

EMPLOYMENT MATTERS COMMITTEE

6 JUNE 2023

SKILLS SHORTAGE AND RETENTION ALLOWANCE POLICY

Report from: Nicola Trainor, Head of Council Planning & Programmes
Author: Lisa Morgan, HR Business Partner

Summary

This is a new policy to replace existing policy and practice relating to the awarding of allowances and market premia. There may be revisions to this policy as we learn from the MedPay Review pilot group and roll out of the review in Phase 2 however consistency of practice is urgently required and it is proposed that the practice set out within the policy be introduced with immediate effect whilst consultation is underway with trade unions and staff.

1. Budget and policy framework

1.1. This is a policy revision and is therefore a matter for this Committee.

2. Background

2.1. The MedPay review has focused on various aspects of pay and remuneration to ensure that Medway Council is a fair and attractive employer.

2.2. Inconsistencies across the council relating to the issuing and application of the market premia scheme have been considered and has led to the drafting of a revised policy and practice guidance for market allowances.

2.3. It is proposed that the new policy be titled 'Skills and Retention Allowances' rather than 'market premia scheme'.

3. Policy proposal

3.1. To introduce this updated policy (Appendix A) with immediate effect in relation to new proposals for market allowances.

3.2. To introduce this new policy when reviewing existing market allowances at the point when review is scheduled in accordance with contractual terms.

4. Advice and analysis

- 4.1. This is a new policy which will need to be consulted upon with trade unions and employee forums however at this stage it has been identified as part of the MedPay review that there is inconsistency in practice which needs to be addressed and so it is proposed that the policy be consulted upon simultaneously as the content relates mainly to operational best practice.
- 4.2. A Diversity Impact Assessment (DIA) is undertaken in relation to changes made under the MedPay Review and is considered when reviewing individual roles.
- 4.3. This new policy will provide a reference document for those moving to the enhanced MedPay scheme.

5. Consultation

- 5.1 The new policy will be circulated to trade unions and employee forums for comment and should there be any major changes as a result of any comments made would be brought back to this committee for agreement, although, as the policy mainly focuses on operational practice, it is not envisaged that there will be many suggestions made.
- 5.2 In relation to the MedPay review the recognised trade unions have been engaged with through the Corporate Consultative Committee and Joint Consultative Committee, with the two main trade unions for support staff also regularly updated through informal communication channels.
- 5.3 The review team also devised a communications and engagement strategy to ensure key stakeholders and all staff in the council are kept informed of any proposed changes to policy and practice and are invited to comment and provide feedback directly, through trade unions, communication champions, Medway Makers, and other employee forums.

6. Financial implications

- 6.1 Skills Shortage and Retention Allowances agreed must be affordable within the existing budgets and are subject to approval by the service and confirmation that the budget exists and will not cause a pressure.

7. Legal implications

- 7.1 There are no direct legal implications to this report.

8. Recommendations

- 8.1 Members are asked to agree the new policy.

Lead officer contact

Nicola Trainor, Head of Council Planning & Programmes,
nicola.trainor@medway.gov.uk, 01634 332594

Appendices

Appendix A – Skills Shortage and Retention Allowance Policy Document and appendices

Appendix B – Current Market premia scheme

Background Papers:

None