



ADSS Cymru

Yn arwain Gwasanaethau
Cymdeithasol yng Nghymru

Leading Social Services in Wales

Memorandum of Co-operation for Agency Children's Social Workers

All Wales Pledge

Version 2

Children's Services leaders pledge to work cooperatively and transparently to manage the agency supply chain, improve the quality of agency staff and regulate pay rates within children's social work.

The All-Wales Pledge forms part of a wider strategic workforce programme that is responding to Children's Social Workers recruitment and retention challenges.

The original Pledge came into effect from 1st May 2023. This updated version will take effect from 1st May 2024.

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Section 1 – Overarching Framework

Introduction

Children's Services leaders pledge to work cooperatively and transparently to manage the agency supply chain, improve the quality of agency staff and regulate pay rates within children's social work.

The All-Wales Pledge addresses a range of challenges related to the supply, quality and cost of using agency Children's Social Workers. It creates a framework through which Wales' 22 Local Authorities can collectively respond to these challenges.

Objectives of The All-Wales Pledge

The objectives of the pledge are:

1. to simplify and harmonise recruitment agency pay rates for social care professionals throughout Wales. This will:
 - a) enable recruitment agencies to develop more sustainable business models by having greater certainty of expected pay rates;
 - b) reduce agency worker "churn" caused by the range of rates currently in place;
2. to reduce the numbers of Children's Social Workers moving from permanent jobs to agency roles within Wales;
3. to set national principles for hiring agency workers including how references are confirmed to ensure the quality of agency workers;
4. to ensure ethical standards are maintained by agencies when recruiting Children's Social Workers.

Scope

The scope of the All-Wales Pledge covers the following categories of registered Children's Social Worker:

Social Worker

A registered Children's Social Worker responsible for delivering general day-to-day social work functions.

Senior Practitioner / Assistant Team Manager or equivalent

- A Senior Practitioner is a registered Children's Social Worker that supports other Children's Social Workers with cases and case management guidance.
- A registered Children's Social Worker who may have some line management responsibilities / deputises for a Team Manager.

Team Manager

A registered Social Worker who has responsibility for full day-to-day management of a social work team.

The scope of this All-Wales Pledge does not include Managed Teams of Social Workers.

Commitment to The All-Wales Pledge

Directors of Social Services from every Local Authority committed to the All-Wales Pledge for a one-year period from 1st May 2023. The All-Wales Pledge was formally reviewed in January 2024. This revised version will commence from 1st May 2024.

Where a Local Authority does not have the role of Director of Social Services, then this commitment has been made by the equivalent Senior Officer with responsibility for Children's Services. "Director of Social Services" will, however, be used to describe all signatories in this document.

Directors of Social Services will ensure the implementation of the All-Wales Pledge within their own Local Authority, as well as holding one another to account should the agreed principles or rates not be maintained. This will be done within the spirit of collaboration.

Governance

The All-Wales Pledge will be overseen by the Directors of Social Services.

They are responsible and accountable for ensuring that their Heads of Children's Service, Human Resources, Commissioning and Operational Teams implement the All-Wales Pledge.

In the spirit of this pledge, if any Director has concern about the use of agency staff by another Local Authority in Wales, relating to the principles within this pledge, then they will ask their Heads of Children's Services to contact their counterpart informally to resolve the matter.

Should their concerns not be resolved, the Director will then contact their counterpart Director to seek resolution.

Where a concern persists then the Director must inform the Central Resource Team. They will also seek to resolve the issue by a process of open discussion at the monthly Directors forum. If the matter cannot be resolved in this meeting, then it will be escalated to the President of ADSS Cymru who will seek a resolution.

ADSS Cymru Directors will receive a written quarterly update on the progress of the Pledge, which will also be discussed at the Directors forum and by the All Wales Heads of Children's Services forum.

Central Resource Team

To support the All-Wales Pledge, a Central Resource Team has been established.

