



**General Purposes Committee
15th October 2018**

**Report from the Strategic Director
of Children and Young People**

**REPORT TITLE: Recruitment and Retention Payments for
Children and Young People's Social Workers.**

Wards Affected:	All
Key or Non-Key Decision: (only applicable for Cabinet, Cabinet Sub Committee and officer decisions)	N/A
Open or Part/Fully Exempt: (If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)	Open
No. of Appendices:	None
Background Papers:	None
Contact Officer(s): (Name, Title, Contact Details)	Nigel Chapman Operational Director Integration and Improved Outcomes Tel: 0208 937 4456 Email: Nigel.Chapman@brent.gov.uk

1.0 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To appraise the Committee of the current challenges in recruiting and retaining key social work roles within the Children and Young People's (CYP) department and the resultant pressure on the CYP budget. To detail proposals as to how these can be addressed to complement other measures already in place.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 General Purposes committee is asked to approve the proposed arrangements, set out in detail in paragraphs 4.1 – 4.3, noting their time limited implementation in order to assess their impact. The proposals are:

- To introduce a one-off, £5,000 payment to newly recruited permanent social work managers, social work practice consultants and senior social workers in hard to recruit to teams within the Localities and LAC and Permanency Services, on satisfactory completion of a probationary period.
- To introduce a retention payment of £3600 to the social work managers and social work practice consultant posts, payable after 36 months in role and on a recurring 36 month cycle, subject to annual review of market conditions. Senior social workers currently receive a retention payment therefore no change is required to these roles.

- To allow the department the discretion to provide relocation package support to key posts, up to a maximum of £5,000 in individual cases.
- 2.2 That authority is delegated to the Strategic Director, CYP, in consultation and regular review with the Director of Legal and HR as detailed in this report, to determine how recruitment and retention payments are offered across the department, with a continued focus on hard to recruit to posts.
- 3.0 **Detail**
- 3.1 A previous General Purposes Committee (March 2016) approved a request to continue to provide a market supplement to Children and Young People's (CYP) social workers as a tool to support the department in retaining key frontline staff. The payments of £1200 p.a., paid monthly were reintroduced from April 2016 for all Children and Young People's social work qualified staff from salary range PO1-PO4. This continued payment, alongside other factors such as stable senior leadership, greater training and development opportunities and manageable caseloads for staff has helped create an upward trajectory in the number of permanent social workers on the SO2 – PO2 grades in the Localities and LAC and Permanency services from 65% in March 2016 to 72% as at September 2018.
- 3.2 However significant structural difficulties remain in recruiting and retaining more experienced social workers and first line social work management staff. A realignment of CYP social work activity took place in January 2018 and, whilst there have been a number of benefits to frontline practitioners, recognised in the May 2018 Ofsted Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services, it has not resulted in an increase in the number of experienced social workers and social work management roles being taken up by permanent staff. In contrast to the SO2-PO2 grades, as at September 2018 only 44% of experienced social workers and front line management posts are filled by permanent staff.
- 3.3 The issue of sufficiency of suitably qualified children's social work staff is recognised as a national issue that the DfE is seeking to address through new routes into social work and better development pathways for future managers. The profession is noted as an occupation that appears on the list of skills shortages to enable overseas recruitment to fill key vacancies.
- 3.4 A screening exercise undertaken by CYP in June 2018, to research packages offered by other London children's services, found the majority had an extensive offer in place to attract new staff, including at social work management level. For example:
- **Barnet:** a remuneration package of up to £49,000 for Social Workers (equivalent in Brent is up to £40,887 + £1200 retention) and up to £56,400 for Advanced Practitioners (equivalent in Brent is up to £47,541). Relocation package of up to £7,000.
 - **Barking and Dagenham:** For posts that are hard to fill there is an enhanced benefits scheme that gives eligible social workers:
 - A £5,000 welcome payment when they join.
 - £15,000 commitment payment after 3 years' service in a hard to recruit to team
 - Two month paid sabbatical, to be taken at an agreed time, after four years' service.

