

**London Borough of Brent**  
**General Purposes Committee - 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2003**

**Report from the Director of Social Services**

**Pay and Retention Strategy for Care Managers, Social Workers and  
Approved Social Workers in the Social Services Community Care  
Service**

**Name of Wards Affected**

**1. SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report is a continuation of the pay and retention strategy for qualified, social work staff. It follows a report to Deciding Committee of 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2001 when improvements to the grading of social workers in Children's Services were agreed.
- 1.2 It is now proposed that the same improvements be made to the grading of social work staff in Community Care in order that this group of staff achieves parity with its colleagues in Children's Services. This is an important further step towards resolving recruitment and retention difficulties in the Department in what continues to be a highly competitive labour market.
- 1.3 The report should be read in conjunction with a further report that proposes a new, career grade for Team Managers in Community Care and Children's Services of PO4/5 and is reported elsewhere on this agenda.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

That members note the contents of the report and agree the improvements to the remuneration of care managers and approved social workers in Community Care Division as detailed in paragraphs 6 and 8. This action will achieve one, coherent pay structure for all social work staff employed in the Social Services Department.

This will take effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2003.

**3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 This decision affects some 90 staff including 14 part-timers and will cost in the region of £82,000 including employer's on-costs in year 1, which equates to approximately 3% of the annual salary budget for this group of staff.
- 3.2 This decision would increase the top of the range for social workers in Community Care by up to four incremental points i.e from spinal column point 36 to spinal column point 40. Therefore, costs will increase compared with 1<sup>st</sup> April this year as social workers progress up the scale. The differential between the above two spinal column points is around £4000 including on-costs.
- 3.3 The Department has made a bid for funds centrally from the Remuneration Budget to fund this initiative. Should funds not be forthcoming from this source, the Department will want to make these improvements from its existing budget. However, the latter

route may limit our ability to concentrate financial resources on the recruitment of new social work staff.

#### **4. STAFFING IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The Community Care Service has not been characterised by as great a turnover in its social work staff as in Children's Services but where vacancies occur, managers have reported difficulty in recruiting. Care managers and approved social workers are specialist staff who are in short supply. This is especially true of approved social workers who hold an additional qualification for approved status and who are much in demand by local authorities.
- 4.2 The ability to retain these employees by paying salaries which are competitive in the marketplace is essential, because of the high cost of recruiting replacements and also because of the high cost of agency staff should it be necessary to provide cover for vacant posts where replacements cannot be found. It is also important to retain good staff to ensure continuity of service to users.
- 4.3 The Joint Review of Social Services December 2002 commented that 'the prospects in Brent for services improving in the future are promising' but highlighted the need to tackle weaknesses in recruitment and retention.

#### **5. TRADE UNION CONSULTATION**

A copy of this report has been passed to the Staffs Side Secretaries of UNISON and the GMB for discussion and comment.

#### **6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 Pay differentials between staff carrying out work of equal value or which have been assessed as having the same grade under the Council's job evaluation scheme are open to challenge under the Equal Pay Act. The proposals should remove the risk of such challenges by social work staff in Community Care, comparing themselves with social workers in Children's Services.
- 6.2 This report refers at paragraph 7.9, to the intention not to make a scarcity payment to newly recruited approved social workers. This payment is made to approved social workers currently employed by Brent. The Department will need to be in a position to explain the reasons for pay differentials between staff covered by the proposed new pay structure who are doing work having the same job-evaluated grade, in the event of equal pay claims. An explanation for protecting the scarcity payment of currently employed approved social workers is given at paragraph 7.10.
- 6.3 If possible payments made to staff which reflect difficulties in recruitment and retention should be made on the basis that the Council has the contractual right to keep these payments under review in the light of labour market conditions and to end or vary them at its discretion in the light of the review.

#### **7. DETAILS**

- 7.1 The Community Care Service employs staff who provide services to adult clients in five service areas. These are Older People's Services, Learning Disabilities, Physical Disabilities, Drugs and Alcohol and Mental Health. Social workers working in the first four service units are known as care managers. The Brent Mental Health Service, which is an integrated service, employs social workers and approved social workers.

Social workers with approved status are also found within Older People's Services, Learning Disabilities and in the Emergency Duty Team.

