

EMPLOYMENT MATTERS

13 OCTOBER 2009

PROPOSED CAREER FRAMEWORK AND REVISED INCENTIVES FOR CHILDREN'S SOCIAL WORK SOCIAL WORKERS AND MANAGERS

Report from: Tricia Palmer, Assistant Director, Organisational Services

Author: Olivia Butler, Interim Assistant Director, Children's Care

Summary

This report provides information in relation to the Children and Adults Directorate responses to Lord Laming's recommendations in relation to the establishment of a Career framework for Children's Social Workers.

1. Budget and Policy Framework

- 1.1 The Council has an agreed policy and procedure for managing the regrading of posts and progression through the pay bands. This proposal recognises the need to acknowledge the different levels of experience and skills required during progression through the grade and rewards more highly qualified and skilled staff accordingly.

2. Background

- 2.1 Medway has faced considerable challenges regarding the recruitment and retention of qualified social workers since 1997. There is a national shortage, which is exacerbated by proximity to higher paying neighbouring boroughs. At its worst, nearly half of the children's social worker posts were vacant. A number of initiatives regarding pay and reward have had a positive impact, and the Directorate has been successful in recruiting new social workers to Children's Care in the last 18 months, however the vacancy level within remains high at 18%. We have used agency staff to cover our statutory safeguarding duties to children, which is costly and unreliable.
- 2.2 In 2006 the Joint Area Review judged the Council's safeguarding arrangements to be inadequate. In 2008 Ofsted judged Staying Safe in Children's Services to be adequate. Improvements to safeguarding have been made but will be judged through the new inspection methodologies, including Ofsted's annual unannounced inspections of

duty and the tri-annual inspections of safeguarding and looked after children services.

- 2.3 In March 2009, the Laming report made five specific recommendations asking for the children's social workforce to be developed to ensure effective safeguarding (Appendix A). Staffing arrangements in Medway were audited against these recommendations, and the proposals in this paper would contribute significantly to Medway's implementation of Laming's recommendations.
- 2.4 The Directorate has responsibility for delivering services to vulnerable children and young people in line with its statutory duties and the priorities of Medway's Children's and Young People's Plan. In order to deliver a safe and reliable service, and meet future public and political challenges, it is important that Medway invests in qualified, experienced and capable practitioners and their managers. The Directorate believes that the introduction of a revised pay framework for Social Workers and the payment of additional allowances to Team Managers and Senior Practitioners in the Duty and Assessment Teams, in recognition of the high risk cases referred to and carried by those teams, will enable Medway to recruit and retain a children's social work staff establishment that can keep children in Medway safe.
- 2.5 Adult social care Social Workers (now called Care Managers), Senior Practitioners and Team Managers are not included in these proposals but their position will be reviewed in the light of:
- a) the recommendations made in the report of the national Social Work Taskforce, which is due to be published in November 2009, and
 - b) the work being undertaken within Medway on the Transformation agenda for adult social care, which will review the roles and remit of adult social work.

3. Current pay arrangements for Children's Social Work staff

- 3.1 The Council offers two additional allowances to address children's social work recruitment and retention difficulties. A joining payment (Golden Hello) to new social workers competes with similar payments made by neighbouring authorities. A Market Premium payment (an additional 8% of the basic salary) have been made to social workers, senior practitioners and managers in posts deemed as particularly challenging in order to bring their salaries closer to those paid by neighbouring authorities. These additional payments were agreed by the Directorate in 2005, and have been reviewed and extended on an annual basis.
- 3.2 There are disadvantages with the current system of pay and reward including:
- The additional 8% rewards staff in those posts regardless of performance, skills or experience;