From 1st April 24 the Central Resource Team will be based within the ADSS Business Unit. This area of work will sit within the ADSS Cymru's Lead Director Workforce's portfolio.

The team will be responsible for:

- Engaging, supporting and monitoring Local Authority and agency activity.
- Identifying any risks and providing advice if the pledge has been breached.
- Engage with all Local Authorities to undertake data collection and analysis.
- Provide management information to Directors of ADSS Cymru.

Section 2 – Key principles

Implementation of The All-Wales Pledge

Directors of Social Services:

- Commit to continue working within the pay rates for new agency workers and principles of the All-Wales Pledge from 1st May 2024.
- Bringing the remaining agency workers who exceed the new All-Wales Pledge pay rates in line with the new pay rates at the earliest possible opportunity. This will need to be supported by a detailed individual transition plan that will be formulated with all stakeholder.

From the 1st May 2024, each local authority will have a nominated officer who will act as a dedicated Point of Contact for agency providers. Communications from agencies will be channeled through these Officers.

A transition plan has been developed for two specific Local Authorities who require some additional flexibility implementing the pledge.

Payment of agency Children Social Workers

Directors of Social Services will:

- a) Ensure agency Social Workers are paid rates no greater than those set out in **Appendix 1: All Wales Pay Rates**. These pay rates must not be supplemented with any additional allowances (such as travel or accommodation).
- b) Work with the Central Resource Team to review the pay rates outlined in **Appendix 1: All Wales Pay Rates** on an annual basis, in consultation with other Directors.
- c) Work in collaboration with agencies to ensure that the assigned role title and pay rate for agency staff appropriately reflects the experience of each worker, aligned the categories of registered Children's Social Worker set out in **Section 1**.
- d) Instruct agencies that they must not advertise any Local Authority roles above the pay rates set out in **Appendix 1: All Wales Pay Rates**. Any non-compliance will be reported to the Central Resource Team.

New qualified Social Workers

Recognising the importance of newly qualified Social Workers gaining practical experience while continuing to develop their professional skills, Directors of Social Services will not permit the use agency Children's Social Workers with less than three years post-qualifying experience irrespective of their pathway to the profession.

Project workers

Directors of Social Services will not seek to use agency Children's Social Workers as 'project' or 'parachute' workers if they hold cases.

Directors of Social Services will not use these descriptions or other similar terms to create any case working Children's Social Worker roles that are deemed to not fall within the **categories of registered Children's Social Worker set out in Section 1**.

Recruitment of permanent staffing

Directors of Social Services agree to:

- Not to use agency workers that have left a Local Authority permanent contract within Wales for a minimum of 6 months after their last day of employment. The Central Resource Team will work with Local Authorities to collect relevant data to monitor this element. This restriction does not apply to permanent staff moving to permanent roles in other Local Authorities within Wales. Social workers who are made redundant from a permanent post will be exempt from this requirement.

Pre-Assignment Checks

References and assignment checklist

Directors of Social Services will:

- Ensure that all agencies adopt **Appendix 2: All Wales Reference Template** and ensure its use as part of their typical compliance process.
- Ensure at least two references, from two different organisations, which demonstrate 3 years post qualifying experience are provided by the agencies, by using **Appendix 2: All Wales Reference Template** before a placement is made.
- Ensure that any reference request from agencies regarding a current / previous agency worker, is completed by either HR or a permanent manager within Children's Services. It is important that this is not completed by an agency worker who may be covering a Team Leader or Management role. However, if this is not possible, then it is important that the completed template is authorised by a permanent senior manager, in line with local policy.
- **Adopt Appendix 3: All Wales Agency Assignment Checklist.** This will ensure that the onboarding of agency workers is in line **Appendix 1: All Wales Pay Rates** and the **categories of registered Children's Social Worker set out in Section 1.**

Supply chain engagement

Directors of Social Services agree to:

- a) Work with Central Resource Team to host online conference calls with the agency supply chain to ensure needs and expectations for roles placed are fully understood. Agencies will be expected to retain and share this information with their staff to ensure learnings is captured and utilized in future recruitment activities.
- b) Work with the Central Resource Team to ensure that any agency that is deemed persistently non-compliant by one Local Authority is then not used by all other Local Authority to source agency workers.

