

A National Trade Union Side
guide to:
Pay and employee benefits in
the MRC
2016 edition



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Introduction

The MRC National Trade Union Side negotiates and consults on all areas covering pay, reward and employee benefits. In recent years it has proved difficult to maintain the benefits that MRC employees have enjoyed over the years due to the impact of government led changes on pension, redundancy schemes and imposed restrictions on pay. However the NTUS have been working with MRC management to mitigate the impact of these changes on employees.

This guide book is designed to give employees an awareness of all elements within the total reward package available at the MRC. This includes both contractual and non-contractual terms so employees should refer to policy documents for clarification. The TUS website www.mrc-tus.org.uk lists all MRC policies and staff bulletins or these can be found by visiting the links in the *More Information* section.

Direct Pay elements

Basic Pay

The current MRC pay structure was developed and agreed with the NTUS in 2012. This includes 7 bands which are split into three sections: A, B and S. The A section is for employees who enter the pay band in a competency development phase, the B section is for employees who can demonstrate their experience and are fully competent within the role, and the S band is for a limited number of employees who are fully competent and display a sustained excellence over a number of years. Some MRC employees are employed on *Senior Contract Pay* so their salaries sit above the pay structure and are governed by the MRC Remuneration Committee.

The MRC has an annual pay award date of 1st April. This means that employees are eligible for any agreed annual pay increase on this

date. However, due to government mechanisms it is often the case that the pay award is not agreed and implemented until later in the year and is backdated.

Each band consists of a series of pay points which can allow employees to move up the pay bands. However, as the MRC does not have *contractual* incremental pay, any incremental progression needs to be included within the annual pay award. Currently the government have restricted the pay award to 1% until 2019 which means that incremental progression is unlikely.

Some MRC employees will be eligible for additional payments through various allowances. The MRC have a wide range of allowances that depend on location, job role and contract type.

The MRC have agreed to pay all employees the National Living Wage. Employees based in London will be paid the London Living Wage taking into consideration any payment of a London Allowance.

It is recognised that in some instances employees may be required to work more than their normal contracted hours. Before doing so employees should speak to their line manager and agree how this time will be reimbursed. Normally time off in lieu (TOIL) or the local equivalent (for example Trust Time in head office) will be agreed. However, in some instances the Director may agree to pay overtime at the following rate once the full time working week has been exceeded:

- Bands 3 and 4
 - normal hourly rate
- Bands 5,6 and 7
 - Monday to Friday – hourly rate x1.5
 - Saturday, Sunday and Public Holidays – hourly rate x2

Promotions

Employees who begin employment with the MRC or who are promoted to a new band are normally expected to enter the pay band on the A section. Employees can advance from the A to the B section of the pay band after they have been able to demonstrate that they are fully competent within their role for a set number of years depending on which band they are in. A to B promotions should be fully attainable for all MRC employees and you should discuss your progress towards this promotion with your line manager. Employees who successfully gain an A to B promotion will either move to the bottom of the B section or increase pay by 5%, whichever is the greater.

S-zone promotions are for employees who have been in the B section of their pay band and can demonstrate a sustained excellence within the role for a minimum of three years.

Whilst promotion from the A to B section is an expectation for all employees, the promotion to the S-Zone is more limited and depends on the funds available within the unit. Employees should discuss their suitability with their line manager at their annual PDR meeting.

Employees who move to a higher band will receive a minimum increase of 7.5% (rounded up to the next highest pay point).

Employees in the science group are eligible to be considered for promotion under the Personal Promotion Policy. Employees in the administration, technical and science support categories can have their role evaluated to ensure it is correctly graded through the Job Evaluation and Grading Scheme (JEGS). Employees who successfully gain a role after applying for an available post are also eligible for the 7.5% increase.

Bonus/Recognition payments

Employees who display an excellent or outstanding contribution throughout the previous year of employment should be considered for an end of year special award. Each unit is allocated 0.8% of their budget to pay for these and this should equate to approximately 25% of the employees in the unit. Awards are set at a fixed rate which is agreed between the NTUS and HR. The current award rates are:

	Excellent	Outstanding
Band 7	-	£810
Band 6	-	£980
Band 5	£1025	£1275
Band 4	£1325	£1650
Band 3	£1750	£2200
Band 2	£2125	£3050
Band 1	£2875	£4100

Each unit will have a different mechanism for how the awards are allocated but employees are encouraged to discuss this with their line manager at their PDR in particular.