- The justification for the additional 8% is not clear and is not supported across the division. The majority of staff do not receive it and feel undervalued by that.
 - The Golden Hello and the additional 8% do not fully address retention issues;
 - It is a barrier when we want to reallocate staff during restructuring exercises.
- 3.3 The Directorate has now found a more rational and sustainable way to address recruitment and retention through the proposals listed here.
- 3.4 If we do not continue to offer a financial reward comparable with neighbouring local authorities, our experienced frontline social workers are likely to move to another authority. Appropriate financial rewards must be developed alongside the development of clear progression routes, recognising skills and competencies.
- 3.5 The Laming report has highlighted the necessity for authorities to ensure that all their social workers are fully trained to meet a complex role that is becoming more open to public and political challenge. Lord Laming has recommended that the Social Work Task Force, the Children's Workforce Development Council and local authorities implement on a national basis clear progression routes for Children's Social Workers. The Government have committed to the creation of a role of Advanced Social Work Professional in Children's and Families Social Work, as part of a career framework.
- 3.6 Children's Social Workers are encouraged to undertake the postgraduate diploma in Working with Children, Young People, their Families and Carers, and the completion of this course is a pre-requisite to becoming a Senior Practitioner in Medway.
- 3.7 A number of workforce and reward issues need to be addressed through changes to the remuneration arrangements. These include the development of:
- An approach that is fit for the social worker labour market.
 - Staff retention to prevent the best staff from moving to neighbouring authorities;
 - A career grade that will reward qualified practitioners in recognition of their professional expertise;
 - A bespoke training and development programme for staff that ensures a skilled, informed and competent workforce, in line with Laming recommendations.

4. Options

- 4.1 Lord Laming's report states that career development is important for social workers, regardless of their length of experience. The Social

Worker grade is Grade B1/2, SCP 27 (£22958) to SCP 41 (£34549) with a qualification pay bar at SCP 38. Progression is by yearly increment. It is proposed that these posts be re-graded to PO1, SCP 33 – SCP 43 (£27,849 - £36,313).

4.2 It is acknowledged that levels of expertise vary according to experience and skills. For that reason it is proposed that a 3-tier competency framework is utilised for all staff. This framework will enable staff to progress through this pay scale at an appropriately enhanced pace as they demonstrate increased competencies and effectiveness.

- **Level 1 Social Worker.** Social workers immediately post qualification. It will be at this stage that Social Workers will complete their induction and basic training.
- **Level 2 Social Worker.** This would be the level at which social workers are continuing to develop their skills. Staff will have already demonstrated the ability to consolidate learning post qualification and be competent to complete statutory functions without direct supervision. Staff will be working towards completion of their post graduate diploma.
- **Level 3 Social Worker.** This will be the main grade for experienced and competent social workers. The worker will have demonstrated excellent understanding and effective practice in undertaking their specific social worker role and will have completed their post graduate diploma.

4.3 The table shows how the social work grade would have the three competency bands:

Competency Band	Spinal Column Point	Salary
Level 3 Social Worker	43	36313
	42	35430
	41	34549
Level 2 Social Worker	40	33661
	39	32800
	38	31754
	37	30851
Level 1 Social Worker	36	30011
	35	29236
	34	28636
	33	27849

4.4 Progression would be by yearly increment with an opportunity for acceleration:

- **To level 2:** Completion of both the “consolidation” module (PQ1) of the post graduate diploma and the Medway Council children’s social worker induction course.
- **To level 3:** Completion of the post graduate diploma (full PQ).

- 4.5 To ensure that staff have consolidated their learning post qualification and working towards becoming a fully qualified children's social worker, the completion of PQ1 and enrolment onto the remainder of the post graduate diploma will be a requirement for advancing to pay point 36.
- 4.6 As the full PQ must be completed within 5 years, staff will not progress beyond pay point 40 without having completed the full PQ. The above criteria will also be applied to experienced social worker applicants. No social worker will be appointed above pay point 40 without having completed the full PQ Framework.
- 4.7 To ensure that all staff have access to this accelerated progression, Medway will need to commit to funding required places on the post graduate diploma. The consolidation module costs £500 and is completed within 1 year. The 5 modules required to complete the post graduate diploma cost £550 each and are completed over 2+ years.
- 4.8 It is not foreseen that there will be any restriction on staff who wish to undertake these post-qualification awards. This year alone has seen 30 children's social workers undertake the Consolidation module and 10 access the main framework.
- 4.9 The long term outcome and benefit to the service will be to increase our supply of experienced and effective children's social workers, we would hope to see a steady increase the number of social workers working at level 3. The proposal for a re-grade for children's social workers should enable the Directorate to meet the under 10% Government target for children's social work vacancies.

