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## **AGENDA**

**1. Apologies**

**2. Minutes**

To approve, and the Chair to sign as correct records, the Minutes of the meeting of the Joint Negotiating Committee (Employers') held on 6 July 2020 (Item 2) (**Pages 4 to 5**).

**3. Disclosure of Interests**

Councillors to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests, or personal interests (including other pecuniary interests), they may have in the business to be transacted, and officers to disclose any interests they may have in any contract to be considered.

**4. Matters Arising from Joint Negotiating Committee: 5 October 2020**

To consider and ratify any decisions arising from the Joint Negotiating Committee held on 5 October 2020:

(a) Social Worker Employee Referral Scheme - Children's Services

**(Pages 6 to 9)**

(b) Social Worker Registration Fee and 'Golden Hello' Payment Review

**(Pages 10 to 14)**

**5. Date of Next Meeting**

To note that the next meeting of the Joint Negotiating Committee (Employers') is scheduled for Monday 7 December 2020 on the conclusion of the Joint Negotiating Committee.



Minutes of meeting of the JOINT NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE (EMPLOYERS') held on MONDAY 6 JULY 2020 at 11.17 am

**Present:** Councillor Middleton (Chair)  
Councillors Alexander, Bowyer, Carr (Vice-Chair), Darlington and Miles

**Officers:** M Cox (HR Director [LGSS]), S Richardson (Director - Finance and Resources), M Zaman (Head of HR and Learning and Development), C Stanton (Pay and Reward Manager), O Bannister (HR Business Partner) and J Crighton (Committee Manager)

**Apology:** Councillor Hosking (Vice-Chair)

**JNC(E)01 MINUTES**

RESOLVED -

That the Minutes of the meetings of the Joint Negotiating Committee (Employers') held on 24 February 2020 and the special meeting held on 20 May 2020, be approved and signed by the Chair as correct records.

**JNC(E)02 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None disclosed.

**JNC(E)03 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE JOINT NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE HELD ON 6 JULY 2020 - DISPUTE RESOLUTION**

The Committee considered the outcome from the JNC meeting, held prior to this meeting, which had considered the Staff Side's request that if the Council were to depart from the National Joint Council guidance it first entered into negotiations with the Trades Unions and that a Dispute Resolution process was agreed in case agreement could not be reached by negotiation.

RESOLVED -

That further discussions be held between representatives of the Employers' Side, on a cross-party basis, Trade Union representatives and officers and a report be brought to a future meeting of the Committee.

**JNC(E)04**

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

It was noted that the next meeting of the Joint Negotiating Committee (Employers') would be held on Monday 5 October 2020. However, if an agreement was reached beforehand, a meeting of the Committee would be scheduled prior to October 2020.

THE CHAIR CLOSED THE MEETING AT 11.27 AM

DRAFT

# Joint Negotiating Committee (Employers')



## SOCIAL WORKER EMPLOYEE REFERRAL SCHEME - CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Contact Officer: Ayesha Shokar (HR Business Partner) - Tel: 01908 253397

### 1. Purpose

- 1.1 To obtain agreement to introduce a 'Employee Referral Policy' for hard to recruit posts, reimbursing both the referrer and all permanently employed qualified Social Workers in Children's Services that are referred.
- 1.2 Several organisations including many Local Authorities operate a 'Employee Referral or Refer a Friend' scheme which is a great incentive for existing employees to refer known experts to our organisation, thus reducing the cost of recruitment fees and supporting the organisation to recruit and retain talent.

### 2. Recommendations

- 2.1 The aim is for the scheme to become active from 1 October 2020 in line with the Autumn Social Worker recruitment campaign allowing current employees across the organisation to refer a friend and receive up to **£1,000** in payment each. Depending on the success of the application, payment will be issued in two parts to both parties:
  - (a) £500 following a successful appointment; and
  - (b) £500 upon completion of 1 year in the post.
- 2.2 This is non-contractual and does not form part of employees Terms and Conditions of employment.
- 2.3 It is proposed that this is introduced initially on a trial basis with a review being undertaken in March 2021 to measure the impact of this proposal on the recruitment and retention of social care staff in Children's Services.
  - (a) Only external applicants applying for a Social Worker position in Children's Services will be considered to qualify under the scheme. This scheme will not apply to referrals made for existing employees of Milton Keynes Council as an internal move to Children's Services.

