

## The Greater Manchester Pledge for workforce stability in children's social care

### **1. Introduction**

This Greater Manchester Pledge ("GM Pledge") is designed to address challenges related to the workforce of Children's Social Work Professionals with focus on the supply and quality of agency workers through evidenced protocols, adopted by other regions over many years, and a commitment to transparent and co-operative working.

### **2. Objectives of the Pledge**

Across the region we have significant numbers of children who are experiencing changes of social worker, it is our collective ambition to improve the experience and lives of our children and families by providing a stable workforce. This, in turn, will support the Local Authorities by reducing the costs associated with staff turnover and high numbers of agency staff. The GM Pledge also contributes towards tackling children's social care budget pressures caused by the high cost of agency staff.

The GM Pledge recognises the need to respond to these challenges collectively and in co-operation, providing clear protocols and mechanism of control.

### **3. Scope**

The GM Pledge covers agency staff within the Childrens Social Work Professional Workforce, including Children's Social Workers, Senior Social Workers, Advanced Practitioners, Independent Reviewing Officers, Assistant Team Managers and Team Manager roles (or equivalent) within the following Local Authorities:

- Bolton
- Bury
- Manchester
- Oldham
- Rochdale
- Salford
- Stockport
- Tameside
- Trafford
- Wigan

("the Local Authorities")

### **4. Effective Date**

The GM Pledge comes into effect on 1<sup>st</sup> November 2023.

### **5. Governance & Resources**

The GM Pledge is overseen by Directors of Children's Services who are responsible and accountable for ensuring that their service managers, HR, Managed Service Providers and agency suppliers implement the GM Pledge in a timely manner within each of the Local Authorities.

Directors of Children's Services will be supported by Assistant Directors of Children's Services, Principal Social Workers, Workforce Leads and Senior HR representatives from across the region.

Progress updates will be shared with GM DCS and GM HR Directors Groups on a quarterly basis and discussed sub-regionally. A HR Director will attend for the performance monitoring report item at the Quarterly DCS session and vice versa. Resources to support communication and consistent messaging across the key stakeholder groups, the supply chain and candidates will be made available in a central repository (GMCA).

## **6. Adoption of The GM Pledge**

Every Local Authority will include the GM Pledge in the terms of contracts and other documents to support the delivery of its objectives, working with Reed and other agencies to fully represent its terms throughout the supply chain.

The Directors of Children's Services commit to implementing the GM Pledge in their own service holding one another to account. The Local Authorities agree to:

- communicate within the Local Authority and hold Heads of Service and managers to account locally for adherence to the GM Pledge
- adopt the protocols for agency CSW recruitment and
- hold one another accountable through agreed processes of control and transparency.

## **7. Commitment to The GM Pledge**

The Directors of Children's Services commit to the GM Pledge for a period of 12 months.

Following 12 months (or earlier if needed) the rates and process will be reviewed by Directors of Childrens Services and HR Directors.

## **8. Management of agency staffing**

8.1. Rates of pay based on FTE hours for agency workers (Schedule 1):

The Local Authorities agree that they will:

- a. Pay agency social worker staff at pay rates no greater than those set out in Schedule 1 of the GM Pledge, instructing their Managed Service Providers and any agencies who supply each Local Authority of the rates. The pay rates set out should not be supplemented with any additional allowances (such as travel or accommodation) and all Heads of Service/Team Managers are not to go against this without express permission from their DCS. Milage payments at the agreed rate will still be made.
- b. Work in collaboration with Managed Service Providers to ensure that the assigned role title and pay rate for agency staff appropriately reflects the experience of each worker, aligned to the pay rates outlined in the GM Pledge.
- c. Not advertise any roles above the pay rates outlined within the GM Pledge. Any non-compliant adverts should be reported and removed, with support from the Managed Service Providers where adverts have been posted by agencies.
- d. Ensure that hours paid to workers reflect the hours worked within their contract.
- e. Not employ case working 'project' or 'parachute' CSW candidates. The Local Authorities will not use these descriptions or other similar terms to create any case working Children's Social Worker roles that are deemed to fall outside the pay rates and terms of the GM Pledge.

