

Purpose

Herefordshire Council recognises the recruitment challenges impacting local government both nationally and within Herefordshire. The challenge affects all sectors of local government and is currently particularly acute in social care. We recognise our staff are our most important asset and attracting experienced social care staff to permanent vacancies across the council is vital in supporting our staff and teams, reducing reliance on agency workers and strengthening relationships with communities, children and families.

The council is strengthening its employment offer for all roles across the council and in recognition of the particular workforce challenges in social care, the council will pilot the use of welcome payments to specific staff groups in the first instance, as set out in this document.

Scope

Welcome payments will be available for the following staff groups:

- All newly appointed employees for permanent HC8 Social Worker posts, with two years' qualified experience in a Social Worker role.
- All newly appointed employees for HC9 Senior Practitioner posts, including HC9 Senior Practitioner Occupational Therapist posts.
- All newly appointed employees for HC9 Approved Mental Health Professionals (AMHP's).
- All newly appointed employees for HC9 Best Interest Assessors (BIA's).

Payment

The above newly appointed employees will receive a £3,000 welcome payment, which will remain subject to tax and national insurance deductions and will be pensionable. It will be paid pro rata for employees working part time.

The payment will be issued in full upon 6 months completion in post.

Agency workers wishing to convert to a permanent role in one of the above staff groups will be eligible for the full payment.

Conditions

Qualifying employees, as referred to in the above staff groups, are required to have been employed by Herefordshire Council for 6 full months to be eligible for the welcome payment.

Newly appointed employees who receive the welcome payment but terminate the contract of employment within 2 years will be required to repay the full amount. Payment will be deducted from the final month salary should this corresponding tie in period not be completed.

If the qualifying date for payment occurs part-way through the month, the payment will be issued at the next pay date and will be shown on the corresponding payslip.

Newly appointed employees that are no longer employed by the qualifying time of 6 months will be excluded from the welcome payment, irrespective of the number of months worked.

Any current or future arrangements with regards to Market Forces Supplements or Relocation Payments are unaffected by this payment.

This welcome payment is a one-off and does not form part of the existing contracts of employment for the affected staff groups. There is no guarantee that future payments will be made.

Herefordshire Council reserve the right to withdraw the welcome payment scheme or change its rules, including the amount payable, at any time and from time to time.

If the newly appointed employees' contract of employment is under notice of termination (whether given by Herefordshire Council or the employee) at the time the welcome payment is due, the organisation retains full discretion not to issue payment.

The new employee must not have been employed by Herefordshire Council within the last 2 years. This includes all current members, irrespective of any current secondment or ongoing transfer to the roles referred to above.