

**Association of Directors of Social Services  
South East Region  
Memorandum of Co-operation  
for managing the demand and supply of adult social care professional agency workers**

## **1.0 Introduction**

A memorandum of understanding (MoU) exists as a voluntary agreement between the 18 councils in the South East. The MoU describes how Directors of Adult Social Services (DASSs) want councils to work together co-operatively with a Regional Programme to help lead improvement of adult social care services. A key priority within this Regional Programme is development of the adult social care workforce; for ADASS in the South East to heighten the efforts of all partners to build a sustainable workforce.

DASSs approved the Regional Plan to develop the adult social care workforce and allocated funding to support implementation in March 2016. A key action within the Regional Plan is to develop a Memorandum of Co-operation (MoC) for adult Social Workers. This is the final MoC developed by a sub-group of the regional Workforce (WF) Group, co-ordinated by Skills for Care and approved by the WF Group on 10 January 2017. This final MoC was approved by DASSs or their representatives attending the South East ADASS branch meeting on 27 January 2017. Councils not represented were asked by the regional Chair to 'opt out' of this MoC and a final list of participating councils agreed on 8 May 2017.

## **2.0 Context**

Across the South East all councils have faced challenges related to the recruitment and retention of social work professionals. In particular, recruitment and retention of social workers has resulted in competitive behaviours between councils that have increased costs without addressing the key underlying issues by delivering an improved supply of skilled and experienced permanent staff. What we are now seeing is a range of incentives and payments to attract staff and a tendency to increase pay to maintain a competitive position with competing councils. This does not detract from the importance of factors that influence retention such as: pay and the employment package; as well as, reputation; development opportunities; caseloads; the quality of support and supervision.

Shortages in suitable staff have led to dependence on expensive agency staff with consequential impact on budgets and the quality of the workforce. In order to manage supply and demand and the associated costs of using agency staff, there is a need to work together across the South East and look at a collaborative approach to support this supply and demand

This MoC is intended to provide a framework for collaboration between councils to address the key issues and builds on the approach demonstrated in the current MoC for children's social work.

## **3.0 Scope**

This MoC covers the adult social care professional workforce for both permanent and temporary/agency staff. Areas of activity include:

- A standardised approach to references for agency staff
- An agency pay cap to stop pay rates from escalating with agency recruitment
- A six month 'cooling off' period for permanent staff moving to agency work

#### **4.0 Governance**

The effective date of implementation for this MoC is 8 May 2017 when the final list of participating councils was signed off.

A sub-group of the regional WF Group co-ordinated by Skills for Care have led this work. The sub-group has representation from six councils including WF, Principal Social Worker and HR leads plus agency involvement.

DASSs or their senior representative will be responsible and accountable for ensuring that their service managers, HR and other support services and agency suppliers implement the terms of the MoC.

A Governance Group will be formed to support implementation of the MoC and to report quarterly to the regional WF Group. This is in line with best practice and agreed by the regional WF Group at their teleconference on 10 January 2017. The impact of the MoC and any issues arising will be reported regularly to the branch.

#### **5.0 Memorandum of Co-operation**

All councils participating in the MoC agree that they will abide by the terms and spirit of this MoC in relation to the adult social care professional workforce for both permanent and temporary/agency staff. They will include reference to this MoC and its terms in recruitment material, contracts and other documents and, as far as is possible, require third party providers to comply with its terms.

##### **The councils agree that they will:**

- I. Promote the MoC with partner agencies, providers and neighbouring councils.
- II. Adopt a common minimum standard for referencing to help prevent 'recycling' of poor quality permanent and agency workers. See Appendix 1.
- III. Work towards fully implementing the terms of this MoC via all their suppliers, i.e. main contractor and any second tier suppliers.
- IV. Work collaboratively and with agency suppliers to develop mechanisms to ensure that rates and charges for supplying agency staff appropriately reflect the skills and experience of workers and support the ethos of this MoC.
- V. Include appropriate provisions in future contracts to allow the appropriate sharing with other councils of information about rates and charge.
- VI. Use end of placement reviews with adequate information passed back to the agency workers and the agency supplier to determine any development requirements or to cease placing the worker to help to address quality issues.
- VII. Ensure that permanent and agency workers are clear from the outset of the MoC and how it is being adopted by all participating councils and their agency suppliers.
- VIII. Ensure that all agencies and agency workers are made aware of the MoC and that the preferred option for councils is to employ permanent staff.