Additional payments for Senior Practitioners and Team Managers

- 4.10 Senior Practitioners and Team Managers are paid at PO2 (£31754 - £40741) and PO3, (£36313 - £45341) grades respectively. The substantive salary is not significantly out of line with that paid by other authorities.
- 4.11 It is proposed that the market premium for those Senior Practitioners and Team Managers currently in receipt of it be replaced with a permanent Additional Responsibilities payment to Senior Practitioners and Team Managers in Duty and Assessment teams, in recognition of their supervisory and managerial responsibilities for front-line child protection work.
- 4.12 The Directorate has considered the following remuneration options for these managers:

Option	Risks	Benefit
1. Maintain the status quo, paying market premia payments to staff currently in receipt of those payments.	Creates ill-will for those not in receipt of market premia, as the rationale was not clear or well-supported.	No new costs.
2. Withdraw market premia and make no additional payments at all	Demoralising for staff in high-risk child protection managerial posts who would lose pay, which could have a significant impact on service delivery.	Make savings. Equal playing field with no differentiation of treatment.
3. Pay additional allowances to all Team Managers and Senior Practitioners	No recognition of front-line child protection supervisory or managerial responsibilities in front line child protection teams. There has been little difficulty in appointing to posts that do not carry the market premia.	Much higher cost. There would be no differentiation of treatment.
4. Pay an additional responsibilities allowance to Team Manager and Senior Practitioner posts in Duty and Assessment teams, in recognition of their front-line supervisory and managerial child protection duties.		Enables the Directorate to secure good management of front-line safeguarding services. Similar costs to market premium payments currently made to senior practitioners and team managers.

Option	Risks	Benefit
		Clear justification for additional allowance acceptable to managers

4.13 The Directorate's preferred option is Option 4, recognising that it is managers of these teams who are at the frontline of particularly challenging child protection work, which requires very able and experienced managers to make difficult decisions in high-risk cases.

4.14 The Directorate has not withdrawn the Market Premium payment from the 4 senior practitioners and team managers who were entitled to it in 2005 but no longer have supervisory or managerial responsibilities for front line child protection but now proposes to remove this on a phased basis. This would be 100% protection for the first year from 1 December 2009, 75% protection for the second year and 25% protection for the third year with no further protection from Year 4.

5. Consultation

5.1 These proposals have already been shared with staff, the Black Workers' Forum and the Disabled Workers' Forum and the Trade Unions and the large majority of staff see this as a positive way forward and have in fact been actively been seeking an arrangement of this kind for some time. The Trade Unions sought assurances that sufficient training would be made available for Social Workers and that the proposals would result in improved recruitment and retention of Social workers.

6. Financial Implications

6.1 If permanent social workers were recruited to fill our vacancies of 7 staff, this would prevent the current overspend (approximately £101,500) resulting from the use of expensive agency staff.

6.2 There are 14.0 social worker posts in the Young Offenders Team who are included within this proposal to ensure parity across Medway for children's social workers. YOT social workers have not been in receipt of the Market Premia payments. A number of these posts are based at the young offenders institute at Cookham Wood and the Prison Service reimburses the costs associated with these staff back to us.

6.3 The figures below include on-costs and reflect the cost of implementing the career grade for social workers and the cost of an additional responsibility payment to £3,000 to the Senior Practitioners, and £3,500 to the Team Managers in Duty and Assessment Teams

(existing establishment is 9 Senior Practitioners and 3 Team Managers).