### 3. Issues and Choices

- 3.1 The social care workforce supports the most vulnerable in our society to enable them to live healthy, independent and safe lives within their community. This is both a highly rewarding and very challenging role. Milton Keynes has attracted many talented and committed people to work in social care, but we continue to face a shortage of permanent social care staff.
- 3.2 A national shortage of Social Workers in Children's Services in particular has increased the competition to recruit from a limited and reducing pool of staff. We recognise that the children's workforce is critical to achieving our ambitious plans for improving outcomes for children and their families.
- 3.3 The Council's ability to continuously improve is intrinsically inked to:
- (a) the quality and capacity of the people who lead, manage, deliver and support our services; and
  - (b) how effectively people work together across organisational and professional boundaries to combine their expertise.
- 3.4 Milton Keynes has a lot to offer, along with being a great place to practice and develop as a professional social worker. The service is due an Ofsted inspection with a trajectory to 'Good' and this is an important feature which shows practitioners that Milton Keynes is a stable and safe place to work. The workload is balanced and appropriate and the training opportunities are substantial.
- 3.5 The level of demand across social care services for all client groups continues to rise. To respond, we need to build, develop and maintain an engaged workforce with sufficient capacity and the right skills, knowledge and capabilities to meet a range of needs, which are often complex, in a flexible way and reduce reliance on agency and relief staff to help meet that demand.
- 3.6 Permanent, committed staff better enables effective team working, which requires team members to recognise and build on each other's strengths which enhances service delivery. Constant changes can unsettle a team and the regular reallocation of cases and/or having to induct or update new workers on cases reduces the quality of support. Regular changes in teams also impact on a manager's ability to lead and improve practice within their teams as they will have to spend a lot of their time getting to know new workers strengths and capabilities to ensure they are confident to support children, families, adults, older people and carers.
- 3.7 The recruitment and retention of Social Workers is extremely challenging for many Local Authorities. This benefit will be added to the existing financial and non-financial range of benefits available to Social Workers to enhance the offer and promote the Council as an employer of choice.
- 3.8 At present the children's social worker salary range is £29k-£42k but no 'golden hello' payment is offered. There is a market supplement policy in place for certain levels of social workers, in hard to recruit services within Children's Services. The market

supplement is not extended to all social workers across Children's Services. The market supplement is an annual payment of 4k, paid in two instalments per year and is strictly dependent on meeting qualifying conditions based on absence, performance etc.

- 3.9 Qualified Social Workers are required to register with the HCPC in order to practice. The HCPC is the statutory regulator for several health and care professions. The aim of the HCPC is to protect patient safety by keeping a register of health and care professionals who meet HCPC standards. The registration fee is paid by the Social Worker at the point of registration and is for the two-year registration cycle, currently costing £180 (£90 per year). Reimbursement of the HCPC registration fee is currently met by Milton Keynes Council for all qualified social workers in children's and Adults services.
- 3.10 Payments for the Employee referral Scheme will be made directly through payroll, evidence of the referral and approval from the line manager and HRBP will be required before payment requests are made to payroll. The Gov.uk website confirms reimbursement is subject to tax and NI deductions for both parties.
- 3.11 All applicable posts within Children's Social Care will be marked on the job advert on the Council jobs page. Applicants submit their application and confirm they saw the vacancy by a referral. Once the referred employee has worked 1 full month both parties will receive an initial payment of £500 in the next pay-run - then upon completion of 1 year in the post, both parties will receive the final payment of £500 each.
- 3.12 The proposed reimbursement has been put to the Council's trade unions for their comment. Comments received will be reported to the meeting.
- 3.13 The trade unions are being consulted on this issue and a verbal update will be given at the meeting.

#### **4. Cost Implications**

- 4.1 The Council does not currently operate an Employee Referral scheme. The inability to recruit and retain permanent Social Workers has a huge impact on the cost as agency workers are significantly more expensive than permanent staff.
- 4.2 With reductions in government grants and increases in population, all services are required to meet care needs within a reduced budget. The Employee Referral Scheme is being proposed to support in recruiting and retaining a staff group that has significant recruitment and retention challenges.
- 4.3 The estimated cost of reimbursement based on the current vacancy total of 6 positions, would be a total of £12,000 assuming all vacancies are filled by Employee Referrals. The cost difference between employing a Social Worker within Children's Social Care when compared to using agency cover is £16k per annum. The cost of appointing a qualified social worker through the use of a permanent recruitment agency is 15% of the salary, approx. 6k fee to the agency per appointment. If all six vacancies were filled via a recruitment agency this would be a cost of 36k.

