

Employment Matters Committee

4 December 2024

Youth and Community Workers – Pay and Conditions

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Summary

This report sets out the options in respect of the Youth Service aligning to MedPay Performance, Progression and Pay (PPP) or Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC) Youth and Community Worker pay and conditions.

1. Recommendations

1.1 Employment Matters Committee are asked to consider the options in respect of pay and conditions for Youth Workers and agree a preferred option ready for the 29 January 2025 report to this Committee prior to consideration at Full Council as part of our pay offer.

2. Budget and policy framework

2.1 This decision is within the council’s policy and budget framework.

3. Background

3.1. In February 2014, Full Council agreed to Medway Council coming out of the Joint National Council Terms and Conditions for Youth and Community Worker national pay awards.

3.2. In April 2014, a new pay and grade scheme for Youth Workers (MedPay Youth and Community Support Worker) was implemented which linked progression to performance and removed automatic increments. Pay awards also changed from national to local collective bargaining.

3.3. All other terms and conditions of employment for Youth and Community Workers continued to be linked to the ‘Pink Book’, which is the terms and conditions for youth and community workers.

3.4. The Joint National Council for Youth and Community Workers pay scale is linked to specific aspects of youth work, including but not exclusive to

recognising unsocial hours working, residential activities, requirements for face to face working and qualification frameworks unique to youth work.

- 3.5. Over time the decision to move to local pay has resulted in pay scales falling behind the nationally recognised pay scale, reducing the service's ability to compete with other positions and inhibiting recruitment efforts.
- 3.6. In August 2022, Employment Matters Committee agreed the principles and framework for a new pay approach (MedPay PPP). All posts that are on the MedPay Youth and Community Support Worker payscale have been evaluated as part of the MedPay PPP review. A comparison of pay has been undertaken against the existing pay structure and JNC Youth and Community (see Appendix 1 to the report) to review the impact.

4. Options

4.1 Option 1 – Do nothing.

Advantages:

- No additional cost
- No consultation required
- No requirement to change pension scheme

Disadvantages:

- Youth Service is not aligned with MedPay PPP or JNC Youth and Community Workers.
- Pay does not align locally or nationally with other youth worker roles.
- The role of Youth Support Worker does not comply with the national framework of a 4-point scale due to the erosion of spinal column points 1-4.
- Pay differential will continue to impede recruitment and retention of workforce.
- No formal job evaluation.

4.2 Option 2 – Align to MedPay PPP

Advantages:

- Potentially lower cost (based on basic salary only) to implement compared to Option 3.
- Aligns Youth Service staff with MedPay PPP and makes it easier for colleagues in Finance, Payroll and Resourcing.
- Simplifies future changes
- Increase to salary budget absorbed by Medpay PPP for the financial year of implementation.
- Council retains decision on pay awards.
- All roles are formally job evaluated.

Disadvantages:

- The JNC salary is inclusive of unsocial working whereas all roles at Range 3 or below under MedPay will attract an allowance of time and a third for hours worked between 8pm and 6am Monday to Friday, time and a half for all hours worked on a Saturday and Sunday, and Bank Holiday enhancement of double time plus TOIL. This is likely to increase the cost significantly.
- All staff will need to move from the Teachers' Pension Scheme to the Local Government Pension Scheme.
- The annual leave entitlement for Youth Workers is 30 days increasing to 35 days. The annual leave entitlement under MedPay PPP is 25 days increasing to 32 days max.
- Professionally qualified workers recognise and are more likely to be attracted to roles that are aligned to the nationally recognised JNC terms and conditions for Youth Work. Moving fully to MedPay may improve salaries but may be less effective in attracting qualified applicants.

4.3 Option 3 – Align to JNC Youth and Community Workers terms and conditions except for automatic increments. Introduction of career progression framework for youth.

