

**LOCAL JOINT COMMITTEE
12 OCTOBER 2022
4.00 - 4.30 PM**



Present:

Councillors Leake (Chair), Allen and Angell
David Allais, UNISON
Pat Kenny, UNISON
David McMullen, GMB

Apologies for absence were received from:
Councillors Wade

6. Declarations of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

7. Minutes from Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 July 2022, were approved as a correct record.

8. Urgent Items of Business

There were no urgent items of business.

Employment Committee: Agenda and Related Matters

The Sub-Committee was briefed and discussed the following matters which were to be considered by the Employment Committee later in the evening:

9. Social Worker Pay/Retention & Recruitment People

The Assistant Director: Human Resources & Organisational Development, Paul Young, advised the Sub-Committee that it was proposed to introduce revised pay arrangements across social care staff to address the significant recruitment and retention challenges. A revised pay and grading scheme was to be introduced, along with a 4 per cent retention payment for children's social workers and an extension of the market premium payments to the Heads of Service roles in Adult Social Care. The aim was to reduce the reliance on agency workers and therefore costs. At the same time, it was hoped to stabilise the social care workforce by recruiting qualified workers to vacant permanent roles, whilst retaining existing workers by also providing better career opportunities, training and development.

Mr Young stressed that it was a particularly difficult area. Recruitment in other work areas had been difficult but nowhere near as bad as with professional social workers.

In response to a suggestion that the Council was always chasing the dragon, Mr Young advised that on this occasion the Council was ahead of the dragon. The likelihood was that other local authorities would however respond by offering

enhanced pay. Therefore, the Council was not just increasing pay, but also seeking to offer support, training and development opportunities and aiming to help improve staff's work/life balance. The Council was also looking to have better arrangements to grow its own staff, including offering more apprenticeships. This was in response to the lack of social workers available in the market. The Council wanted to become an employer of choice.

Pat Kenny indicated that most councils were talking about it. Slough had been spending £2m per month on agency workers across the Council. There were also issues about some agency workers who, if employed, might face disciplinary action, but if coming from an agency would just leave one authority only to move to another. He believed that if the Council was perceived as a good employer, it was more likely that staff would stay there.

Mr Young indicated that exit interviews had revealed that more people were leaving to go to agencies, increasing the costs to the Council. He stressed that the Council wanted to have a stable workforce.

Councillor Leake indicated that it was a national problem that one council could not solve. A proper supply was required. The employers and unions needed to get together nationally to see how it could be addressed. Modular training may assist.

There were no other comments.

10. **2022 Pay Award**

The Assistant Director: Human Resources & Organisational Development, Paul Young, advised the Sub-Committee the employers had offered, with effect from 1 April 2022, an increase of £1,925 on all NJC pay points 1 and above and an increase of 4.04% on all allowances. With effect from 1 April 2023, there would be an increase of one day to all employees' annual leave entitlement and the deletion of pay point 1 from the NJC pay spine. They had rejected a one-off COVID-19 recognition payment, the introduction of a homeworking allowance, the introduction of a school support staff retention payment scheme and a reduction of the working week to 35 hours with no loss of pay.

David Allais reported that UNISON had accepted the offer with 62% in favour of the offer. David McMullen stated that the GMB ballot would close on 21 October 2022 and was hopeful that the offer would be accepted. Mr Young added that, if accepted, would be implemented for payment in November.

11. **Matters to be Raised by Trade Unions**

No matters were raised by the trades unions.

CHAIRMAN