

## **Refer a Friend Policy**

### **Purpose**

1. The purpose of the report is to update SPC on the introduction of a policy for the Refer a Friend scheme.

### **Background**

2. To improve recruitment of hard-to-fill roles, a pilot scheme was introduced in 2022 to provide a referral incentive to Wiltshire Council employees who made a successful referral of a friend for an eligible vacancy.
3. The objective of the scheme is to encourage existing Council employees to recommend friends to employment with the Council, in specified hard-to-fill positions, to improve recruitment and retention for these roles.
4. Incentive payments are paid on a twofold basis, an initial payment to the employee of £250 is made once the individual referred has commenced employment and the remaining £250 to the referred employee once they have successfully completed their probationary period.
5. The scheme is currently managed by the Recruitment Team with HR Business Partners liaising with services to approve identified hard-to-fill roles as being eligible for the scheme. There is a requirement that roles are hard-to-fill however, the assessment criteria for eligible roles, under the scheme, does not extend beyond this.
6. A formal policy is now required following the pilot to ensure a consistent and fair approach.
7. A copy of the pilot's terms and conditions can be found at Appendix 1 and a list of current eligible roles can be found at Appendix 2.

### **Main considerations**

8. The recruitment team have reported the scheme has been effective in achieving the scheme's objectives, in respect of supporting recruitment and retention of hard-to-fill posts.
  
9. Some of the highlights of the scheme include:
  - 9.1 Since its launch, there have been a total of 160 referrals, with 140 employees having successfully completed their 26-week probationary period.
  - 9.2 Since its launch, Highways and Transport have received the most referrals, with 51 candidates having proven eligible, 47 of which have been retained following probation.
  - 9.3 There has been considerable cost savings for services, namely in Reablement where 5 successful referrals in occupational therapy, under the scheme, prevented the Council having to utilise a recruitment agency, saving a minimum cost of £6,450 per vacancy.
  - 9.4 Furthermore, the scheme has reduced the Council's reliance on employment of agency workers which costs approximately 59% more in comparison to employed members of staff across service areas, with identified eligible roles.
  
10. Hard-to-fill roles are currently defined as a role which has been advertised a minimum of three times with no appointments made, typically over a period of 3-6 months.
  
11. Directors are required to approve posts as eligible under the scheme. This is due to the need to maintain consistency and compliance across service areas.
  
12. It is proposed that an evidence-based assessment, which follows a consistent approval process should be introduced under the policy consistent with the approval process for market supplement payments. The HR Strategy team will act as custodians of the assessment and approval process and maintain records for quality assurance purposes, with sign off of eligible posts by the Director HR&OD in conjunction with CLT.
  
13. HR Business Partners will continue to liaise with services to identify hard-to-fill roles and work in collaboration with HR Recruitment and HR Strategy at the appropriate stages.

## **Environmental impact of the proposal**

14.N/A

## **Equalities impact of the proposal**

15. This policy will be taken to the equality impact assessment panel on 11th September 2024. All comments from this panel will be considered.

## **Risk Assessment**

16. There is need for standardised criteria for assessing the eligibility of posts under the scheme to ensure consistency and an audit trail of an evidence-based approval process.

17. Quality assurance needs to be maintained to ensure fair and consistent governance of the scheme.

## **Financial Implications of the proposal**

18. It is not proposed to make any adjustments to the payments offered under the scheme, with payments continuing to be paid from service salary budgets.

## **Recommendations**

19. That SPC approve the implementation of a Refer a Friend policy formalising the pilot scheme introduced in 2022.

**Tamsin Kielb**  
**Director HR&OD**

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## Appendix 1 – Pilot terms and conditions

### Refer a friend pilot scheme

#### *Overview of the scheme*

To improve our recruitment to some of our hard to fill roles.

If you refer a friend for one of the eligible roles and they are successfully recruited, you will both be paid an incentive of £250.

The process is simple, once you tell your friend about the post, all they need to do is state that you have referred them in their application form, providing your name and work email address in the free text box available. If your friend is successfully recruited, you will be contacted by HR to arrange the payment.

#### *Scheme terms and conditions*

1. You are only eligible for the payment if the person you refer is successfully recruited to the post.
2. You will only receive your incentive payment when your friend commences employment
3. Your friend will receive their payment once they have successfully completed their 6 months probationary period
4. The incentive will be paid by the service area where the successful candidate is employed.
5. The payment is subject to subject to tax and national insurance but will be non-pensionable.
6. For a referral to be successful, the person being recommended must not be already employed in any capacity by Wiltshire Council and must be successfully appointed through a recruitment process.
7. The person recommended must not have worked for Wiltshire Council in the last 12 months.
8. To make a referral the referrer must be employed on a permanent or fixed term contract basis with the council. This scheme does not apply to bank workers, agency staff, consultants, or councillors.
9. The referred employee must be offered a permanent contract of employment with the council. The scheme does not apply to employees offered fixed term, or temporary contracts.
10. There is no incentive payable for referring a candidate for a vacancy where the referrer is the hiring manager, or where they have any involvement in the interview and selection process.

If you have any questions regarding the refer a friend scheme, please contact [recruitment@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:recruitment@wiltshire.gov.uk)

## Appendix 2 – Current eligible roles

Service	Eligible job roles
<b>Adult Social Care &amp; DASS</b>	<b>Experienced Social Worker - Level 3</b> <b>Experienced Occupational Therapist</b> <b>Support Worker</b> <b>Senior Support Worker</b>
<b>Children's Services</b>	<b>Experienced Social Worker - Level 3</b> <b>Experienced Occupational Therapist</b> <b>Child Care Officer</b> <b>Child Care Officer Assistant</b>
<b>Planning</b>	<b>Principal Planning Officers</b> <b>Principal Planning Officers</b> <b>Principal Enforcement Officer</b> <b>Senior Enforcement Officer</b> <b>Senior Planning Officers</b> <b>Planning Officers Level 2</b> <b>Planning Officers Level 1</b>
<b>Highways and Transport</b>	<b>Passenger Assistant</b> <b>Passenger Vehicle Driver</b>
<b>Leisure, Culture and Communities</b>	<b>Receptionist</b> <b>Facilities Operations Officer</b> <b>(Facilities Operations Operative)</b> <b>Cleaner</b> <b>Duty Manager</b> <b>Fitness Consultant (Fitness</b> <b>Instructors)</b> <b>Recreation Assistants</b>