Employees who have not received an award after four years may submit a self nomination directly to their unit/institute Director for consideration.

In year special awards are used to provide timely recognition for exceptional effort in response to a demanding piece of work, a key achievement or significant contribution to unit/institute objectives. It may also be the case that a team of employees are all rewarded, for example, upon publication of a high profile paper. These awards can be given at any point throughout the year and there is no restriction on the budget or number of employees that can receive an award, however, an employee can only receive one in year award per year. There are no set rates for in year awards but the recommended

amount is between £200 and £500 and the maximum payment is £1000. The award should reflect the achievement regardless of the employees' band. Employees may receive both an in year and end of year special award.

Recognition awards are available to all MRC employees and are funded centrally. Employees are allocated a £50 e-voucher that they can then choose to redeem in various shops and restaurants. The purpose of the recognition award is to celebrate and reward employees who go above and beyond in their role. Employees can nominate their colleagues by submitting a short paragraph to their HR teams. It is possible for colleagues to be nominated for more than one recognition award.

Training contracts

When joining the MRC new post docs are offered the chance to join one of two schemes as detailed below. Due to the training nature of these roles neither category is eligible for A to B promotions or S-Zone awards but are eligible for all other elements of reward. Contracts for both types of role are typically offered for a fixed term of 36 months but can be extended up to a maximum of 47 months.

The first type of contract has:

- No allowances payable for this role. However, the post holder is entitled to attend all courses available for those on the Post-doctoral training scheme
- Redundancy payment at the end of their contract
 - 6 month notice period which runs concurrently with the 6 month resettlement period
 - 1 months salary for each year of reckonable service (pro-rata)

- Compensation payments are tax free for the first £30000

The second type of contract has:

- Resettlement allowance of £1000 – one off non-consolidated payment which is taxable but is non-pensionable
- Post-Doctoral Training Allowance which is also taxable but non-pensionable and is paid alongside the basic salary. This is subject to completing a Vitae Research Development Framework Planner and finding a mentor
 - £850 in year one
 - £1300 in year two
 - £1800 in year three onwards
- No redundancy payment will be made unless the post extends beyond the 47 month limit

The MRC Pension Scheme (MRCPS)

Employees are automatically enrolled in the MRC pension when they join the MRC. The MRCPS is a final salary scheme which means that the benefit paid on retirement is linked directly to your final salary. MRC employees pay 6.5% of their salary before tax towards their pension and the MRC pays a further 14% (which they will only pay into this scheme). Scheme members benefit from:

- Lump sum payment of 3 x pension on retirement
- Pension calculated on years of pensionable service x pensionable pay at an accrual rate of 1/80
- Tax free lump sum of 4 x salary for death in service
- Ill health pension if you have to retire early because of permanent ill health
- Pension for adult and child dependants on death

Your pension will increase each year in line with the CPI inflation rate.

If you have recently joined the MRC you may be eligible to transfer your existing public sector pension into the scheme – for more information on this contact JLT the pensions administrator.

There are complicated rules on how government tax limits can impact on pension savings. Employees who are concerned about this should speak to JLT for more information and can also seek advice from an independent financial advisor available through the Employee Assistance Programme.

Contractual Benefits

Annual Leave

The MRC provides annual leave which is greater than statutory entitlement. This includes 30 days annual leave and 10.5 public/privilege days (pro-rata for part time employees).

Redundancy

When MRC employees are made redundant they are entitled to choose between compulsory or voluntary compensation payments of which the first £30000 is tax free under current HMRC rules.

Sick Pay

MRC employees are eligible for six months sick pay at their full rate of salary followed by a further six months at half rate of pay. After a cumulative sickness absence period of 12 months within a four year period, their entitlement to sick pay will normally cease.

Maternity/Adoptive/Maternity Support/Shared Parental Leave/Parental Leave

Employees who take Maternity or Adoptive leave are eligible for the first 26 weeks at their full rate of pay with the following 13 weeks payable at the statutory rate.

MRC employees who take Maternity Support (Paternity) leave are eligible for two weeks of full pay.

Employees who opt in to shared parental leave can be eligible for up to 24 weeks at their full rate of pay and a further 13 weeks at the statutory rate depending on how and when the leave is split with the mother/principle carer of the child.

Parents/Carers are entitled to take unpaid leave in weekly blocks for each child under the age of 18. This is subject to a maximum of four weeks per year and 18 weeks for each child overall.

