

**Personnel Committee (PC) – 12 June 2023**

**Soulbury Pay Scale for Assistant Educational Psychologists (AEP) and Senior Educational Psychologists**

**1. Purpose of the report**

- 1.1 To gain Personnel Committee approval to adopt the national Assistant Educational Psychologists Soulbury pay scales (points 1-4) into our Walsall Council Soulbury pay scales, endorsed by Corporate Management Team (CMT) at their meeting of 06 April 2023.
- 1.2 To gain Personnel Committee approval to adopt point 2 of the national Senior Educational Psychologist's Soulbury pay scales into our Walsall Council Soulbury pay scales, endorsed by Corporate Management Team (CMT) at their meeting of 06 April 2023.

**2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 Personnel Committee is recommended to approve the use of the national spinal column points within Soulbury Pay Scales (points 1-4) for Assistant Educational Psychologists and the adoption of point 2 on the Senior Educational Psychologist's pay scale endorsed by CMT (06 April 2023). Please refer to appendix 1 for Walsall Council currently adopted Soulbury scales and appendix 2 for the national Soulbury pay scales.

**3. Background Information**

- 3.1 Educational Psychologists (EPs) and Assistant EPs (AEPs) are employed on Soulbury Pay and Conditions.
- 3.2 Walsall Council has not employed AEPs in the past and therefore the respective pay scale has never been adopted.
- 3.3 Walsall council have adopted the Senior EP pay scale from points 3-18, but have not adopted the lower points of the scale.

*Aim*

**Assistant EP Pay**

- 3.4 To be able to recruit and pay AEPs on the appropriate scale as per the Soulbury Agreement.
- 3.5 The Educational Psychology Service has created fixed term AEP posts which need to be remunerated on the correct Soulbury scale.
- 3.6 The posts have been created to fulfil obligations under a Memorandum of Understanding between the NHS and Walsall Council where we have

agreed to undertake work to support Whole School Approaches to supporting mental health as part of the DfE and Health England's 'Mental Health Support Teams' initiative.

### **Specialist Senior Pay Scale**

- 3.7 The Educational Psychology Service is facing significant recruitment and retention issues and to try to address this, existing posts have been amended to create 'specialist senior' posts as these may encourage applicants seeking career progression to pursue employment in Walsall on these posts.
- 3.8 The starting pay for this role is usually from point 2 of the senior scale with the overall range being 2-5. It is likely that most candidates would have previous pay history requiring payment above point 2, so the point is unlikely to be used. However, it would be appropriate to advertise the lowest point available for this job role.
- 3.9 This would cover the theoretical case where we might employ someone and offer them the lowest starting point, 2, on the scale. This scenario could arise if an EP was in the early stages of their career and had not had sufficient pay progression to move across to a higher point of the scale (2-5) but was still able to meet job and person specification.

#### *Know*

- 3.9 These proposed changes will support recruitment activity and therefore reduce dependence on locums leading to a cost saving in the longer term.
- 3.10 The changes would allow Walsall Council to fulfil the Memorandum of Understanding with the NHS and further support partnership working.

#### *Our Council Plan priorities*

- 3.11 The policy is directly aligned to the council's strategic priority of internal focus ensuring all council services are customer focused, effective, efficient and equitable and helps support the delivery of our Employee Satisfaction Proud promise.

#### *Response*

- 3.12 Subject to approval, HR will amend the Walsall Council Soulbury payscales to include the Assistant Educational Psychologist scale (points 1 – 4) and include point 2 on Senior Educational Psychologists pay scale so they mirror the National Soulbury scale of points 2 – 18. The Pay Policy will be updated at its next iteration.

#### *Review*

- 3.13 The Soulbury Pay Scales are reviewed annually in line with the national pay award and are formally published as part of the Pay Policy Statement reviewed each year.

#### **4. Financial Implications**

- 4.1 Walsall Council has been allocated £91,566 for 22/23 and £126,614 for 23/24 (total of £218,180) to support the NHS with the Mental Health Support Team project across the borough. Very little delivery has taken place in the 22/23 financial year so delivery for both financial years will take place in the 23/24 financial year by the 4 Assistant Educational Psychologists roles being created.
- 4.2 The total cost of 4 Assistant Educational Psychologists with on costs is £160,856 for a 12 month fixed term based on bottom scale of the AEP01-04 Soulbury pay scale.
- 4.3 The AEP posts are fixed term and continuation of them would depend on continuation of the funding stream from the NHS.
- 4.4 Finance have modelled for the financial implications of changes to posts to create specialist senior roles to be paid on a minimum of scale point 2. Funding is from within the current budget and derived from amending existing posts within the EPS structure.

#### **5. Legal Considerations**

- 5.1 There are no anticipated legal issues arising from this report.

#### **6. Consultation**

- 6.1 CMT reviewed and endorsed the policy at their meeting of 06 April 2023.

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