

Customer Experience Directorate – Trades

We recognise the highly competitive marketplace for recruiting and retaining Trades employees. For this reason, we have developed some flexibility in our salary package for Trades employees, giving them the opportunity to opt in or opt out of a choice of Max Salary or Flexible Benefit Trade Package.

We have listened to feedback and we know some individuals would prefer to receive higher basic pay than a benefits package that includes additional pension contributions and sick pay – this package is known as ‘max salary’. For others, the enhanced benefits we offer provide security and additional entitlements which support their personal circumstances.

To help you to make an informed choice about which package is right for you, we have put together a comprehensive set of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs). The FAQs below detail everything you need to know about the package options on offer and what happens after you’ve made your choice.

These contract types are offered to you as a voluntary change, or you can opt to remain on your current terms and conditions. The choice is yours.

Note: *A trade-based Skills Assessment will take place for those wanting to move to an Advanced Craft (A/C) Max Salary or Flex Benefit contract; this will establish what level of skills are held outside of your core trade. If gaps in skills are identified, you will be supported in developing those skills with a view that upon completion you will be able to then move to the Advanced Craft 8-8 contract and salary attached.*

Frequently Asked Questions:

What are the associated salaries relating to an Advanced Craft 40hr Max Salary contract and the Advanced Craft 36hr Flex Benefit contract?

This depends on your core trade on either of the associated contracts as follows:

Flex Benefit Contracts:

- A/C Gas Heating Engineers and Electricians will receive **£39,337.25pa**
- All other A/C Trade roles will receive **£37,151.84pa**

Max Salary Contracts:

- Max Salary Gas Heating Engineers and Electricians will receive **£45,819.68pa**
- All other Max Salary Trade roles will receive **£43,634.28pa**

What is the difference between a Max Salary Contract and a Flexible Benefit Contract?

Max Salary receives a higher salary with less benefits, with the alternative role receiving a higher level of organisational benefits. Both contract types require you to carry out an advanced craft role, they just provide different options for what is important to you right now.

What does a Max Salary contract mean?

Max salary refers to enjoying a higher salary whilst receiving fewer benefits.

- You will be required to work 40 hours per week on a rota basis
- You will receive SSP only during sickness absence – *it is advised that you consider a separate insurance to cover you for any periods of absence if receiving SSP only could have a detrimental impact on your household finances*

- You will have the statutory allocation equivalent to 20 days annual leave plus statutory bank holiday
- You will have access to the company pension scheme with a maximum employer contribution of 5%

What would I receive if I opted for the Flexible Benefit contract?

- A 36-hour working week – on a rota basis
- Depending on length of service (continuous service years apply) you will receive a basic enhanced holiday allowance of 25 days, increasing with service to a total of 31 days at 6 years' service.
- 3 discretionary days
- Organisational sick pay; which depending on length of service increases so that after 3 years' service you will receive 3 months full pay, 3 months half pay.
- Income Protection Scheme providing half pay for up to 18 months after the full pay period has been exhausted.
- Access to Healthcare/Cashplan scheme
- Access to Scottish Widows Pension Scheme with choice of employee/employer contribution up to 14%

What are the work patterns for Advanced Craft Trades?

Max Salary and Flexible Benefit contracts have working hours between Monday to Sunday (8.00am to 8.00pm) and are required to be on the OOH/Standby scheme on a rota basis

- Flexible Benefit contracts will be required to work a 36-hour per week work pattern.
- Max Salary contracts will work a 40-hour per week work pattern.

Note: *Changing your contract type will affect your working pattern; we recommend you consider the effect this will have on your current arrangements, prior to requesting the change to contract.*

What does it mean to work an 8.00am to 8.00pm contract?

The work patterns are variable and will be discussed and agreed with your manager. We encourage a flexible approach to ensure our customers' needs are met; following consultation with our customers, providing a weekend and after work service was favourable to them.

Examples of what a 40-hour work pattern might be:

*Thursday to Saturday 8.00am to 8.00pm as an 11.5 hr day = 34.5 hrs
Monday 12.30pm to 6.00pm 5.5 hrs.*

Or

*Monday to Wednesday 8.00am to 5.00pm (8.5 hrs per day)
Thursday 10.00am to 6.00pm 7.5 hrs.
Sunday 8.00am to 3.30pm 7 hrs.*

Example of a 36-hour work pattern, similar to that of the 40-hour above is:

*Thursday to Saturday 8.00am to 8.00pm as an 11.5-hour day = 34.5 hrs
1 in four Mondays would then be covered as a 6-hour shift
ie 8.00am to 2.00pm*

We may ask you to flex your work patterns occasionally, with no less than 14 days' notice given, during periods of high absence for example, to ensure a consistent service can be provided to our customers.

