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**Vacancy request and authorisation process**

***Managers guide***

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| 0.1 | 18th December 2023 | Draft for consideration |
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This guide will support hiring managers through the current vacancy request and authorisation process.

All new and replacement posts within NHSGGC must be reviewed and considered by the appropriate level of delegated authority. Managers should **not** assume that a vacancy will be approved because there is budgetary provision. Employing a new member of staff is a very expensive decision which requires scrutiny.

The vacancy authorisation process outlined within this guide applies to all job families, and term and conditions, including:

* Agenda for Change
* Medical and Dental
* Executive and Senior Management

A rigorous system of vacancy authorisation control across NHSGGC is necessary to ensure operational and financial implications are reviewed prior to recruitment. Therefore, all posts will be considered for approval via varying levels of scrutiny.

When completing a Vacancy Request Form (VRF), managers must include a detailed business case, to demonstrate full consideration of the options available upon a post becoming vacant.

Managers must consider the ongoing requirement to deliver the work of the previous postholder and whether this work can be realigned within the existing staffing establishment or the wider team. Managers should consider the following:

* Is there a clear and exceptional reason for filling the post, and what makes it critical that the post is filled now? (i.e. could the recruitment process be delayed, contributing to service / department financial efficiency programmes?)
* What direct / indirect impact does this post have on service delivery and will service delivery stop if the post wasn’t filled?
* Has the post been vacant for three months (or more) to allow time to assess the impact on service delivery? If so, what were the outcomes?
* Is there a health and safety risk if the post remains vacant? (e.g. is NHSGGC at risk of statutory failure if the post remains vacant?)
* How does the post fit in with the current workforce planning?
* Can the key tasks of the vacancy be combined with other existing vacancy responsibilities to create a single new post which will deliver the essential tasks?

# Vacancy Request Form

In January 2024, a new Vacancy Request Form (VRF) was implemented to support managers with the revised vacancy authorisation controls. This form can be downloaded from [HR Connect](https://www.nhsggc.scot/staff-recruitment/hrconnect/the-recruitment-service/recruitment-process-guidance-for-hiring-managers/)

Only the current version of VRF will be accepted. Any previous versions of the form submitted to the NHSGGC Recruitment Service may be returned to the hiring manager for resubmission.

# Vacancy controls

From January 2024, new controls will be applied to the following vacancy scenarios:

1. A 13-week **recruitment pause** will be applied to all grades of approved vacancies within the following job families:

* Administrative services
* Executive and senior manager
* Personal and social care (i.e. health promotion; hospital chaplaincy; social work)

Once in receipt of an approved VRF, the NHSGGC Recruitment Service will commence recruitment advertising 13 weeks following receipt of the authorised VRF. Service performance, staff workload and wellbeing will be closely monitored during this phase.

1. **Fixed term posts** to cover maternity and secondments will no longer be automatically approved.
2. **Newly-created posts** will not be approved unless supported with evidence of recurring or non-recurring funding provided to NHSGGC. Finance information must be included on the VRF to confirm funding source and any impact to staff pay budgets.
3. **Externally-funded posts** will require evidence of recurring or non-recurring funding. Consideration must also be given to associated costs, such as administrative support and technology requirements. These associated costs must be sourced from the external bid, and not funded through NHSGGC.
4. **Replacement posts** must exist in the current staffing establishment. VRFs will not be authorised if the post is not in the current staffing establishment.

# Vacancy authorisation

It is the hiring manager’s responsibility to secure authorisation to fill a vacant post in line with vacancy control processes.

**All** posts must be approved by authorised officers from each of the three authorisation levels:

**Level 1**: Budget holder (e.g. line manager / head of service)

**Level 2**: Head of Finance (Acute and Corporate Services); or

Chief Financial Officer (Health and Social Care Partnerships)

**Level 3**: Sector / directorate vacancy management group; or

Director (Acute Services or Corporate Services); or

Chief Operating Officer (Acute Services); or

Chief Officer (Health and Social Care Partnerships)

**Additional authorisation**

In addition to the above authorisation, some posts will be subject to further scrutiny:

**New** posts require oversight from:

* Depute Director of Human Resources; and
* Chief Operating Officer

**Nursing, Midwifery & Allied Health Professionals** (NMAHP) roles at Agenda for Change Band 8A and above will require authorisation from:

* Executive Director of Nursing

**Executive and senior manager** rolesat Agenda for Change Band 8A and above, or Executive and Senior Management Grade A and above, will require authorisation from:

* Chief Executive

# Completing the VRF

The VRF is split into 3 sections.

* Section 1: vacancy details
* Section 2: recruitment business case
* Section 3: vacancy authorisation approvals

The hiring manager must ensure part 1 and part 2 of the VRF are completed fully before submitting for approval. Any omissions from the VRF will result in the **authorisation process being delayed.**

If the hiring manager is not the budget holder, they must ensure the budget holder authorises the VRF as part of the authorisation process.

Once the VRF has been fully authorised, the hiring manager should forward the following documents to the NHSGGC Recruitment Service:

* Vacancy Request Form (authorised)
* Job description
* Person specification
* Recruitment advertisement

The job description and person specification must be up to date, in line with the NHSGGC [Job Evaluation guidance](https://www.nhsggc.scot/staff-recruitment/hrconnect/job-evaluation/).

The NHSGGC Recruitment Service will update the hiring manager if there are further recruitment restrictions that are applied to the post.

# Further information

**NHSGGC Recruitment Service**

[recruitment.vacancies@ggc.scot.nhs.uk](mailto:recruitment.vacancies@ggc.scot.nhs.uk)