In addition, any social worker leaving a permanent contract will not be employed on an agency contract by another authority in the region within 6 months. This does not exempt the worker from working elsewhere or in any other work, or returning to employed work with a council. This would not apply to permanent staff moving to permanent roles in other authorities within the region. Social workers who are made redundant from a permanent post will be exempt from this requirement.

## 6.0 Pay Rates

All new assignments are to have a pay ceiling in order to act as a disincentive to agency work and to help control costs. The rates set out below are the maximum hourly rates. These rates have been decided by the sub-group from comprehensive benchmarking of rates already paid in the region.

<b>Role</b>	<b>Capped Hourly Rate</b>
Social Worker	Up to £28
Social Worker (with 2 years+)	£28 - £32
Senior Practitioner	£32 - £35
Team Manager	Up to £42
Occupational Therapist	Up to £28
Senior Occupational Therapist	Up to £32
AMHP	£37

The above rates show the maximum to be paid to the worker. The rates include employer costs where relevant, but exclude agency charge rates and travel (which may be a fixed pence price, or percentage addition, dependent on local agreements).

## 7.0 List of councils within the scope for this MoC

1. Bracknell Forest Council
2. Brighton and Hove City Council
3. Buckinghamshire County Council
4. East Sussex County Council
5. Hampshire County Council
6. Isle of Wight Council
7. Kent County Council
8. Medway Council
9. Oxfordshire County Council
10. Portsmouth City Council
11. Reading Council
12. Southampton City Council
13. Surrey County Council
14. Slough Council
15. West Berkshire Council
16. West Sussex County Council
17. The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead
18. Wokingham Borough Council

*South East ADASS Workforce Group  
8 May 2017*

## Appendix 1

### South East Region Agency Adult Social Care Worker Standard Reference Request Template

In the South East Region we are committed to ensuring that we have a high quality agency workforce. As part of that commitment at the end of every assignment a reference will be provided to the Agency for the next employer.

Managers completing this reference should include factual, evidence based information and there should be nothing contained in this reference that you have not previously discussed with the Agency Worker. Should you require further advice on the completion of this document please contact your HR Service.

In completing the reference you provide permission to disclose information contained in this document to third parties including the candidate and clients.

#### Referee Details

Referee Name:	
Referee Job Title:	
Council/Company Name:	

#### Candidate Details

Candidate Name:	
Candidate Job title:	

Assignment / contract date From:		Assignment / contract date To:	
Main duties during this assignment:			

Has the candidate completed their ASYE?		If not please give any information as to why not	
For an Occupational Therapist have they completed their Preceptorship Year		If not please give any information as to why not	

In what capacity do you know the candidate?	
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Please provide information about any learning or training undertaken by the candidate whilst assigned to your organisation.
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## Competency Assessment

Please assess the candidate's competency in the following areas:

	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Verbal communication				
Written communication				
Report writing				
IT skills				
Ability to deal with situations appropriately with regards to confidentiality				
Ability to distinguish between confidentiality and when disclosure is required				
Ability to set and maintain appropriate professional boundaries with colleagues				
Ability to set and maintain appropriate boundaries with service users				
Ability to work effectively as part of a Social Work team				
Ability to work effectively in a multidisciplinary environment with other professionals and organisations				
Knowledge of legislation relevant to their area of work				
Ability to manage effectively a large caseload				
Ability to adhere to professional codes of conduct/ practice				
Ability to report and take appropriate action, in cases of suspected abuse				
Ability to work under pressure, and to maintain judgement				
Ability to effectively and appropriately manage risk.				
Duty experience				
Punctuality				
If any of the above answers are unsatisfactory please can you provide evidence to explain why?				

Please outline briefly any areas where the candidate has demonstrated particular strengths

Please detail any areas where the candidate would benefit from development

Would you re-employ this candidate in a similar role	Yes	No
If you would not re-employ, please can you explain why?		

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Did you ever have concerns about this workers practice (e.g. safeguarding, promoting an individual's welfare) or behaviour that resulted in early termination of the assignment?	Yes	No
If yes, please explain what these were		
Have you discussed these concerns with the candidate?	Yes	No

Declaration

I confirm that I am authorised to give the reference details outlined on this form.

By supplying this reference I understand I am giving you permission to disclose information contained in this document to third parties - to include the candidate and clients.

Name:		Signature:	
Date:		Telephone no:	

Please email a copy of the completed reference to:

Please provide a copy of the completed reference to the agency worker.