## 8.2. Referencing quality and supply chain engagement

The Local Authorities agree that they will:

- a. Adopt a common referencing standard (Schedule 2).
- b. Complete the reference template (Schedule 2) as part of the end of an assignment process for agency workers, supported by the Managed Service Providers.
- c. Complete the reference template (Schedule 2) in a timely manner providing detailed feedback on the capabilities and performance of workers alongside confirmation of dates, and not defer to the representing agency to provide a date reference.
- d. Ensure that the Managed Service Providers embed the template for use in the agency supply chain and ensure its use as part of their typical pre-employment compliance process.
- e. Work with Managed Service Providers to host conference calls with the CSW agency supply chain wherever possible to ensure needs and expectations for roles placed are fully understood. Agencies will be expected to retain and re-train this information with their staff to ensure learnings are captured and utilised in future recruitment activities.
- f. Work with the Managed Service Providers to ensure that any persistently noncompliant agencies are removed, suspended or demoted from the agency supply chain.
- g. In order to qualify for agency appointments, candidates must demonstrate a minimum of 2 years' post-qualified experience within Children's Services Social Work (irrespective of their pathway to the profession).

## 8.3. 6 Month 'Cool-off' period for transfer of workers:

The Local Authorities agree:

- a. Not to engage on an agency contract, candidates leaving a permanent contract with another Local Authority in Greater Manchester for a minimum of 6 months after leaving their permanent post. This does not apply to permanent staff moving to a permanent role in another Greater Manchester Local Authority. Social workers who are made redundant from a permanent post will be exempt from this requirement.

## 8.4. Notice Period

The Local Authorities have the right to:

- a. Instate a 3-week notice period for agency CSW candidates, committing to adopting a reciprocal arrangement between agency workers and Local Authorities to minimise immediate or quick departures and the associated impact on children and the permanent workforce.

## **9. Management of permanent staffing**

The LAs agree that they will:

- a. Refrain from proactive headhunting of staff from signatory Local Authorities committed to the GM Pledge directly or through third parties, unless for a promotional role.
- b. Engage in opportunities to work more effectively with the agency supply chain to better enable their support of permanent recruitment activities across the region.
- c. Provide mutual support and assistance to other signatories to the pledge wherever possible, recognising that the needs and challenges of each Local Authority will differ but our

collective commitment to Greater Manchester children is consistent. The support could, for example, involve the short-term provision of staff or leadership advice and support in specific areas.

## **10. Data sharing to monitor implementation and improve future CSW workforce development**

The Local Authorities agree that they will:

- a. Participate in surveys and data gathering by providing a timely, accurate and comprehensive response to requests so that accurate and reliable information is available to all signatories.
- b. Provide accurate and complete data to the GMCA's HR Metrics Service on a quarterly basis (working with Reed and in collaboration with other agencies where applicable). This information will be anonymised.

The parties to the GM Pledge will adhere to the following principles and practices and will comply with the UK General Data Protection Regulations, the Data Protection Act 2018 and all applicable law about the processing of personal data and privacy:

- Where it is necessary for a party to share personal data that cannot be truly anonymised, then they shall only share personal data or confidential information/data where an appropriate lawful basis has been established in accordance with data protection legislation
- They will process all personal data fairly and lawfully for specified and lawful purposes
- They will endeavour to hold relevant and accurate data, and where practical, they shall keep it up to date
- They shall not keep personal data for longer than is necessary and shall securely delete the data when no longer required
- They shall keep all data secure
- They shall endeavour to ensure that personal data is not transferred to countries outside of the European Economic Area (EEA) without adequate protection
- They shall obtain evidence that any third party involved in data processing is compliant with data protection legislation
- They shall regularly review associated internal controls and processes, how data is captured, kept safe and stored; and
- They shall periodically review their Privacy Policy and ensure full accessibility to all.