SOCIAL WORKER RE-GRADE	Social Workers £	Senior Practitioners £	12 months total £	4 months total £
Childrens Care	213,500	11,500	225,000	75,000
Young Offenders Team	3,800		3,800	1,270
Total	217,300	11,500	228,800	76,270

6.4 £150,000 was allocated in the 2009-10 base budget which reduces the 2010-11 pressure identified in the table above to £78,800. This pressure has been incorporated in the directorate's 2010-11 revenue budget proposals, currently being scrutinised by Members through the medium term financial planning process. For 2009– 10, the £150,000 covers the 4 month cost of £76,270. The overspend of approximately £101,500, referred to at the beginning of this section is set against the current overall under spend within the Children and Adults Directorate.

6.5 It is proposed that that the transitional arrangements for dealing with the phasing out of the market premia scheme and assimilation arrangements for the basic social work grade be delegated to the Director of Children and Adult Services in accordance with the Council's normal arrangements in these circumstances.

7. Legal implications

7.1 Implementation of the proposed career framework will require a variation to the contracts of employment of the relevant staff. It has therefore been necessary to consult fully with the affected staff and seek their consent to the variation prior to implementation of the proposed changes. It is anticipated that most staff will agree to the proposed changes. Those social workers not wishing to access the new pay arrangements and undertake the required training may opt to continue on their present pay arrangements, with the exception of the market premium which will be no longer be paid to any staff and would be phased out as set out above.

8. Risk Management

8.1 Failure to address the issues of recruitment and retention of children's Social Workers, Senior Practitioners and Team Managers will result in a high level of vacancies, which will impact severely on the quality of service that can be provided to children and their families in Medway.

9. Diversity Impact Assessment

9.1 A Diversity Impact Assessment (DIA) has been undertaken on the proposals and it has been found that it is not necessary to carry out a full impact assessment. The screening form is attached at appendix B to the report.

10. Recommendations

10.1 The Employment Matters Committee is asked to agree:

- (i) Implementation of the career progression framework for the main grade social workers with effect from 1 December 2009.
- (ii) Additional responsibilities payments of £3500 a year to Team Managers and £3000 a year to Senior Practitioners in the Duty and Long-term teams in recognition of their front-line safeguarding duties with effect from 1 December 2009.
- (iii) That the transitional arrangements for dealing with the phasing out of the market premia scheme and assimilation arrangements for the basic social work grade be delegated to the Director of Children and Adults.

Lead officer contact

Olivia Butler, Interim Assistant Director, Children's Care
Tel: 01634 331205
E: olivia.butler@medway.gov.uk

Background papers

Laming recommendations
Medway's Children's and Young People's Plan

LAMING RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHILDREN'S SOCIAL WORK

Recommendation 11

DCSF should revise Working Together to Safeguard Children to set out clear expectations at all points where concerns about a child's safety are received, ensuring intake/duty teams have sufficient training and expertise to take referrals and that staff have immediate, on site support available from an experienced social worker. Local Authorities should take appropriate action to implement these changes.

Recommendation 15

The Social Work Task Force should establish guidelines on guaranteed supervision time for social workers that may vary depending on experience.

Recommendation 16

DCSF should revise Working Together to Safeguard Children to set out the elements of high quality supervision focused on case planning, constructive challenge and professional development.

Recommendation 24

The Social Work Task Force should:

- i. develop the basis for a national children's social worker supply strategy that will address recruitment and retention difficulties, to be implemented by DCSF. This should have a particular emphasis on child protection social workers¹;
- ii. work with the Children's Workforce Development Council and other partners to implement, on a national basis, clear progression routes for children's social workers;
- iii. develop national guidelines setting out maximum case-loads of children in need and child protection cases, supported by a weighting mechanism to reflect the complexity of cases, that will help plan the workloads of children's social workers; and
- iv. develop a strategy for remodelling children's social work which delivers shared ownership of cases, administrative support and multi-disciplinary support to be delivered nationally.

Recommendation 29

Children's Trusts should ensure that all staff who work with children receive initial training and continuing professional development which enables them to understand normal child development and recognise potential signs of abuse or neglect.