## 5. **Conditions of the Scheme**

- 5.1 Only current, existing employees of Milton Keynes Council (MKC) can refer a friend.
- 5.2 Only external applicants applying for Social Worker positions in Children's Services will be considered. No existing employees of Milton Keynes Council will be considered under this policy as an internal move to Children's Services.
- 5.3 All incentive posts within Children's Social Care will be marked on the job advert on the Council's job page. Applicants submit their application and confirm they saw the vacancy by your referral.
- 5.4 The successful candidate must have Social Work qualification and HCPC registration. The payment relates only to successful qualified social workers. It does not apply to support worker posts, newly qualified posts or any other vacancies within Milton Keynes Council.
- 5.5 Referrals cannot be accepted retrospectively.
- 5.6 Referrals can only be accepted for people eligible to work in the UK.
- 5.7 Only those referrals that result in a permanent placement of the individual will qualify for the payment.
- 5.8 The person referring must obtain prior consent from the potential candidate before referring.
- 5.9 Payment is subject to tax and NI deduction and will be paid to both parties after a successful appointment and after being in the post for 1 year. Payment is not applicable if the employment is terminated for any reason during the guarantee period.
- 5.10 Payments will be paid directly into the bank account to which the referrer and new employee receives their salary.
- 5.11 No alternative to the payment is available.
- 5.12 There are no limits to the number of referrals made.
- 5.13 Milton Keynes Council's decision on payments to be made is final.

Background Papers: None

# Joint Negotiating Committee (Employers')



## SOCIAL WORKER REGISTRATION FEE AND 'GOLDEN HELLO' PAYMENT REVIEW

Contact Officer: Oliver Bannister (HR Business Partner) Tel: 01908 254022

### 1. Purpose

- 1.1 To update the Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC) on the implementation of the reimbursement of the Social Worker Registration Fee and the impact of the Golden Hello payment.

### 2. Social Worker Registration Fee Reimbursement

- 2.1 At the meeting of the JNC held on 8 July 2019, the following was agreed in respects to Social Worker Registration Fees:
- (a) reimburse all qualified Social Workers or post holders required to pay for HCPC Social Worker registration up to Team Manager or equivalent grade, with effect from 1 August 2019;
  - (b) this is non-contractual and does not form part of employees Terms and Conditions of employment;
  - (c) in line with the regulatory transfer from the HCPC to Social Work England, the Council will continue to monitor and review any possible changes to either the registration process or the registration fee that may impact on this proposal;
  - (d) a review will be undertaken in July 2020 to measure the impact of this proposal on the recruitment and retention of staff.
- 2.2 In accordance with the above and the qualifying criteria, social worker registration reimbursement was implemented and has been claimed by practitioners across Adults and Children's services.
- 2.3 The regulatory transfer from HCPC to Social Worker England was implemented on 2 December 2019. The Council has continued to review the registration process and fee, but as of September 2020 there have been no changes.

- 2.4 A review of the reimbursement of fees has been conducted throughout 2019/20 since its introduction. At its launch, the announcement was well received. It was noted at the time, from Children's Services that the proposal was seen as a positive response to specific requests for the reimbursement in the Children's Service Social Worker Health Check 2018/19.
- 2.5 A new starter survey was conducted in 2019 within Adult Services, which identified that the reimbursement of fees whilst not a key motivator in applying at Milton Keynes Council, played its part in the overall benefits package being offered to applicants.
- 2.6 From feedback obtained as part of Adult Services 2019/20 Social Worker Health Check, the reimbursement of fees was well received.

### 3. **Review of the 'Golden Hello' Payment**

- 3.1 Last year, Adult Services introduced a 'Golden Hello' market supplement payment to experienced external social workers. The payment was part of a series of approaches taken as part of a recruitment drive with the objective of removing the services over dependency on agency workers and to improve the quality of appointments being made.
- 3.2 The payment was to be made to qualifying Social Workers at G and H grades. A figure of £5,000 was identified to set a clear competitive differentiation with local authority market supplements.
- 3.3 Since the golden hello's introduction, the service has recruited 31 external permanent social workers, and has made 21 golden hello payments.
- 3.4 The service has also continued to recruit F Grade Social Workers and support their Assessed and Supported Year in Employment Programme (ASYE). In addition, 2019 also provided the opportunity to utilise the new social worker apprentice courses available via the apprenticeship levy. The service last year inducted two new apprentices with a regular annual intake now underway.
- 3.5 Due to the success of the recruitment campaign there have been significant reductions in agency usage. Not only did the service achieve the unprecedented feat of 100% occupancy at the later stages of last year, this now typically operates around 95% and has created a stable and improved working environment for the services team and has made significant savings in agency spend. These savings have more than offset the initial investment in the golden hello payments.
- 3.6 The service has been mindful of monitoring the impact of the payment to existing staff and have monitored and supported staff closely with this. Initial anecdotal feedback was expectedly mixed with colleagues understanding the need for the payment, but not feeling any financial benefit for themselves.

