

**Report to:** Governance Committee

**Date of meeting:** 30 September 2021

**By:** Chief Operating Officer

**Title:** Employee Referral Scheme

**Purpose:** To recommend that an employee referral pilot scheme is implemented for Support Worker roles in Adult Social Care

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## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Governance Committee is recommended to:

- 1. approve the implementation of an employee referral scheme for Support Workers in Adult Social Care, with a payment of £500 (£250 for the referring employee and £250 for the successful applicant) upon completion of a year in post**
  - 2. agree that the pilot scheme is evaluated after 12 months in order to determine its continuation and/or wider application across the Council.**
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### **1 Background**

1.1 The Council has in place a variety of tools to help attract job applicants and is currently undertaking a range of work to help strengthen our recruitment offer as part of the corporate Recruitment and Retention workstream.

1.2 However, at present some areas of service continue to have difficulty recruiting suitable candidates. In particular, in Adult Social Care (ASC) Directly Provided Services, the Support Worker role in High Weald, Lewes and Havens has been notoriously difficult to recruit to for a number of years resulting in posts being continuously vacant.

1.3 A range of creative recruitment solutions have already been explored including targeted online advertising, radio advertising, open days, and attendance at career fairs. However, despite considerable effort from the service, as of June 2021 there were 17 Support Worker vacancies and 1 Senior Support Worker vacancy at a time of rising demand for the service.

1.4 On this basis the Corporate Management Team recently considered a proposal from the service to implement a 'refer a friend' scheme, to compliment and support existing recruitment efforts.

1.5 The proposal is that existing employees would be awarded £250 for referring a friend to a vacancy within the service. In addition, employees appointed following a referral will receive a retention payment of £250 after completing a years' service within the role.

1.6 It is also proposed that in the first instance, the scheme be run on a pilot basis, specifically for Support Worker roles in Directly Provided Services for a period of 12 months. This will enable an evaluation of the Scheme to be undertaken. Subject to this evaluation, the scheme could be expanded to include other hard-to-fill roles across the Council.

### **2 Supporting Information**

2.1 A draft copy of the referral scheme is attached as Appendix 1, for reference.

2.2 It is hoped that an employee referral scheme will help aid both immediate recruitment and longer-term retention of employees. Research suggests that if referred by a friend, the employee is more likely to be committed to the role improving retention as they trust their friend's recommendation. For the employee that makes the recommendation, they feel valued and engaged, talking highly favourably of the Council as an employer.

2.3 Referral can also lead to attracting like-minded staff and better-quality candidates as their friend is likely to have described the organisational culture and dispelled any negative myths about working in the public sector, so the candidate is fully engaged.

2.4 Referral schemes can potentially also reach a wider audience than other recruitment methods, by engaging with applicants not currently reached by online or print advertising. The initiative could complement current methods and would not be a replacement for any existing methods.

2.5 A similar referral scheme already exists at Surrey County Council, albeit targeted at Social Workers and Occupational Therapists. In the 2020-21 financial year, 14 successful candidates were appointed following employee referrals.

2.6 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been undertaken to ensure there are no unintended consequences of running the pilot scheme. No negative impacts have been identified, but it is proposed that another EIA is undertaken as part of the assessment of the pilot scheme.

### **3 Conclusion and Recommendations**

3.1 An employee referral pilot scheme could help support immediate recruitment needs within ASC Directly Provided Services, and potentially support wider recruitment and retention across the organisation. The Governance Committee is recommended to:

- approve the implementation of an employee referral pilot scheme for Support Workers in Adult Social Care, with a total payment of £500 per successful referral - £250 for the referring employee, and £250 for the successful applicant upon completion of a year in post.
- agree that the pilot scheme is evaluated after 12 months in order to determine its continuation and/or wider application across the Council.

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