

# THE LONDON PLEDGE

The London Pledge is a pan-London commitment by Children's Services system leaders 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.



## **1. Introduction**

This London Pledge is designed to address challenges related to the workforce of Children's Social Work Professionals with focus on the supply and quality of agency workers through evidenced protocols, adopted by other regions over many years, and a commitment to transparent and co-operative working. This agreement replaces the Memorandum of Cooperation.

## **2. Objectives of The London Pledge**

The London Pledge recognises the need to respond to agency challenges collectively and in cooperation, providing clear protocols and mechanism of control, whilst also ensuring that each Local Authority can respond to their own needs in times of significant pressure.

## **3. Scope**

This London Pledge covers the CSW Professional Workforce for agency staff, including Children's Social Workers, Senior Social Workers, Assistant Team Managers and Team Manager roles (or equivalent).

## **4. Effective Date**

The effective date of the London Pledge is 1<sup>st</sup> June 2022.

## **5. Governance & Resources**

The London Pledge is overseen by Directors of Children's Services who are responsible and accountable for ensuring that their service managers, HR, Managed Service Providers and agency suppliers implement the London Pledge in a timely manner within each of their boroughs.

Directors of Children's Services will be supported by Assistant Directors of Children's Services, Principal Social Workers, Workforce Leads and Senior HR representatives from across the region, alongside LIIA and London Councils.



Progress updates will be shared with ALDCS on a quarterly basis and discussed sub-regionally.

Resources to support communication and consistent messaging across the key stakeholder groups, the supply chain and candidates will be made available in a central repository.

## **6. Adoption of The London Pledge**

Every borough will include the London Pledge in the terms of contracts and other documents to support the delivery of its objectives, working with third party providers to fully represent its terms throughout the supply chain.

The Directors of Children's Services commit to implementing the London Pledge in their own service holding one another to account.

The Local Authority signatories ("the Boroughs") of The London Pledge agree to adopt the protocols for agency CSW recruitment and hold one another accountable through agreed processes of control and transparency.

## **7. Commitment to The London Pledge**

The Directors of Children's Services commit to The London Pledge for a 2-year period, until 31st May 2024.

## **8. Management of agency staffing**

### **8.1. Pay rates of pay for agency workers (Schedule 1):**

The Boroughs agree that they will:

- a. Pay agency social worker staff at the pay rates no greater than those set out in Schedule 1 of The London Pledge, instructing their Managed Service Providers and any agencies who supply each Borough of the rates. The pay rates set out should not be supplemented with any additional allowances (such as travel or accommodation).

- b. Work in collaboration with Managed Service Providers to ensure that the assigned role title and pay rate for agency staff appropriately reflects the experience of each worker, aligned to the pay rates outlined in The London Pledge.
- c. Not advertise any roles above the pay rates outlined within the London Pledge. Any non-compliant adverts should be reported and removed, with support from the Managed Service Providers where adverts have been posted by agencies.

## **8.2. Referencing quality and supply chain engagement**

The Boroughs agree that they will:

- a. Adopt a common referencing standard (Schedule 2).
- b. Complete the reference template (Schedule 2) as part of the end of an assignment process for agency workers, supported by the Managed Service Providers.
- c. Complete the reference template (Schedule 2) in a timely manner providing detailed feedback on the capabilities and performance of workers alongside confirmation of dates, and not defer to the representing agency to provide a date reference.
- d. Ensure that the Managed Service Providers embed the template for use in the agency supply chain and ensure its use as part of their typical pre-employment compliance process.
- e. Work with Managed Service Providers to host conference calls with the CSW agency supply chain wherever possible to ensure needs and expectations for roles placed are fully understood. Agencies will be expected to retain and re-train this information with their staff to ensure learnings are captured and utilised in future recruitment activities.
- f. Work with the Managed Service Providers to ensure that any persistently non-compliant agencies are removed, suspended or demoted from the agency supply chain.
- g. In order to qualify for agency appointments, candidates must demonstrate a minimum of 3 years' post-qualified experience within Children's Services Social Work (irrespective of their pathway to the profession).

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- h. Not employ case working 'project' or 'parachute' CSW candidates. The boroughs will not use these descriptions or other similar terms to create any case working Children's Social Worker roles that are deemed to fall outside the pay rates and terms of the London Pledge.

**8.3. 6 Month 'Cool-off' period for transfer of permanent to agency worker:**

The Boroughs agree to:

- a. Not employ candidates leaving a permanent contract in London to take up a contract role through an agency with another authority in London for a minimum of 6 months after leaving their permanent post. This does not apply to permanent staff moving to Permanent or Fixed Term Contract roles in other authorities within the region. Social workers who are made redundant from a permanent post will be exempt from this requirement.

