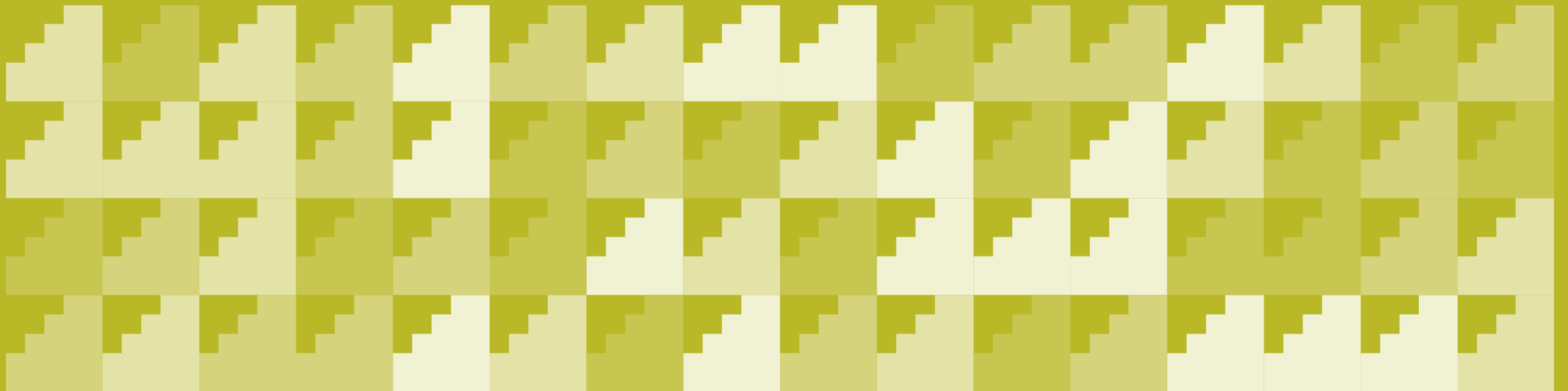


The Greater Manchester Pledge for workforce stability in children's social care



What is the GM Pledge?

- The GM Pledge will set out a series of commitments from the 10 GM local authorities to work collectively to support and manage our social care workforce by tackling the high cost of agency children's social workers.
- The GM Pledge is similar to the 'London Pledge' which was launched in July 2022 and has been signed up to by all 36 local authorities.
- At a national level the Government has identified the need to tackle the overuse of agency social workers and are developing rules (likely to be implemented in Autumn 2024).
- Commitment for 12 months initially.

Why are we doing this and why is it important?

- To provide better care and support to our vulnerable children and young people - an over reliance on agency social workers rather than permanent staff means that children and families may have a more unstable social care experience, which can leave them feeling frustrated and unsupported.
- Agency social workers cost more to the local authority than a permanent social worker reducing levels of resource that may otherwise be available for wider services.
- We want to reduce the excess cost and profiteering of some agencies so that vital funds can be reinvested back into support children and families.
- Setting shared standards around things like references and experience will also improve the quality of workers.
- By working together across Greater Manchester on the Pledge, local authorities will be able to hold one another to account and provide mutual support and assistance to other GM LAs.

By introducing the GM Pledge each local authority will:

- Commit to working within the pay rates and protocols of the GM Pledge from **1 November 2023**. This will apply to **new** engagements active from this date.
 - Bring any existing agency workers who exceed the new GM Pledge pay rates in line with the pay rates and timelines as agreed with each local authority.
 - To introduce a standard reference template for all candidates that relates to standard of practice for any agency worker
 - Not to engage candidates leaving a permanent contract in GM to take up an agency role in GM for a minimum of 6 months
 - To refrain from headhunting permanent employees from GM boroughs, unless for a promotional role
 - To work closely with the agency supply chain to better enable their support of permanent recruitment activities across GM
 - To hold one another to account and provide mutual support and assistance to other GM LAs e.g., short term provision of staff or leadership advice and support in specific areas
 - To provide accurate and complete data to the GMCA's HR metrics service on a quarterly basis
 - Only engage agency workers with 2 years post qualifying experience
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Which roles does this apply to:

Covers the Children's Social Care professional workforce.

Substantive Job Role Grades (Social Work Qualified)	Current agency hourly rate within Tameside (per hour)	Updated maximum hourly rate agreed as part of the GM Pledge (per hour)
Grade J <i>Example job titles include:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Team Managers</i>• <i>Independent Reviewing Officers</i>	£40.24	Up to £46
Grade I <i>Example job titles include:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Senior Practitioners</i>• <i>Practice Managers</i>	£37.22	Up to £43
Grade H <i>Example job titles include:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Social Workers</i>	£35.21	Up to £40

What does this mean if I'm recruiting an agency worker:

- From 1 November the main change is the introduction of maximum rates
- Managers are expected to continue to engage at the agreed Tameside rate
- Where there is difficulty in obtaining an agency worker within the current rate, managers can increase the rate up to the maximum amount shown
- Normal allowances will still apply e.g. enhancements, car user etc
- Permission must be granted by the Director of Children's Services for engagement above the maximum level
- If you become aware of adverts or other outside of agreement please report this to your Service Unit Manager/Head of Service

What does this mean if I'm recruiting an agency worker (continued):

- From 1 November Reed (agency contract) will update the agency booking system (XMS) to ensure maximum rates are set
- Reed suppliers will be asked to confirm that any agency worker provided has had a gap of at least **6 months** if they were employed at a local authority within Greater Manchester prior to becoming an agency worker (managers to check this)
- Reed will ensure that the requirement for a **3 week notice period** is communicated to agency workers at the start of their engagement (managers to check this).
- All recruiting managers will be required to complete a timely and accurate reference form for each agency worker at the end of the agency engagement using the new template that will be emailed to the recruiting manager and returned to Reed. All references need to be signed by your Head of Service ahead of returning.

Existing agency workers:

- Nothing will change from 1 November for existing agency workers
- 6 month period to ensure compliance across the agency workforce
- When current engagements end, agency workers paid above the maximum rate will be re-engaged on a rate up to the maximum level (where extensions are required)
- Currently have 6 agency workers above maximum rates, all current bookings will end before the end of the year
- Individual briefings will be held with those affected and their manager to explain this prior to end of December

Implementation

- Maximum rates will be effective from 1 November for *new* agency engagements
- Directors of Children's Services across the 10 GM local authorities will sign the Pledge on 17 November
- Internal governance will follow that
- The performance of the GM Pledge will be reviewed by the GM Directors of Children's Services and GM HR Directors groups with support from GMCA on a quarterly basis.

Communication and resources

- Resources and key contact details will be made available on the GMCA website from 1 November 2023
- Briefing/s with recruiting managers to provide an overview of responsibilities and changes
- The GM Pledge, briefing slides and FAQs will be made available internally on the Intranet and links provided for the wider Children's Social Care workforce
- General communications with agency workers will be provided by suppliers under the Reed umbrella
- Individual briefings with agency workers will be undertaken where the worker is on a rate exceeding the maximum level to provide information if the engagement is extended and to clarify this will be on a rate within the agreed levels