



# Social Work Sponsorship Policy

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# **Policy for appointing sponsored and supported self-funding social work graduates into qualified social work posts.**

## **1.0 Introduction**

The Community and Children's Services Group operate an annual programme of sponsorship and support for self-funding onto the Social Work Degree course with the Open University in Wales. This creates the ability to 'grow our own' qualified social workers and retain them in employment upon qualification and for some time thereafter. This policy ensures that there is a clearly planned and agreed process for students to experience a successful transition to their first social work post, to commence their chosen career, upon graduation.

For the purpose of this document, these employees are referred to as 'students'. This document is made available to prospective students as part of their application pack.

The primary purpose of this procedure is to ensure that the resources committed by Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council to its students during the course of their studies are maximized within the organization, to the benefit of MTCBC and the community it serves, whilst at the same time positively supporting staff retention initiatives by ensuring our students have a positive first experience in Social Work.

This procedure provides guidance to students, Managers and the HR team on how to manage the process of securing a post as a qualified Social Worker. Its aim is to provide a consistent and transparent approach, ensuring that there is as smooth a transition as possible whilst ensuring compliance with registration requirements and the Council's Equal Opportunities policies

## **2.0 Procedure**

Prior to the course ending in Sept, the nominated officer from Workforce Development Team will confirm by March to HR a list of students who are expected to qualify in that year.

Discussion between Workforce Development and HR around any students who have failed placements, or have experienced difficulties, which could result in them not successfully completing the course, will take place at this stage.

HR will provide the students listed with details of existing relevant social work vacancies from within the Council. From March such vacancies will be notified to students when they become available, with the opportunity to apply for these roles before going to public advert. The students are expected to take joint responsibility for looking at, and applying for Social Work posts at this time, especially where they may not secure a post from the initial list.

There is an expectation that students will take up a Social Work post on qualification, or shortly afterwards, given the resources and commitment made to them whilst studying. Furthermore there is a contractual term that the sponsored worker will remain employed by the Council in the Social Work profession for a 2 year period following graduation and a self-funding worker who has received support will remain employed by the Council in the Social Work profession for a 1 year period following graduation. If the Social Worker wants to leave during this period this could lead to the reclaiming of fees and/or salary on a sliding scale in line with details of the signed learning agreement within the Post entry training document.

Individual preferences will need to be balanced with the needs of the Service, and therefore no guarantee can be given as to where students will be found a permanent post. Wherever possible this policy will strive to support students in their career choice, as this is more likely to positively support longer-term retention. However this will depend on the vacancies available prior to students completing their course.

**The Council, via the Corporate Management Team reserves the right to offer a post based on the needs of the service, and ultimately may consider the reclaiming of fees where a newly qualified Social Worker declines offers of employment to a qualified position.**

Relevant Team Managers will conduct student only internal interviews in order to determine graduates suitability for the particular social work post/discipline. References will be requested from the individual's line manager and the University.

Following the interviews, and where the interview panel make recommendations to appoint students to posts, conditional offers of appointment will be made, subject to confirmation of successful completion of the qualification, satisfactory references, pre-employment checks and successful registration as a Social Worker with Social Care Wales.

On confirmation of qualification and registration they will formally commence in the post, commencing on the appropriate qualified rate. This change will be effective either from the date of their registration, or from their commencement date, if this date is later than the date of registration. (In Social Work at this point the student will be entitled by law to use the title 'Social Worker').

Team Managers and/or students may however request that students commence work in the team prior to their registration etc. being confirmed. In such cases, they will be employed in temporary unqualified positions and will not be permitted to take the title of Social Worker until such time as they are successfully registered. They will be referred to as Support Workers and will be paid at the appropriate unqualified rate. In terms of continuity of employment and employment protection the student will move from their substantive post to their new post as soon as is practical, given their commitments to the University in the final year and the dates from which they can be available.

Where a student is unsuccessful in gaining a qualified social work post or fails to qualify, or is unable to register as a Social Worker, then they will continue in their substantive position.

Once this policy has been applied to a student and s/he has secured a permanent Social Work post within the Council, then this procedure will no longer be relevant to them. Should they subsequently become interested in another Social Worker post in the Authority, then they would need to apply for that position in line with the procedures in place outside of this policy, regarding the recruitment and selection of staff.



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Community & Children Services

Social Work Graduates

Indication of Preference Form

NAME:.....

WORK ADDRESS: .....

Dear Colleague,

I understand you are expected to successfully complete your Social Work qualification in the forthcoming year. In accordance with the Councils policy, related to the retention of you as a valuable resource, on the provision that you successfully complete your professional qualification, I have detailed below the vacancies currently available within MTCBC council. Please complete column 5, indicating your preference in order that I may make arrangements with the relevant Team Managers for interviews to take place.

Post	Team/Location	No of Hours	Provisional Interview Date	Preference Number

**Procedure for appointing Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council staff who have been sponsored or supported to self-fund on the social work degree programme into qualified positions on completion of the qualification.**