**8.4. Notice Period**

The Boroughs have the right to:

- a. Instate a 3-week notice period for agency CSW candidates, committing to adopting a reciprocal arrangement between agency workers and LAs to minimise immediate or quick departures and the associated impact on children and the permanent workforce.

**9. Management of permanent staffing**

The Boroughs agree that they will:

- a. Refrain from proactive headhunting of staff from signatory boroughs committed to the London Pledge directly or through third parties, unless for a promotional role.
- b. Engage in opportunities to work more effectively with the agency supply chain to better enable their support of permanent recruitment activities across the region.

### **9.1 Data sharing to improve future CSW workforce development**

The Boroughs agree that they will:

- a. Participate in surveys and data gathering by providing a timely, accurate and comprehensive response to requests so that accurate and reliable information is available to all signatories.
- b. Provide accurate and complete data to the London Council's HR Metrics Service on a quarterly basis (in collaboration with MSPs where applicable).

### **10. Transition to The London Pledge**

The Boroughs agree that they will:

- a. Commit to working within the pay rates and protocols of the London Pledge effective 1<sup>st</sup> June 2022.
- b. Bring any existing agency workers who exceed the new London Pledge pay rates in line with the pay rates at the earliest possible opportunity.

### **11. Continuous Development of The London Pledge**

- b. The performance of the London Pledge will be reviewed by the sub-regional governance groups with support from London Councils and LIIA on a quarterly basis.
- c. The pay rates outlined in Schedule 1 will be reviewed annually in consultation with other regions nationally.
- d. The protocols outlined in the London Pledge will be reviewed annually and opportunities for reciprocation with other RIIA will be identified in order to strengthen the London Pledge.
- e. The London Pledge forms part of a wider strategic workforce programme to respond to CSW recruitment and retention challenges, of which each sub-regional governance groups is represented.

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- f. The boroughs will collaborate with other regions to strengthen the London Pledge and developed shared objectives and opportunities where appropriate.

**We, the undersigned, support and commit to the terms of The London Pledge.**

**Merlin Joseph, Association of London Director of Childrens (ALDCS) Workforce Policy Lead**

**Director of Children's Services**

Updated 21.11.22

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**Schedule 1**

**Pay rates for new agency staff (inclusive of on costs, exclusive of agency mark- up)**

The rates set out below are hourly rates (umbrella/Ltd company rates) and must be converted for the PAYE equivalent candidates. These are rates inclusive of Employers' NI and holiday pay ie. equivalent to Ltd Co/Umbrella rates. The rates exclude agency mark ups, which are unchanged.

These rates have been arrived at by analysis of data collected from London Authorities' outlining the most common pay rates, as well as in collaboration with neighbouring regions to ensure that they are representative of market rates.

The **pay rates** have been applied based on London data.

Job Categories	Agency Worker Pay Rates
Social Worker	Up to £37.00
Senior Social Worker/Specialist Social Worker	Up to £38.50
Assistant Team Manager/Practice Manager	Up to £40.50
Team Manager	Up to £44.50

The rates set out should not be supplemented with any additional allowances (such as travel or accommodation).



**Schedule 2**

**London Agency Children’s Social Worker Reference Template**

This reference template is to be completed for the relevant agency worker to assess their competency in relation to their role, to ensure the safeguarding and welfare of children, young or vulnerable people. To comply with the Safeguarding Guidance, you must ensure the reference is accurate and does not contain any misstatement or omission.

**Section 1 - Worker Details**

Worker’s Name:			
Worker’s Job title and summary of key duties and responsibilities:			
Contract start date:		Contract end date:	

**Section 2 – Competency & Performance**

Mark the relevant box:

	Excellent	Good	Competent	*Requires development	Unproven
Oral communication					
Written communication including report writing					
Court work (if applicable)					
Quality of work					
IT skills and data entry reporting					
Able to distinguish between confidentiality and disclosure					
Able to set and maintain appropriate professional boundaries					
Colleague interaction and team-work					
Client interaction					
Knowledge of legislation					
Able to adhere to professional codes of conduct/practice					
Able to engage constructively with the supervision process					
Attendance record					
During the employment period, have you, or your colleagues, ever had cause for concern about the worker’s conduct or performance related to the safety and welfare of children, young or	Yes No If Yes, please provide details (and any attachments)				



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vulnerable people or have they ever been subject to disciplinary or capability procedures whilst in your employment.	
Would you re-employ this worker in the same or any other role within your organisation?	Yes No  If No, please provide reasons:
Any additional comments?	

**Section 3 – Referee Details**

Referee Name:	
Referee Job Title:	
Organisation:	
Contact information: ( Email)	
Relationship with the worker:	

**Declaration** (Please tick to confirm)

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

I understand information disclosed in this document can be shared with the worker and potential employers.

**Signature:**

**Date:**