Advantages:

- The JNC scale recognises the working conditions of youth work and is linked to the National Occupational Standards.
- The JNC scale has clear requirements for unsocial hours work (8 unsocial hour sessions a fortnight) as well as containing stipulations around the percentage of face-to-face work and pay for residential work. It also aligns the work professional qualifications for Youth Work and the National Occupational Standards for Youth Work.
- Pay is inclusive of unsocial hours work.
- No need to change pension scheme.
- More attractive for qualified workers, making it easier to recruit and retain a high-quality workforce.
- Pay will track national rates and maintain competitive offers for Youth Workers comparable to other areas.
- JNC annual leave (prior to 5 years continuous local government service) is higher (30 days rising to 35 days)
- Youth work will be aligned to the principles of MedPay PPP in respect of the appraisal process and career progression.

Disadvantages:

- Potentially higher cost than MedPay PPP, though this may be absorbed as JNC pay is inclusive of unsocial working.

- Youth Workers remain on a different pay scale to other Medway staff.
- Medway relinquishes control of pay decision for Youth Workers.

4.4 Options 2 and 3 will require consultation with trade unions and staff.

5. Advice and analysis

5.1 Option 1 is not considered to be a viable option as the pay differential will continue to impede both recruitment and retention of the workforce.

5.2 Options 2 and 3 offer a level of remuneration and salary improvement that should help address issues with recruitment and retention for youth work staff. Recruitment has been particularly difficult in recent years at all post levels, so this is a priority. While it may seem attractive to align with MedPay PPP (Option 2) for streamlining the Council pay, this may not be as cost effective, requiring significant HR work related to consultations and pension movement while creating potential difficulties for the service in managing commitment to unsocial hours work and introducing additional pay complexity for staff needing to claim enhancements.

5.3 For the reasons set out above, this report recommends realigning Youth Workers to the National JNC pay and conditions (Option 3) except for automatic increments. A career progression framework will be developed aligned to the MedPay PPP model enabling staff to progress through the range based on competency.

5.4 A Diversity Impact Assessment (DIA) is attached as Appendix 2 to this report.

6 Risk management

6.1 Risk management is an integral part of good governance. The Council has a responsibility to identify and manage threats and risks to achieve its strategic objectives and enhance the value of services it provides to the community. Using the following table this section should therefore consider any significant risks arising from your report.

Risk	Description	Action to avoid or mitigate risk	Risk rating
Failure to recruit and retain staff	Unable to attract to vacant posts and retain existing staff	Alignment to JNC terms and conditions for youth workers	BIII

Likelihood	Impact:
A Very likely	I Catastrophic
B Likely	II Major
C Unlikely	III Moderate
D Rare	IV Minor

7 Consultation

- 7.1 The recognised trade unions have been engaged through the Corporate Consultative Committee.
- 7.2 Staff have been briefed on the options proposed and will be kept informed of the proposed changes and invited to comment and provide feedback directly and through trade unions, a summary of this will be available in the January report.

8 Climate change implications

- 8.1 Whilst this has neither a positive or negative climate change/carbon emission implication, it should be noted that any other form of further recognition would need to be considered and will be covered as part of the Medpay review on allowances.

9 Financial implications

- 9.1 The 2024/25 staffing budget for Youth is £476,906.
- 9.2 The proposed staffing budget for Youth based on Option 2 is £522,918. These costs would be absorbed by MedPay PPP.
- 9.3 The proposed staffing budget for Youth based on Option 3 is £533,729. However, it is noted that pay negotiations are currently ongoing and the pay award for September 2024 has not yet been confirmed (see Appendix 1).
- 9.4 Subject to comments from Employment Matters Committee on 4 December 2024, January's report will be to recommend the budget addition to Council, the matter would be considered by Full Council at the meeting on 27 February 2025. It is anticipated that the changes would be implemented with effect from 1 April 2025.
- 9.5 The draft budget includes an allowance for the cost of realigning pay for the youth service along with an allowance for the implementation of the MedPay review which would be used to fund the agreed preferred option.

10 Legal implications

- 10.1 A full and thorough consultation with those affected by the proposed change to their terms and conditions will need to be undertaken. Any group or individuals disadvantaged by the proposals will need to be identified and steps taken to remove or alleviate any disadvantage encountered.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 - Table of current pay scales (MedPay Youth and Community Support Worker) compared to MedPay PPP and JNC Youth and Community Workers.

Appendix 2 - Diversity Impact Assessment (DIA).

Background papers

[Full Council minutes, 14 February 2014](#)

[Employment Matters Committee, 31 August 2022](#)