

CHILDREN AND ADULTS
DIRECTORATE MANAGEMENT TEAM

Children and Adults – Pay structure for social work and occupational therapist qualified roles

Report from: Sam Beck-Farley, Chief Organisational Culture Officer

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Summary

This report sets out a proposal to align basic pay for Social Workers and Occupational Therapist (OT) roles in Adult Social Care with Children's Services to create a single Social Work/OT pay scale. In addition, it is proposing to align on-call payments for Heads of Service in Adults Social Care with Children's Services.

1. Recommendations

1.1. To request that Employment Matters Committee

- (a) support the proposal of aligning pay for social workers and occupational therapist roles across Children and Adult Services for consideration at Full Council as part of our pay offer.
- (b) support the proposal of aligning the on-call payments for Heads of Service across Children and Adult Services.

2. Budget and policy framework

3.1. Additional budget pressures will need to be discussed at Employment Matters Committee.

3. Background

4.1. In April 2018, Medway Children's Services introduced a new career and pay grade to respond to the challenges in recruiting and retaining staff. This led to the creation of a separate social worker pay scale for children's services being introduced with extended pay grades.

- 4.2. The recruitment of permanent social work staff is highly competitive, and the supply of experienced social workers is limited.
- 4.3. Over the last 18-24 months Adult Social Care have been experiencing challenges in the recruitment and retention of social workers and are becoming more reliant on agency social workers to fill vacancies. The vacancy rate across grades SW2 – SW5 is currently 35%. Predominantly this relates to social work posts.
- 4.4. Whilst all social work and occupational therapist roles have been evaluated using the NJC job evaluation scheme the basic pay for social workers across Children and Adults does not align due to differences in the length of the pay scales between Children and Adults at grades NQSW, SW2 and SW3. This is leading to challenges from the existing workforce in Adult Social Care.
- 4.5. Head of Service roles within Children’s Services pay an on-call allowance of £3,000 per annum, where as in Adult Social Care Service Managers are paid at the rate of £40 per on call.

5. Advice and analysis

- 5.1 This proposal addresses the disparity in basic pay across Children’s and Adults Social Care through aligning the pay scales and the payment for on-call. This should help diminish any future challenges in pay and assist with recruitment and retention.
- 5.2 Skills allowances and retention allowances are based on salary benchmarking data across the sector. There will continue to be a disparity of allowances between Children and Adults based on the evidence gathered.

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 would lead to additional budget pressures	Unable to attract to vacant posts and retain existing staff	Alignment of pay scales across Children’s and Adults Social Care.	BII

For risk rating, please refer to the following table (please **retain** table in final report):

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

7. Consultation

7.1. Formal consultation with staff in Social Care with Trade Union Colleagues will be taken forward.

8. Climate change implications

8.1. [The Council declared a climate change emergency in April 2019](#) - item 1038D refers, and has set a target for Medway to become carbon neutral by 2050.

8.2. There are no direct implications arising from this report.

9. Financial implications

9.1. The proposed increase to the staffing budget to align pay scales is approximately £136,326 per annum, excluding oncosts.

9.2. The proposed increase to the staffing budget to align on call payments is a maximum of £12,000 per annum, excluding oncosts.

9.3. Subject to comments from Employment Matters Committee it will be necessary 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.

10. Legal implications

11.1 There are no immediate legal implications as a result of this recommendation.

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Appendices

Background papers

None