- **Harrow:** all social work qualified staff receive a £1500 pa retention payment. There is a £6k targeted retention package for hard to recruit to posts and a relocation package of up to £6k available.
- **Greenwich:** all roles within services similar to Brent's Localities and Looked After Children and Permanency services receive the following benefits:
 - 10% of starting salary 'Golden Hello';
 - Minimum 10% of salary annual retention payment, plus enhancements for frontline child protection teams;
 - Travel costs worth £1k+, OR Essential car user car parking (close to the workplace);
 - Royal Greenwich Keyworker housing (after being employed for six months, subject to application and meeting criteria)

It is important that Brent is not left behind in what is an increasingly competitive market place for good quality staff.

- 3.5 Experience from two 2018 recruitment campaigns highlighted the difficulty faced in recruiting experienced social worker and permanent management staff. Of the 12 vacant posts advertised only 3 have been filled. The vacant posts are filled by agency staff which increases staff budgetary pressures (currently approximately £1m within CYP) and mitigates against the consolidation of good social work practice.
- 3.6 Other activity is taking place to address the issue of recruitment and retention. A refreshed workforce development strategy is focused on creating long-term improvements, in line with the Council's 2020 vision. The workforce strategy includes a wide range of activities, one of which was to review pay structures and evaluation schemes to ensure the Council can attract and retain people in hard to recruit and key roles. The strategy is reviewed quarterly for effectiveness by the CYP senior leadership team.
- 3.7 An action plan arising out of the workforce strategy included setting out how recruitment and retention could be enhanced. A successful and well-managed programme to recruit newly qualified social workers is in place and a career development pathway established in order to 'grow our own' staff. The career development pathway will also enable talented staff to move through the management system at a faster pace. To augment this, international recruitment of qualified social workers from Southern Africa and India will take place during 2019. The experience of previous international recruitment exercises in Brent and neighbouring authorities has demonstrated the ability of staff recruited from overseas to quickly move into more senior roles. Social Workers successfully recruited through this project will be employed on the PO1 grade.
- 3.8 Another future development that aims to address the recruitment challenge is the Social Care apprenticeship that will present an opportunity for existing staff in unqualified social care roles such as Social Work Assistants to obtain qualifications that will be an additional supply source in years to come. It is likely to be 12 months before universities are ready to take the first students and a further 3 years before the first apprentices are qualified through this route.
- 3.9 Whilst these and other measures will over time improve the situation, short-term measures are required to boost the number of permanent staff in key social

work roles. The proposals as set out in section 4 below are based on the assumptions that funding will be met from within the CYP department, that it will lead to a reduction in cost pressures and that it will create a positive impact.

4.0 The Proposal

- 4.1 To introduce a one-off, £5,000 payment to newly recruited permanent social work managers (PO7), social work practice consultants (PO5) and senior social workers (PO3) in hard to recruit to teams within the Localities and LAC and Permanency Services, on satisfactory completion of a probationary period. The teams to which this payment would apply are the East and West Locality Teams, the Brent Family Front Door, LAC and Permanency teams A-F and the Care Leavers Teams. These are the teams with lower levels of permanent staff in the three roles, in comparison to other teams undertaking other similar work.
- 4.2 To introduce a retention payment of £3600 for new recruits to the PO7 and PO5 posts, payable after 36 months in role and on a recurring 36 month cycle. Whilst the net payment to these staff over the 36-month period will equal that currently provided on a monthly basis to staff within the PO1-PO4 scale it is considered that a lump sum amount will have greater impact. These payments will be regularly reviewed, initially immediately after the first round of recurrent payments are made and then on an annual basis, to consider whether the market factors which currently make them essential in order to recruit to these posts still exist.
- 4.3 To allow the department the discretion to provide relocation package support to key posts, up to a maximum of £5,000 in individual cases. This may apply particularly to posts that will be recruited during 2019 from overseas. Evidence from a neighbouring borough who supported overseas recruits in this way reported greater levels of integration, job satisfaction, commitment to the organisation and strong levels of loyalty and therefore retention. The relocation support will be considered on a case by case basis by the Operational Director, Integration and Improved Outcomes in consultation with the Director of Legal and HR.