- 7.2 With effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2003, the Service Unit Manager for EDT will report to the Assistant Director-Community Care. Before this date she reported to the Assistant Director-Children's Services. The Team's ASWs work across all client groups. The Team was not considered during the regrading of social workers in Children's Services and is included therefore in the recommendations of this report.
- 7.3 New job descriptions were produced for the above groups of staff and evaluated by the Council's Job Evaluation Unit in line with the objectives of this report.
- 7.4 The spinal column ranges for each group of workers are loosely based on the national pay scales for social workers and do not fit at present into the grade bandwidths on the Council's paychart. This in itself can be confusing for managers and potential recruits during the recruitment process. The fresh evaluations will be more readily understandable as they will be in line with Children's Services.
- 7.5 The changes are outlined in the following tables. These demonstrate current spinal column ranges benchmarked against the new range currently used in Children's Services. The new range is to be adopted for Community Care.
- 7.6 Changes for non-ASW grades:

Table 1: SOCIAL WORK GRADES IN CHILDREN'S SERVICES

JOB CATEGORY	GRADE	SPINAL COLUMN POINTS
Social Worker	Career Grade – SO2/PO1/PO2	32 to 40
Senior Social Worker	PO3	40 to 43
Team Manager	PO4	44 to 47

Table 2: CHANGES TO GRADES IN COMMUNITY CARE (Non ASW)

JOB CATEGORY	SERVICE	OLD RANGE (SCPS)	NEW RANGE
Care Manager	Older People's Services	27 to 36	32 to 40 (SO2/PO1/PO2)
	Drugs and Alcohol Team		
	Physical Disability	29 to 36	
Social Worker	Learning Disability	29 to 37	
Seniors	Mental Health		
Team Manager	Older People's Services	38 to 40	40 to 43 (PO3)
	Physical Disability	38 to 40	
	Learning Disability <sup>1</sup>	38 to 40	

- 7.7 In Community Care, Approved Social Workers had a higher grade starting point and in common with Senior ASWs, a plus two increment differential to recognise their approved status. It is intended to maintain this differential as it is in recognition of the

<sup>1</sup> 2 Senior Practitioners in Learning Disability to be redesignated Team Manager on recommendation of Joint Review of Social Services

additional complexity of the work and maintains our ability to recruit this scarce resource.

## 7.8 Change to ASW grades

JOB CATEGORY	SERVICE	OLD RANGE (SCPS)	NEW RANGE
Approved Social Worker	Emergency Duty Team Learning Disability Mental Health Older People's Services	35 to 39	37 to 42
Approved Senior Prac.	Mental Health	40 to 43	42 to 45
Approved Senior Social Worker - Mentally Disordered Offenders		40 to 42	

7.9 Approved social workers employed by Brent have been paid Inner London Weighting to date. From 1<sup>st</sup> April 1999, newly recruited staff to Brent were to receive Outer London Weighting. Staff on existing contracts would retain their Inner London Weighting. At that time, it was negotiated that an exception could be made for newly recruited ASWs to be on the 'equivalent' of Inner London Weighting due to concerns about the scarcity of ASWs and the difficulties in recruiting them. This was known as the 'Outer London plus scarcity payment.' With the improvement in ASW salaries that this report proposes, this scarcity payment is no longer considered consistent with an up-to-date pay structure for Community Care. It is intended that new ASW starters will be offered Outer London Weighting. Currently employed ASWs will have their Inner London Weighting status protected.

7.10 The decision to protect the London Weighting status of current ASWs is considered appropriate because in these proposed improvements, they will have their pay increased by either one or two increments only (depending on where they fall in the current scale). Removal of the scarcity payment would mean that they would either standstill or be worse off in financial terms. This would not accord with the stated aim of retaining these workers in Brent employment.

7.11 The following table demonstrates the changes in salary ranges that would result from these proposals:

### CHANGE TO ASW SALARIES INCLUDING REMOVAL OF OUTER LONDON PLUS SCARCITY PAYMENT

JOB CATEGORY	OLD RANGE INC. 'OUTER LONDON PLUS PAYMENT'	NEW RANGE INC. OUTER LONDON WEIGHTING
Approved Social Worker	£27,114 - £30,114	£27,204 - £31,023
Approved Senior Practitioner	£30,834 - £33,048	£31,023 - £33,201
		NEW SALARY MAXIMUM
Approved Social Worker with protected plus payment		£32,310
Approved Senior Practitioner with protected plus payment		£34,488

7.12 In the future, it is intended to consider the status of ASWs employed in the Emergency Duty Team to check how consistent the Department's recruitment and retention strategy for this group of experienced workers, when compared with other London Boroughs.

7.13 The assimilation arrangements on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2003 for staff affected by these changes are attached at Appendix 1.