## **11. Transition to the GM Pledge**

The Local Authorities agree that they will:

- a. Commit to working within the pay rates and protocols of the GM Pledge from November 2023.
- b. Bring any existing agency workers who exceed the new GM Pledge pay rates in line with the pay rates within a reasonable time as agreed with each Local Authority.
- c. Bring any existing project or Managed Teams to an end within 6 months of the 1 November 2023
- d. Engage with the GMCA project team with performance management data to ensure governance arrangements are adhered to.

## **12. Continuous Development of the GM Pledge**

- a. The performance of the GM Pledge will be reviewed by the GM DCS and GM HR Directors groups with support from GMCA on a quarterly basis.
- b. The pay rates outlined in Schedule 1 will be reviewed at least annually in consultation with other regions nationally and in line with the annual pay award agreement.
- c. The protocols outlined in the GM Pledge will be reviewed at least annually in order to strengthen the GM Pledge.
- d. The GM Pledge forms part of a wider strategic workforce programme to respond to CSW recruitment and retention challenges.
- e. The Local Authorities will collaborate with other regions to strengthen the GM Pledge and developed shared objectives and opportunities where appropriate.
- f. The GM Pledge will be reviewed following the first 12 months and an analysis of success will be provided to each Local Authority.

***The Pledge was signed by Lead Members for Children and Young People and Directors of Children's Services on Friday 17 November 2023.***

## Schedule 1

### **FTE Pay rates for new agency staff (inclusive of on costs, exclusive of agency mark- up)**

The rates set out below are hourly rates (umbrella/Ltd company rates) and must be converted for the PAYE equivalent candidates.

These are rates inclusive of Employers' NI and holiday pay ie. equivalent to Ltd Co/Umbrella rates. The rates exclude agency mark ups, which are unchanged.

These rates have been arrived at by analysis of data collected from Greater Manchester Authorities' outlining the most common pay rates, as well as in collaboration with neighbouring regions to ensure that they are representative of market rates.

The pay rates have been applied based on existing agreed rates across Greater Manchester

<b>Job Categories</b>	<b>Agency Worker Pay Rate</b>
Social Worker	Up to and including £39.00
Senior Social Worker	Up to and including £40.00
Assistant Team Manager/Practice Manager	Up to and including £43.00
Team Manager	Up to and including £46.00

*The rates set out should not be supplemented with any additional allowances (such as travel or accommodation).*

## Schedule 2

### **Greater Manchester Agency Children’s Social Worker Reference Template**

This reference template is to be completed for the relevant agency worker to assess their competency in relation to their role, to ensure the safeguarding and welfare of children, young or vulnerable people. To comply with the Safeguarding Guidance, you must ensure the reference is accurate and does not contain any misstatement or omission.

This reference template should be completed by an appropriate line manager within the LA. This may be the direct line manager or the manager as detailed within local policy.

#### **Section 1 - Worker Details**

Workers Name			
Worker’s Job title and summary of key duties and responsibilities:			
Contract Start date:		Contract end date:	

#### **Section 2 – Competency & Performance**

Mark the relevant box:

	Excellent	Good	Competent	Requires Development	Unproven
Oral communication					
Written communication including report writing Court work (if applicable)					
Quality of work IT skills and data entry reporting					
Able to distinguish between confidentiality and disclosure					
Able to set and maintain appropriate professional boundaries					
Colleague interaction and team-work					
Client interaction					
Knowledge of legislation					
Able to adhere to professional codes of conduct/ practice					
Able to engage constructively with the supervision process					
Attendance record					
During the employment period, have you, or your colleagues, ever had cause for concern about the worker’s conduct or performance related to the safety and welfare of children, young or vulnerable	Yes: No:  If Yes: please provide details				

people or have they ever been subject to disciplinary or capability procedures whilst in your employment.	
Would you re-employ this worker in the same or any other role within your organisation?	Yes: No:  If No, please provide reasons:

**Section 3 – Referee Details**

Referee Name	
Referee Job Title	
Organisation	
Contact Information (Email)	
Relationship with Worker	

**Section 4- Declaration** (Please tick to confirm)

I confirm that I am authorised to give the reference details outlined on this form.	
I understand information disclosed in this document can be shared with the worker and potential employers.	

**Signature:**

**Date:**