The reimbursement of registration fees was seen as a very positive step to demonstrate the Council's intention to show financial support where possible to existing social workers.

- 3.7 The Social Worker Health Check survey later formally captured these sentiments, but there was a clear understanding and appreciation of the benefits the payment brought by removing agency workers, bringing more balance and stability to each respective social worker team and the positive impact this had on caseloads.
- 3.8 The Health Check assisted in identifying the most important aspects of focus for retaining and supporting existing social workers. Resoundingly the feedback identified career development, training opportunities and improved quality in management communication as more significant than financial benefits.
- 3.9 Adults Services introduced and continues to implement mechanisms and initiatives of support to existing social workers. These have included:
  - (a) a restructure of the entire Adult Services to create an Assessment Service (social work) led by a Group Head, to bring social work teams together, creating closer and improved ways of working and a new structure and pathway for career progression;
  - (b) for the first time the service created and recruited to the role of Principal Social Worker, whose role is solely focused on the professional development of the service's social workers;
  - (c) revised supervision format and 1:1 support; and
  - (d) a new social worker career progression framework is the final stage of development. This will outline a far more fluid approach to career development than the current process. Based on the Professional Capability Framework (PCF) and Knowledge Skills Statement (KSS) the new framework removes the unnecessarily restrictive progress that is currently in place. This will allow the service to assess and allow social worker to progress through the grades F-H in a more timely manner, basing assessments on demonstrable skills and knowledge, than additional formal qualifications that the current framework dictates. This will also assist in improved options when it comes to offering salaries to external candidates.

#### 4. **Proposed Revisions to the Golden Hello Payment**

- 4.1 A pay review was conducted in July 2020 to evaluate the golden hello payment and the Councils' salary offering compared to neighbouring authorities. The review identified that the Council is competitive with its basic salary offering

and that the level and type of market supplement being offered varies significantly. Some authorities have removed market supplements all together whilst others have notably increased their supplement offering in line with Milton Keynes Council.

- 4.2 After conducting the review it was determined by the Adult Services Leadership Team (ALT) that in line with the much improved occupancy rate, and recognising the current climate and the new financial pressure placed on the service and the organisation, it would be prudent to revise the level of golden hello payment made. Consideration was given to removing the payment in its entirety but having reviewed the pay packages offered by our neighbouring authorities it was decided that this would make our own offer significantly less competitive.
- 4.3 It is proposed that the golden hello payment is now paid at a lower rate and that it differentiates between grades G and H. The original intention of the payment was to target a more experienced level of social worker; therefore, the following changes have been proposed:

Grade / Basic Salary	Level of Golden Hello Payment
H - £34,788 - £38,813	£3,000
G - £29,636 - £33,799	£2,000

## 5. Recommendations

- 5.1 The following recommendations have been made:
- (a) the Council continues to reimburse social workers for their professional fees, and that process for registration and potential changes to the fees is closely monitored;
  - (b) the 'Golden Hello' payment continues, but at the recommended levels proposed in Section 4.3. The impact of this change on the number and quality of candidates will be monitored; and
  - (c) Adult Services continues to develop and enhance its retention initiatives for existing social workers.

## 6. Implications

- 6.1 There are no wider implications identified than mentioned in the paper.

6.2 Resources and Risk

X	Capital	X	Revenue	X	Accommodation
X	IT	X	Medium Term Plan	X	Asset Management

6.3 Legal

This does not form part of employee Terms and Conditions of employment.

6.4 Other Implications

Y	Equalities / Diversity	X	Sustainability	X	Human Rights
X	E-Government	X	Stakeholders	X	Crime and Disorder

Background Papers:

- JNC05: Social Worker (Hcpc) Registration Fee - Reimbursement (July 2019)
- JNC06: Adult Social Worker 'Golden Hello' Payment (July 2019)