¹ A national strategy for retention and recruitment schemes is to be set out in Autumn 2009. National guidance on caseload weighting systems & progression routes for social workers is expected from the Social Work Task Force. A Social Work Reform programme is expected to outline a national strategy for remodelling social work in Autumn 2009.

Appendix B - Diversity Impact Assessment: Screening Form

Directorate Business Support Department/ Children and Adults Directorate	Name of Policy Proposed Career Framework and revised incentives for Children's Social Workers and Managers	
Officer responsible for assessment Paula Charker, Head of HR Services	Date of assessment 2 October 2009	New or existing? New
Defining what is being assessed		
1. Briefly describe the purpose and objectives	To implement a new career pay progression framework for the main grade social workers with effect from 1 December 2009. To provide additional responsibility payments of £3500 a year to Team managers and £3000 a year to Senior Practitioners in the Duty and Long-term teams in recognition so of their front-line safeguarding duties with effect from 1 December 2009. The objective being to provide a more rational and sustainable way to address the recruitment and retention of Children's social workers and to provide training and development for staff to ensure a skilled, informed and competent workforce.	
2. Who is intended to benefit, and in what way?	Children and families of Medway will benefit as there will be consistent support from Children's Social Workers when needed. The Council will benefit by improving current recruitment and retention issues. The provision of a competitive salary will help to deter staff moving to neighbouring authorities. Also, this reinforces the council's commitment to complying with its required safeguarding responsibilities. Staff will benefit by having a career graded post. This will reward qualified practitioners in recognition of their professional expertise, helping to provide an engaged and valued workforce.	
3. What outcomes are wanted?	Children in Medway are helped to stay safe Improved recruitment and retention of Children's Social Workers. An engaged workforce who feel valued. Compliance with the council's safeguarding responsibilities.	

Appendix B - Diversity Impact Assessment: Screening Form

<p>4. What factors/forces could contribute to or detract from the outcomes?</p>	<p>Contribute</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Children's Social Workers embracing the new competency framework and accompanying salary changes; - Managers ensuring Children's Social Workers are fully aware of their responsibilities and the requirements for career and salary progression. - The council must ensure that the training and development programme is implemented effectively. 	<p>Detract</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Members failing to agree to the changes could result in adverse recruitment and retention issues and the risk of Medway failing to comply with its safeguarding responsibilities; - External market forces could detract if salaries within other local authorities within the local area increase; - Insufficient training and development provided to Children's Social Worker posts could result in a shortage of skilled, informed and competent staff. - The competency framework must be managed in accordance with the scheme to prevent inequality.
<p>5. Who are the main stakeholders?</p>	<p>The Council, employees and children of Medway.</p>	
<p>6. Who implements this and who is responsible?</p>	<p>HR Services implements this scheme, the lead officer is Tricia Palmer, Assistant Director, Organisational Services.</p>	

Appendix B - Diversity Impact Assessment: Screening Form

Assessing impact	
7. Are there concerns that there <u>could</u> be a differential impact due to <i>ethnicity/ racial groups</i> ?	
	No
What evidence exists for this?	<p>The proposals have been consulted upon with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Trade unions - Disabled Workers Forum - Black Workers Forum - Medway Council legal services - affected staff. <p>The trade unions sought assurances that sufficient training would be made available for Social Workers and that the proposals would result in improved recruitment and retention of Social Workers.</p>
8. Are there concerns that there <u>could</u> be a differential impact due to <i>disability</i> ?	
	No
What evidence exists for this?	See para.7 same applies.
9. Are there concerns that there <u>could</u> be a differential impact due to <i>gender</i> ?	
	<p>No</p> <p>Whilst there are no significant concerns that there could be a differential impact due to gender, the council should be mindful of the following factors</p> <p>The new pay scheme applied to the Children's Social Worker post is based on service-based incremental progression with an opportunity to progress faster up the pay scale by obtaining the necessary competency/qualification.</p> <p>It has been argued in case law that the operation of service-based pay progression is indirectly discriminatory on grounds of sex because women generally have less service than their male comparitors. However the European Court of Justice has held that where length of service as a criteria for determining pay leads to indirect discrimination, it does not require specific justification by the employer, unless the claimant provides evidence that raises serious doubts about the efficacy of the criteria.</p> <p>2) The competencies determining increase to the next pay level is determined by gaining access to training and qualification. Therefore both men and women must have equal access to training. Care should therefore be taken to ensure that women are enabled to undertake necessary training at all stages of their career.</p>
What evidence exists for this?	See para. 7 same applies.
10. Are there concerns there <u>could</u> be a differential impact due to <i>sexual orientation</i> ?	
	No
What evidence exists for this?	See para. 7 same applies.