Season Ticket Loans

Employees are able to apply to the MRC for a season ticket loan (an advance of salary) to help them purchase a quarterly or longer season ticket for travelling to and from work. This could be used for bus, train, car parking and congestion charges. The money is then deducted from salaries on a monthly basis. Whilst the loan is interest free it is subject to tax and national insurance.

Non-Pay related Benefits

Health Benefits

Employees are enrolled in Benenden which immediately provides a range of treatments and services including private hospitals, physiotherapy, stress counselling and a GP advice line. Employees will receive a welcome pack with the full details.

The MRC pays for employees who use video display units to have an eye test every two years. Employees who require prescription spectacles for use with a VDU can also claim the cost of a basic pair from the MRC. Prescription safety goggles will be provided for employees working in laboratories.

All employees are offered free flu vaccinations and will also be provided vaccinations applicable to their role such as travelling to other countries.

Employees can self-refer to the MRC occupational health service which is provided locally.

The MRC also ran local 'Health MOTs' in 2014 and 2015 to give employees access to information on their health and advice on how they might improve it.

Employee Assistance Programme

The MRC provides all employees access to the EAP which provides support on lifestyle and work related issues. The EAP includes free counselling, free access to a financial advisor and written resources.

My Family Care

Employees are able to access 6 sessions of emergency care for dependants throughout the year once they have registered for the service. This includes emergency childcare, adult/eldercare and school holiday cover.

Cycle to Work scheme

The MRC provides a cycle to work scheme where employees can hire a bike and safety equipment through their salary each month. This amounts to tax and national insurance savings of up to 32%. Employees do not own the bike at the end of the hire agreement but can either choose a new bike and new hire agreement, retain the bike and pay an administrative fee or buy the bike based on the current market value.

Childcare Vouchers

Employees with children up to the age of 15 can access childcare vouchers at £55 per week tax and national insurance free.

Shopping Vouchers

The MRC participates in the cross council RCUK employee benefits site (www.rcukemployeebenefits.co.uk) which allows employees to buy discounted shopping vouchers, cinema tickets, access special sale offers and get cashback on online purchases.

More Information

All MRC HR policies and staff bulletins are listed on the NTUS website www.mrc-tus.org.uk

- Allowances
<http://mrc-tus.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/MRC-Allowances-policy-1.0-PDF.pdf>
- Annual Leave
<http://mrc-tus.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/MRC-Annual-Leave-Policy.pdf>
- Health and Well Being
<http://mrc-tus.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Health-and-Well-Being-Policy-09.04.15.pdf>
- Maternity, Adoptive, Maternity Support, Shared Parental Leave and Parental Leave
<http://mrc-tus.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/MRC-Maternity-Adoptive-Maternity-Support-Shared-Parental-Leave-and-Parental-leave-policy.pdf>
- Pay and Grading
<http://mrc-tus.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/MRC-policy-on-pay-and-grading-V2.0-pdf.pdf>
- PDR
<http://mrc-tus.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/MRC-PDR-Policy.pdf>
- Personal Promotion
<http://mrc-tus.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/MRC-Personal-Promotion-Policy.pdf>
- Post Doctoral Training Scheme/CDF
http://mrc-tus.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/sb_488_mrc_post_docs_vfinal.pdf

- Recognition Award
<http://mrc-tus.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Recognition-Award-Guidance.pdf>
- Redundancy Compensation Scheme
<http://mrc-tus.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/MRC-Redundancy-Compensation-Scheme.pdf>
- Sickness Absence Management
<http://mrc-tus.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/MRC-Sickness-Absence-Management-Policy-agreed-final.pdf>
- Season Ticket Loans
<http://mrc-tus.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/MRC-Season-Ticket-Loans-policy.pdf>
- Special Award Scheme
<http://mrc-tus.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/MRC-Special-Award-Scheme-policy.pdf>

Other benefits:

- Benenden
<http://mrc-tus.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Staff-Bulletin-517-Benenden.pdf>
<http://mrc-tus.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Staff-Bulletin-519-Benenden-further-update.pdf>
- RCUK Rewards site (access to shopping vouchers, cycle to work, childcare vouchers and employee assistance)
www.RCUKemployeebenefits.co.uk
- My Family Care (for child and elder care)
<https://www.myfamilycare.co.uk/mrc>

Notes



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