Performance and Quality checks

The quality assurance of agency workers is a shared responsibility between the Local Authority and the relevant Recruitment Agency.

Directors of Social Services agree to:

- Ensure any performance issues are managed in a timely way. This will involve informing the agency of any concerns as well as taking any relevant action which include providing additional support. Where a worker requires significant additional support, this will be provided by the agency with the outcome communicated to the Local Authority.
- Ensure that the Central Resource Team are notified of any agency worker whose contract has ended due to performance concerns.

Notice Period for agency workers

To comply with our duty to provide continuity of care, Directors of Social Services will require agency Social Workers to work a minimum 4-week notice. That is, they will be required to continue to work for 4 weeks after they have given notice of their intention to terminate their arrangement to the agency provider.



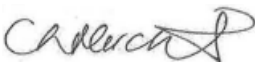

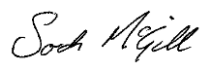
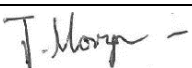
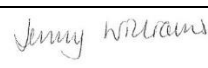
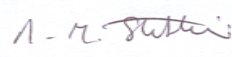



This will be a reciprocal arrangement [unless in the case of gross misconduct] between agency workers, agencies and Local Authorities.

Data sharing to improve future workforce development



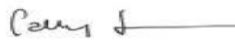


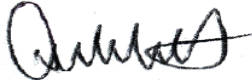

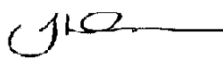

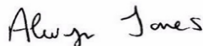
Directors of Social Services agree (in line with their Data Protection Act 2018) to:

- Participate in reports, surveys and data gathering by providing a timely, accurate and comprehensive response to requests from the Central Resource Team so that accurate and reliable monitoring information is available to all signatories at ADSS Cymru's Directors' Meeting and the All Wales Heads of Children's Services Meeting.
- Continue to provide regular accurate and complete data to the Central Resource Team.
- The appropriate data sharing protocols will be in place between ADSS Cymru and the Local Authorities.

We, the undersigned, support and commit to the terms of The All-Wales Pledge [to be signed by all Directors of Social Services].

Name of Local Authority	Name of Director	Signature of Director of Social Services [or nominated SRO for Children's Service]	Date of Signature
Isle of Anglesey CC	Fon Roberts		01.05.2024
Blaenau Gwent CBC	Tanya Evans		01.05.2024
Bridgend CBC	Claire Marchant		01.05.2024
Caerphilly CBC	Gareth Jenkins		01.05.2024
Cardiff Council	Sarah McGill		01.05.2024
Carmarthenshire CC	Jake Morgan		01.05.2024
Ceredigion CC	Audrey Somerton-Edwards	-----	-----
Conwy CBC	Jenny Williams		01.05.2024
Denbighshire CC	Nicola Stubbins		01.05.2024
Flintshire CC	Neil Ayling		01.05.2024
Gwynedd Council	Dylan Owen		01.05.2024
Merthyr Tydfil CBC	Lisa Curtis- Jones		01.05.2024

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Monmouthshire CC	Jane Rogers		01.05.2024
Neath Port Talbot CBC	Andrew Jarrett		01.05.2024
Newport City Council	Sally Jenkins		01.05.2024
Pembrokeshire CC	Michael Gray		01.05.2024
Powys CC	Nina Davies		01.05.2024
Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC	Neil Elliott		01.05.2024
Swansea Council	Dave Howes		01.05.2024
Torfaen CBC	Jason O'Brien		01.05.2024
Vale of Glamorgan Council	Lance Carver		01.05.2024
Wrexham CBC	Alwyn Jones		01.05.2024