Do I have to be part of the Standby Out of Hours Rota?

Yes. All contracts will contain the requirement to work the Standby rota. However:

- If you work up to 8.00pm you will not be actively partaking in the rota.
- If you work up to 6.00pm, you will actively partake in the rota.

As an Advanced Craft Trade, this is usually one week, twice annually. Gas Engineers, being lower in numbers, would partake approximately one week in every eleven.

What do we mean by Advanced Craft?

Our Advanced Craft trades are multi-disciplined operatives who are able to work beyond their core trade to help deliver a high-quality, efficient repairs service to our customers.

In addition to their primary trade specialism, Advanced Craft colleagues are trained and competent to carry out a range of additional repairs from our Advanced Craft Skills Matrix (as detailed at the end of this FAQ document). This means that when attending a customer's home, they may be asked to complete repairs that sit outside of their base trade, such as minor plumbing, carpentry, plastering, tiling or decorating tasks.

For example, you may be an Advanced Craft Painter & Decorator, who due to your proximity to a job would attend to complete some minor plaster patching, refix a bath panel, replace a WC seat or reseal around sanitary fittings. There may not even be a requirement for any decorating to take place, but you would if you needed to, to ensure the full repair can be completed in one visit.

This multi-disciplined approach reduces the need for follow-on appointments, minimises disruption for our customers and allows us to deliver a faster, more efficient repairs service while maintaining a high standard of workmanship.

How do I apply to move to an Advanced Craft contract?

If you wish to change your contractual terms, complete the attached form indicating your preference for the Max Salary or Flexible Benefit package and email this to people@hpg.org.uk. Once received you will be contacted to undertake a skills assessment, (as per the skills matrix at the end of this FAQ document) which will take place within 4 – 6 weeks of your request being received. Once individuals' skills have been reviewed, you will then meet with an Operational Manager who will discuss the role and expectations in more detail and discuss and agree your new working pattern. If there are some skills gaps identified you will be fully supported in enhancing your skills, using a skills support plan, with the expectation you will be able to undertake all additional requirements of the Advanced Craft role within six months of your contract change.

Note: If you do not wish to move to the 8-8 Monday to Sunday T&C's please use the form, indicating a wish to remain on your current contractual terms.

If I move to a new contract type, what is the impact on my current pension?

HPG are associated with the Scottish Widows pension scheme with the following contribution rates:

Employee Contribution	Employer Contribution
3%	5%
4%	5%
5%	10%
6%	12%
7%	14%

What if I want to change contract type in the future?

You have the option of changing contracts once in every three years. Therefore, once you have selected the Max Salary or Flex Benefit contract, you will remain on those T&C's for up to three years. After this time, if you wish to consider changing your contract type and associated terms and conditions, you can apply to do so but will be fixed into this new contract type for a further three years. This supports the service and ensures any changing costs are reflected in budget and business planning.

We will carefully monitor this scheme and reserve the right to adjust our opt in/out policy should business circumstances change; three months notification will be given to staff who are eligible.

How will my annual leave be affected?

This will increase. Basic entitlement starts at 25 days and will increase annually up to a maximum of 31 days per annum when reaching 6 years' service (continuous service will be reflected).

***Note:** If you work a shift pattern and on bank holidays, your leave will be provided in hours with a bank holiday allocation included. You will be required to book all bank holidays you do not work out of your total allowance. If you work on a bank holiday, these hours will remain on your entitlement to be taken at another time.*

How will this change affect my sickness entitlements?

Your sickness entitlements are based on length of service, and will be unaffected by your contract change unless you have opted for a Max Salary contract; in this case you would receive Statutory Sick Pay only. You would also be opting out of the GIP cover associated to the Flex Benefit package.

Sickness is based on a rolling 12-month period. Should you have already had a period of sickness prior to your contract change, this will be accrued and offset any future absences.

i.e. if you have had absences on a rolling 12-month period whilst on your current contract (receiving organisational sick pay), these absences will still count towards your overall absence record if you were to change to Max Salary Contract. This means, if you have had a period of 2 months absence from work (paid) your remaining SSP allowance will be calculated and paid for the duration of your absence until such time that would be exhausted.

