

Unis Classification Open	Item No.
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Meeting:	Employment Panel
Meeting date:	4 February 2025
Title of report:	Sponsorship Policy & Amendments to the Recruitment & Selection Policy
Report by:	Cllr. Tahir Rafiq, Cabinet Member for HR & Corporate Affairs
Decision Type:	Council
Ward(s) to which report relates	All

Executive Summary:

As part of the Council’s activity to stabilise the Children’s Social Care workforce and reduce reliance on agency staff 16 Children’s Social Workers were recruited internationally with the support of a recognised expert in international social care recruitment. This has proved an invaluable component of the authority’s overall Children’s Social Care improvement strategy.

In order to manage the above process, the Council was required to gain a license to issue certificates of sponsorship. These Certificates are used to demonstrate that individuals have a firm offer of appropriate employment and, as such, support visa applications (but does not guarantee visa approval and do not give an individual the right to work in the UK).

The Council’s status as licensed authority is a matter of public record and means that we are likely to see increased interest from individuals requiring sponsorship to work in the UK. In order to ensure the Authority makes safe and consistent decisions regarding sponsorship the appended policy (Appendix A) has been developed to guide decision making. The policy confirms the Council’s position to continue to provide sponsorship for Social Workers, owing to the significant local and national challenge in recruitment here. It also sets out a set of clear criteria for the assessment of other sponsorship applications which will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

An Equality Impact Assessment of the proposed policy has been produced and is attached at Appendix B.

This policy has been developed based on a model policy developed by another Greater Manchester local authority with specialist legal support and has been subject to review by the Council’s legal service and shared with Trade Union colleagues.

To reflect the Sponsorship Policy a number of minor amendments are also required to the Council's overarching Recruitment and Selection Policy. These amendments are set out in Appendix C and also include a change to reflect the Council's commitment to inclusive recruitment through participation in a number of agreed Guaranteed Interview schemes which are a shared commitment across Greater Manchester Councils.

Recommendation(s):

That the Employment Panel:

1. Agrees the new Sponsorship policy and the revisions to the Recruitment and Selection policy

Subject to Employment Panel's approval, the revised policies will go forward for endorsement via the Council's Corporate Joint Consultative Committee before being published on the Council's intranet pages and communicated to staff with the intention to come into force from 1 March 2025.

Community impact/links with Community Strategy

A modern and effective employee policy framework is essential to ensuring the effective operation of the organisation and, in turn the delivery of our commitment to the Community Strategy.

Equality Impact and considerations:

Equality Analysis	Please provide a written explanation of the outcome(s) of either conducting an initial or full EA.
Full Equality Impact Assessment appended. No negative impacts	

Assessment of Risk:

The following risks apply to the decision:

Risk / opportunity	Mitigation
Trade Union objection to policy changes	Prior discussions have taken place with Unison

Consultation:

All of the proposed changes have been shared with the Trade Unions, and where appropriate there have been consultations with HR colleagues, managers, the EDI Manager and the Legal Team.

Legal Implications:

The proposed policy aligns with all relevant legislation and guidance.

Financial Implications:

Costs relating to the new policy will be met from existing budget provision.

Report Author and Contact Details:

Andrew Smith
HR Operations Manager
j.hall@bury.gov.uk

Sam McVaigh
Director of people & Inclusion
s.mcvaigh@bury.gov.uk

Background papers:

Appendix 1: Sponsorship Policy

Appendix 2: Sponsorship Policy EqIA

Appendix 3: Recruitment and Selection Policy Changes