7.14 Other retention initiatives for social work staff were dealt with in the committee report of 3/10/01. More recently:

- The Department has piloted a work-life balance programme on behalf of the Council. This gives staff the opportunity to better manage their working and non-working hours
- A link has been developed with Private Sector Housing where for a payment of £250 per worker, they will a) seek good quality accommodation with registered landlords for the worker to rent and b) provide up to £500 bond advance
- The Department is planning to introduce a 'signing-on and retention' allowance for Children's Services social work staff to address the effects of the particularly difficult recruitment-market conditions pertaining to this group of staff.

7.15 A salary survey was prepared by us to check the competitiveness of Brent's care manager salaries against the London area and to ensure that our proposals meet our objectives. The results are shown at Appendix 2 to this report. For ease of reference, team manager salaries are included in this survey.

## **8. CONCLUSION**

- In response to acute recruitment and retention problems in Children's Services, this Service's social workers were regraded in October 2001. Since then, it has become apparent that similar difficulties occur in recruitment and retention in adult services. Although these problems in Children's Services are considerably worse
- Difficulties are experienced in recruiting when vacancies occur in the Community Care Service
- The Department wishes to place all its social work salaries within the upper quartile of salaries paid by London local authorities to maintain its competitiveness in the London labour market. If this does not happen, our staffing situation will worsen
- It is essential to limit the cost of agency staff and the lack of continuity for service users provided by such staff who may only spend a few weeks in the Department

For these reasons, the proposal to re-grade care managers in the Community Care Service has been developed.

## **9. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Report to Deciding Committee of 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2001: Pay Strategy for Qualified Social Workers in Children's Services.

Report to Executive Committee 31st March 2003: New Career Grade for Team Managers in Children's Services.

## **APPENDIX 1**

### **ASSIMILATION ARRANGEMENTS FOR SOCIAL WORKERS/CARE MANAGERS IN COMMUNITY CARE WITH EFFECT FROM 1<sup>ST</sup> APRIL 2003**

- Any social worker/care manager on spinal column point 31 will move to spinal column point 33
- Any social worker/care manager on scp 30 or below will move to scp 32
- Any social worker/care manager between scps 32 and 36 will receive two increments
- Any social worker/care manager on scp 37 will move to scp 38
- Seniors re-graded to PO3
- Any approved social worker on scp 35 to move to scp 37
- Any approved social worker between scps 36 and 38 to receive two increments
- Any approved social worker on scp 39 to move to scp 40
- Any approved senior between scps 40 and 42 will receive two increments
- Any approved senior on scp 43 will move to scp 44

Community Care Social Work Salaries

Level I Basic Professional  
 Level II Experienced/Senior Professional  
 Level III Principal Professional - manager of a single function or small team

\*incl. market supplement and/or retention allowance

	Brent		Survey Median*		Survey Mode*		Top 5 local authorities*	
	Min	Max	Min	Max	Min	Max	Min	Max
<b>Level I</b>	20,619	26,499	22,026	27,922	22,026	n/a	25,797	28,770
							24,030	28,821
							24,620	29,370
							22,026	29,547
proposed	24,033	29,547					24,117	29,556
	Min	Max	Min	Max	Min	Max	Min	Max
<b>Level II</b>	27,957	29,547	24,699	30,288	27,957	29,957	23,385	30,291
							24,033	30,291
							26,030	30,821
							20,703	30,834
proposed	29,547	31,761					27,141	30,834
	Min	Max	Min	Max	Min	Max	Min	Max
<b>Level III</b>	32,505	34,713	33,051	36,155	33,792	33,969	30,900	37,110
							33,792	37,470
							33,051	38,214
							33,051	38,214
proposed	32,505	36,930					24,442	40,042

