.

“I want to thank staff for their extraordinary ongoing contributions to the NHS and encourage everyone eligible to apply, especially those from under-represented groups including women and younger consultants, so we can reward excellence across the health service wherever it is found.”

The reforms, announced in January, include:

- awards for those working less than full time will be paid at the full value instead of pro-rata. This will help address the gender pay gap in medicine as women are more likely to be working part-time and is one of

the recommendations from the Independent Review of the Gender Pay Gap in Medicine commissioned by the government. When women do apply for an award, their chances of achieving one is comparable to men – 35.9% for men against 35.31% for women in 2021;

- all award levels will be open to all applicants as the requirement to move up through the tiers of awards over subsequent years will be removed. This will help ensure outstanding contributions from younger consultants are equally recognised;
- awards will continue to be held for five years but reapplication after this will be assessed in open competition against new applicants to create a more level playing field and reduce bias towards older, established award holders. By removing the need to progress through award stages, outstanding national clinical impact will be recognised appropriately regardless of career stage;
- the scheme will move from four award levels to three and the first award level will become more attainable. There are more awards available at each level than in previous years, meaning that overall more people should – providing they reach the threshold – be able to achieve an award: roughly 330 at level 1, 200 at level 2 and 70 at level 3;
- employers will not need to contribute to recipients' pension funds to reflect modern remuneration arrangements and align with the Local Clinical Excellence Awards – this will also allow for more awards to become available; and
- refreshed assessment criteria will reflect modern consultant careers and recognise contributions from under-represented groups, including allowing more flexibility in the type of evidence provided in applications. This will improve accessibility and recognise under-represented specialities that women often undertake. Applicants would be expected to provide evidence that demonstrates their impact on current NHS priorities.

The National Clinical Excellence Awards scheme has existed since 1948 with the latest iteration running since 2004, before this year's reforms. Through the scheme, consultants and academic general practitioners within the NHS who perform above and beyond the standard expected of their role can gain financial awards.

Background

- Reforms to the National Clinical Impact Awards were announced in [January 2022](#)
- More information on this year's awards can be found [here](#)
- The National Clinical Impact Awards will run in both England and Wales, with governance oversight and system support from the Department of Health and Social Care, but is administered as a devolved scheme in Wales. Wales will, in the most part be adopting the same reforms England have proposed. However, Wales do not have access to a local awards scheme and will therefore retain the 4-level of awards rather than the 3-level the England scheme will introduce.