

Purpose

Herefordshire Council recognises the recruitment challenges impacting local government both nationally and within Herefordshire. The challenge affects all sectors of local government and is currently particularly acute in childrens social care. We recognise our staff are our most important asset and attracting experienced childrens social care staff to permanent vacancies across the council is vital in supporting our improvement journey, staff and teams, reducing reliance on agency workers and strengthening relationships with communities, children and families.

The council is strengthening its employment offer and in recognition of the recruitment challenges in childrens social care, the council uses welcome payments for specific staff groups. Since 2024 we have had a welcome payment as part of our offer of £5,000 for specific childrens social care roles. This has now been enhanced to £10,000 with effect from April 2025. This is for new offers of employment to external applicants from April 2025. Any current offers prior to this date will remain at the rate of £5,000.

Scope

Welcome payments will be available for the following staff groups.

All newly externally appointed employees for permanent childrens social work posts, with two years' qualified experience in a childrens social worker role. This will be based on all external candidates, including current agency workers, fulfilling the full recruitment and selection process and receiving an offer of employment and will replace the existing simplified agency conversion process. Roles included in this offer are;

HC8 Childrens Social Worker

HC9 Senior Practitioner

HC10 Managing Practitioner

HC10 QA Practitioner

HC11 Team Manager

HC12 Service Manager

Payment

The above newly externally appointed employees will receive a £10,000 welcome payment, which will be subject to tax and national insurance deductions and will be pensionable. It will be paid pro rata for employees working part time.

The payment will be issued 50% on first month in employment and 50% upon 6 months completion in post.

Conditions

Newly externally appointed employees who receive the welcome payment but terminate the contract of employment within 1 year via resignation or if the council terminates their employment will be required to repay the welcome payment on a sliding scale basis.

Welcome Payment	Resignation/ End of Employment Between Months 1-3	Resignation / End of Employment Between Months 4-6	Resignation / End of Employment Between Months 7-9	Resignation / End of Employment Between Months 10-12
50% in first month - £5,000 & 50% at 6 months	£5,000	£2,500	£5,000	£2,500

Payment will be deducted from the final month salary should this corresponding tie in period not be completed.

If the qualifying date for payment occurs part-way through the month, the payment will be issued at the next pay date and will be shown on the corresponding payslip.

Newly externally appointed employees that are no longer employed by the second qualifying time of 6 months will be excluded from the remaining 50% welcome payment, irrespective of the number of months worked.

Any current or future arrangements with regards to Market Forces Supplements or Relocation Payments are unaffected by this payment.

This welcome payment is a one-off and does not form part of the existing contracts of employment for the staff groups in scope. There is no guarantee that payments will be made in future years, and the scheme can be withdrawn at the discretion of the council.

Herefordshire Council reserve the right to withdraw the welcome payment scheme or change its rules, including the amount payable, at any time and from time to time. If the newly externally appointed employees' contract of employment is under notice of termination (whether given by Herefordshire Council or the employee) at the time the welcome payment is due, the organisation retains full discretion not to issue payment. The new employee must not have been employed by Herefordshire Council within the last 2 years. This includes all current employees, irrespective of any current secondment or ongoing transfer to the roles referred to above.