Additional Information

Enhanced Payments

If your normal working day, within your regular work pattern, falls on a Sunday or a Bank Holiday, you can claim an additional flat rate payment for the hours worked. *(For additional hours worked on these days, in excess of your contracted weekly hours, normal overtime payments apply).*

Christmas Shutdown

Because the business is open during the Christmas period, a minimum level of cover is required. Those identified to work during this period will be given appropriate notice.

Max Salary and Flex Benefit contracted Trades may work through the Christmas shutdown period if required. Furthermore, you may be requested to work a minimum of four bank holidays throughout the year if required.

If you are not required to work the Christmas period shutdown whilst on a Max Salary contract, you must book these days off from your annual leave allowance.

If you are on an Flex Benefit contract, you will receive discretionary days that will need to be allocated to the days you are not required to work over this Christmas period.

Note: Due to Christmas Rota planning requirements, all leave requested for the Christmas Period is considered as a collective and must be submitted to your line manager by the 27th July. All requests will then be considered ensuring Christmas resourcing and service delivery is maintained with rota's issued by the end of September.

Are there any circumstances that would prevent me from changing contract type?

Other than during your probation period, if you are undergoing a formal process relating to a Group policy and procedure you cannot choose to opt in/out of your current contract until such time it is deemed appropriate to do so.

Do I have to move into an Advanced Craft Trade role?

No, this is a voluntary request from you. If you do not wish to move to the Advanced Craft trade role, you are able to remain on your current contract, salary and associated terms and conditions.

The below table outlines the difference between Flex Benefit T&Cs and Max salary T&Cs, enabling you to compare terms more easily before deciding to opt-in or out:

This table details the A/C Trade T&Cs as will apply when signing the new HPG contractual terms:

T&C's	A/C Flexible Benefit	A/C Max Salary
Salary	£39,337.25 - Gas and Electric £37,151.84 - All other Core Trade	£45,819.68 – Gas and Electric £43,634.28 – All other Core Trade
Hours	36 hours flexible between 8am – 8pm Monday to Sunday	40 hours flexible between 8am – 8pm Monday to Sunday
A/L	25 days incrementing yearly to 31 days maximum plus B/H's	Statutory 20 days plus B/H's
Discretionary Days	3 days	None
Standby/OOH	HPG allowance?	HPG Allowance?
Bank Holiday working	May work bank holidays or discretionary days if required	Expected to cover Christmas shutdown and at least 4 bank holidays per year
Overtime Payments	Double time for work on a Sunday, bank holiday or extra statutory day; and time and a half for work on any other day, and exceeding 30 minutes on any one day	Double time for work on a Sunday, bank holiday or extra statutory day; and time and a half for work on any other day, and exceeding 30 minutes on any one day

Sick Pay	(After Probation) up to 3 months full, 3 months half based on length of service	Statutory SSP only
Pension	Up to 14% employer contribution	Maximum employer contribution of 5%

Skills Matrix

Advanced Craft Skills

Trades Operatives are expected to demonstrate a defined level of multi-skilled capability in addition to their primary qualification.

The skills outlined below represent the minimum expected standard for an Advanced Craft Trade. These tasks sit outside of the operative's primary trade skill set, but are required to support same day completion, first time fixes and effective making good, following repairs.

This list is not exhaustive and Trades may be required to undertake other reasonable associated tasks, subject to training, competence, and health and safety requirements.

Skill Area	Minimum Expected Standard
Plumbing	Isolate water supply Replace taps, traps, WC seats Trace and Identify leaks Unblock sink/ toilet Carry out silicone sealing and mastic works
Carpentry	Complete basic timber repairs Lift and refit floorboards Fit and refit bath panels Cut and refit access panels (walls, ceiling, boxing) Remove and refit boxing-in around pipework Refix loose panels, hatches or covers Doors – Tighten hinges, adjust door keeps and latches, ease sticking doors, replace handles and latched (like for like) Fix loose trim/ skirting boards Replace damaged threshold strips Refix loose timber fences/ gates
Plastering	Make good surfaces following repairs Patch plaster small areas
Tiling	Remove/ replace individual tiles Tile small areas (such as a splashback)
Painting/ Decorating	Make good minor surface damage Prepare and decorate small areas Strip wallpaper where required
Damp & Mould	Identify visible symptoms (Complete DMC survey) Remove surface mould

	Apply approved mould treatments
Other	Carry out minor fascia/ soffit repairs Gutter clearance Install loft insulation

Form here for completion, so printed off at same time as FAQ's to hand out

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