5.0 Financial Implications

- 5.1 There are no financial savings to be generated by providing incentives to recruit to social work positions as budgets have been set using an assumption of 100% permanent officers and no vacancies. Consequently any incentive scheme agreed needs to be funded from additional resources or within existing budgets.
- 5.2 However, the additional costs of agency staff can be avoided by recruiting permanently, thus reducing the cost pressure on the service. This additional cost pressure is estimated at £7.2k per year per agency staff member.
- 5.3 The cost of a six month scheme of golden hellos is estimated at **£74k** and mitigates costs to social worker teams of £92k. Existing staff do not receive any golden hellos. It is proposed to fund this six month scheme of golden hellos on a one-off basis from reserves in order that the scheme can be properly evaluated upon conclusion to determine the impact on recruitment. It is not considered affordable to offer this on a permanent basis and needs careful monitoring and consideration prior to offering the scheme again in the future.

- 5.4 The cost of introducing a £3600 incentive to retain new staff at the PO5 and PO7 grades after three years of service is estimated at **£35k per annum**. This sum would need to be identified from existing resources as it would be an annual cost.
- 5.5 Current Children's social workers on PO1 to PO4 grades currently receive a pensionable incentive of £1200 per year but those on PO5 to PO7 grades currently do not. The £3600 retention payment proposed for the PO5 to PO7 grades would not be pensionable as it would be paid only after 3 years of service.
- 5.6 There is no relocation budget currently available. The £74k estimated cost of the six month scheme includes an estimate of the cost of relocations. Funding for relocations of future recruitment of overseas staff would require use of reserves.

6.0 Legal Implications

- 6.1 Where a supplement is paid on top of the evaluated grade of a post the potential for equal pay claims arises. The council will need to demonstrate that there is a "material factor" which is neither directly nor indirectly sex discriminatory to avoid or defend such claims. The state of the employment market, which may lead an employer to increase the pay of a particular job in order to attract candidates, may constitute an objectively justified economic ground for a pay disparity. Where a payment to an employee is on-going (as is proposed in respect of the £3600 payments) the payment must be kept under regular review to ensure that it only continues for as long as it is justified by material market factors.

7.0 Equality Implications

- 7.1 The public sector equality duty, as set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, requires the Council, when exercising its functions, to have "due regard" to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited under the Act, to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who have a "protected characteristic" and those who do not share that protected characteristic. The protected characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.
- 7.2 Having due regard involves the need to enquire into whether and how a proposed decision disproportionately affects people with a protected characteristic and the need to consider taking steps to meet the needs of persons who share a protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it. This includes removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by persons who share a protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic.
- 7.3 An Equality Impact Assessment was completed in respect of the proposals set out in this report and the analysis was based on the characteristics of ethnicity and gender as these were the two most significant types affected by the proposed changes. To ensure the analysis was sufficiently broad the analysis also included staff undertaking similar tasks from the Community Wellbeing department.

7.4 **Gender:**

- For the staff in the teams that are within the scope of the proposed changes between 82% and 86% are female, except 1 team where 100% are female.
- For the teams that are out of scope of the proposed changes:
 - CYP - Between 80% and 92% are female, **except 3 teams** where 50% are female (and therefore 50% are male).
 - CWB - Between 67% and 88% are female, except 1 team where 100% are female **AND 2 teams** where 25% and 20% respectively are female.
- The sample sizes are relatively small given the limited number of roles being compared.

7.5 **Ethnicity:**

Information held corporately on this characteristic is more variable that makes firm analysis less achievable. From the information available the ethnicity of staff affected is equally distributed across the teams that are within and outside the scope of the proposals.

The overall analysis is that the risks that the criteria for applying the proposed payments disadvantage persons with a protected characteristics is low based on ethnicity and medium based on gender. However, it is considered that the market evidence included in this report, establishing that there is a material factor (namely market conditions for recruitment to the affected posts) justifies the pay disparity.

8.0 **Consultation with Ward Members and Stakeholders**

Not Applicable (N/A)

9.0 **Human Resources/Property Implications (if appropriate)**

The Human Resources implications have been contained within the main body of the report above.

10.0 **Next Steps**

- 10.1 The next scheduled recruitment campaign will commence at the end of October 2018 and, should the Committee approve these recommendations, they will be incorporated into the marketing materials. Monthly progress meetings to consider the impact of these initiatives have been set and the overall effectiveness of the proposed changes will be reviewed after 6 months and a report presented to the Corporate Management Team.
- 10.2 Should the proposal be agreed, Human Resources will consider the demand pressures within other departments of the Council and the corporate implications where there are similar skills shortages in hard to recruit to posts.

Report sign off:

Gail Tolley

Strategic Director of Children and Young People