Approved Social Worker

## Salaries

\*incl. market supplement and/or retention allowance

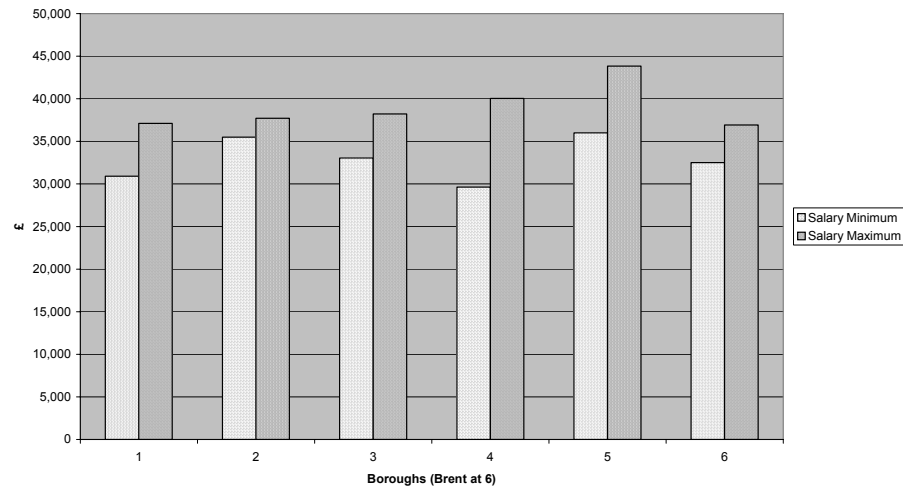
	Brent		Survey Median*		Survey Mode*		Top 5 local authorities*	
	Min	Max	Min	Max	Min	Max	Min	Max
	27,141	33,048	28,842	32,288	n/a	32,288	30,834	33,051
							31,023	33,240
							27,920	33,420
							31,288	33,505
proposed	27,204	33,201					31,578	33,792



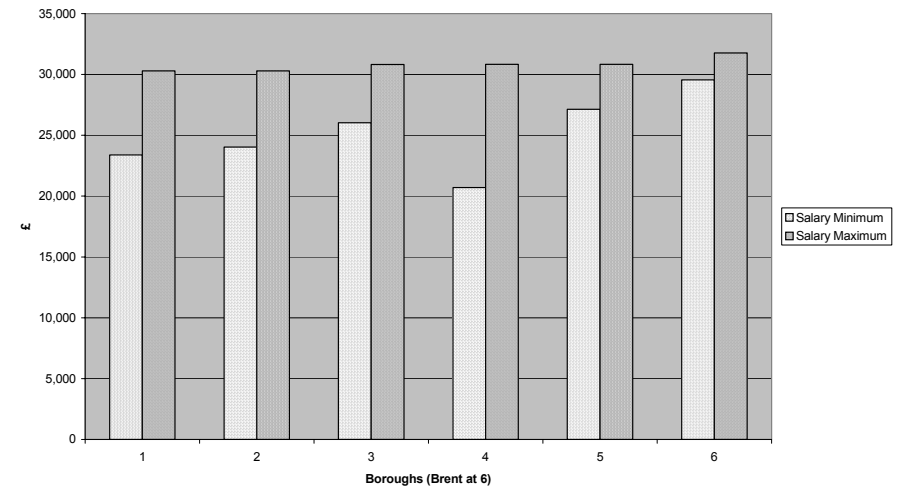
# SURVEY OF COMMUNITY CARE SOCIAL WORK SALARIES IN LONDON BOROUGHs

## APPENDIX 2

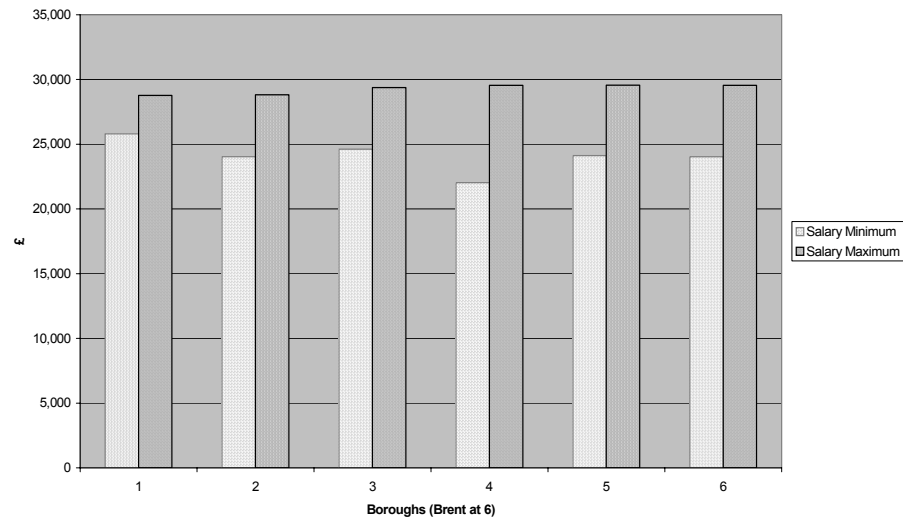
Top Five Team Manager Salaries Compared with Brent's Proposed Salary



Top 5 Senior Practitioner Salaries Compared with Brent's Proposed Salary



Top 5 Care Manager Salaries Compared with Brent's Proposed Salary



Top 5 Approved Social Worker Salaries Compared with Brent's Proposed Salary