Appendix B - Diversity Impact Assessment: Screening Form

11. Are there concerns there <u>could</u> be a have a differential impact due to <i>religion/belief</i> ?		
	NO	
What evidence exists for this?	See para. 7 same applies.	
12. Are there concerns there <u>could</u> be a differential impact due to <i>age</i> ?		
	NO	
What evidence exists for this?	See para 15.	
13. Are there concerns that there <u>could</u> be a differential impact due to <i>being trans-gendered or transsexual</i> ?		
	NO	
What evidence exists for this?	See para. 7 same applies.	
14. Are there any <i>other groups</i> that would find it difficult to access/make use of the policy, or who might experience unfavourable treatment (eg people with caring responsibilities or dependants, those with an offending past, or people living in rural areas)?		
	No	
What evidence exists for this?	See para. 7 same applies.	
15. Are there concerns there <u>could</u> be a differential impact due to <i>multiple discriminations</i> (eg disability <u>and</u> age)?		The council should be mindful that a competency based pay progression scheme based on qualification attainment could disadvantage <u>younger</u> women who may wish to start a family, take maternity or adoption leave or change their working hours. It is feasible that employees within this group could be at a disadvantage compared to their mail comparitors, who by tradition would not take such a break and could therefore benefit from the career progression at a much faster pace. However, to minimise this the council should ensure that access to training is made available at all times and managers should ensure women on maternity and adoption leave are kept fully up to date with developments.
	NO	
What evidence exists for this?		

Conclusions & recommendation

16. Could the differential impacts identified in questions 7-15 amount to there being the potential for adverse impact?		Providing the new pay scheme is monitored and reviewed and access to training is made available to all individuals at all parts of their career the potential for adverse impact is minimal.
	NO	
17. Can the adverse impact be justified on the grounds of promoting equality of opportunity for one group? Or another reason?		
	NO	

Appendix B - Diversity Impact Assessment: Screening Form

APPENDIX B

Recommendation to proceed to a full impact assessment?		
No	This policy complies with the requirements of the legislation and there is evidence to show this is the case.	
NO, BUT ...	<p>What is required to ensure this complies with the requirements of the legislation? (see DIA Guidance Notes)</p>	<p>The council should ensure that the new pay system is monitored and reviewed regularly with a view to highlighting any possible equal pay issues such as pay gaps between genders.</p> <p>The council should ensure that access to training is made available to all employees at all times.</p>
YES	<p>Give details of key person responsible and target date for carrying out full impact assessment (see DIA Guidance Notes)</p>	N/A

Action plan to make minor modifications		
Outcome	Actions (with date of completion)	Officer responsible
Staff involved in reviewing the policy	Monitor and review pay system	Paula Charker, Head of HR Services

Planning ahead: Reminders for the next review		
Date of next review	October 2010	
Areas to check at next review (eg new census information, new legislation due)	A more in-depth review of demographics could be undertaken to see whether there are any issues of concern emerging.	
Is there <i>another group</i> (eg new communities) that is relevant and ought to be considered next time?		
Signed (completing officer/service manager)	Date	
Signed (service manager/Assistant Director)	Date	

Related documents
XPert HR Age Discrimination legislation advice 2/10/09