

Grow Our Own Scheme – HR Comments

The MMU Course Programme is supported by The GYO Social Worker Development Scheme, which sets out expectations of those Nottingham City Council employees who engage with the MMU Qualification Programme, and includes; Scheme Outline, Access, The Learning Agreement, Absence/Leave, Performance, Withdrawal from the Programme, and Programme Fees. It is acknowledged that employees' circumstances may change during the 2 years of the course programme and whilst every eventuality cannot be planned for, this GYO Social Worker Development Scheme sets out the impact of certain changes to personal circumstances (although the list is not exhaustive). Should exceptional circumstances occur that jeopardise the employees' ability to complete the Course Programme, NCC will work with MMU in the interests of the employee to assist them to complete the programme in full. NCC will be the Lead in such processes and the employee will have parallel responsibilities to comply with all policies and procedures set out in both the NCC People Management Handbook and MMU's Student Handbook.

As part of the overall Children's Social Work Workforce Plan, the Head of Children's Strategy and Improvement will consider this additional capacity. Newly Qualified Social Workers' who successfully complete the programme, will be offered the opportunity to apply for vacant posts, where these are available, post-qualification. Candidates will be subject to an assessment process before being offered permanent employment as a Newly Qualified Social Worker.

Management will need to consider the impact of workload during an employee's placement periods, on that employee and on other members of the employee's team, as it is not intended that backfill arrangements will be approved during this time.

It is also noted that during the period of the two year programme, employees will remain in their substantive roles, unless a permanent change in their contract takes place for other reasons, which includes periods when on placement. Management should be mindful that any request from management for the employee to move to a different role, or to move to a different salary band, as a result of being on the programme might be deemed as a variation to contractual arrangements, and would therefore require management to enter into formal consultation with the employee. Management will also need to consider the impact on the employee and their existing contractual arrangements, in line with the New Nottingham Contract, particularly at the point of their application for vacant social work posts, post qualification.

Furthermore, whilst there is a management expectation that those employees who complete the course, are successful in attaining their qualification and complete their registration with the HCPC, will apply for and be assessed against Level 1 Social Work posts, management should note that whilst this expectation has been clearly set out and communicated, there is no formal obligation or contractual requirement for employees to apply for such posts, and therefore management would not be in a position to enforce this. It is also noted that if successful in securing a Level 1 Social Worker post the colleague will be enrolled onto the ASYE programme and will be employed on the terms and conditions relevant to this post. Any formal agreements related to the Loan Agreement or Learning Agreement are a separate matter.

As stated, in the course of the two year programme, there are many variables that may affect employees circumstances, both personally and from an NCC employment perspective and management are advise to take HR and/or Legal advice on individual employment circumstances, on a case by case basis.

It is also noted that management have determined to provide for a Management Development Pathway to support a limited number of Team Managers to gain Social Work qualification, which will run in parallel to the GYO Scheme. The conditions of the scheme for these employees will be

outlined in an amended HR Scheme, as these are different to those for the GYO Scheme, with distinct expectations and agreements that will need to be in place that apply to this cohort, as follows:

During the two placements; 70 days in Year One and 100 days in Year 2, there will be an expectation for Team Managers, through agreed temporary variation to contract, that they are paid at Band F, equivalent to Social Worker Level 1 to allow for critical business backfill their posts, to sustain the required level of service delivery.

Upon successful completion of the scheme and subsequent registration with the HCPC there is an expectation that these employees would apply for a Newly Qualified Social Worker position (Level 1 Social Worker). This is to enable them to gain the necessary experience and skills that are required for complex front-line social work. At the point of securing a Level 1 post, they will be expected to successfully complete the ASYE (Assisted and Supported Year in Education), which usually would take in the region of 12-14 months.

During the period of the ASYE programme, again via agreement to temporarily vary their contract, and as a Level 1 Social Worker these employees will be paid at Band F, commensurate with the duties and responsibilities of the post and temporarily relinquish their substantive post. At the end of the ASYE programme they would have the right to return to their substantive post, which will be held during the ASYE period.

The condition of the Management Development Pathway stipulated that post qualification should a Team Manager choose not to apply/accept a post as a Level 1 Social Worker, they would be required to pay back the £3,000 contribution which Nottingham City Council have provided based on business need to increase the frontline social work capacity. This will require an amendment to the Learner Agreement for this cohort.

Again, management will need to manage the variety of changes to personal circumstances carefully and with advice from HR on a case by case basis, to ensure fairness and transparency of treatment.

Lynn Robinson

HR Business Partner

9 May 2017 Advice provided by Lynn Robinson (HR Business Partner), with subsequent addition re Management Pathway on 25 May 2017.