

## Employment Committee

Meeting to be held on Wednesday, 26 January 2022

Electoral Division affected: None;
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### Temporary Changes to Staff Terms and Conditions due to the current Omicron Coronavirus Emergency Circumstances

Contact for further information:

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#### Executive Summary

In April 2020, in accordance with the urgent business procedure, the Director of Corporate Services, following consultation with the Chair and Deputy Chair of the committee, agreed temporary changes to the terms and conditions of staff to enable the council to respond in a fast and agile manner to address the emerging challenges from the Covid-19 pandemic.

It was agreed that the overtime cap at SCP19 could be lifted during the 1<sup>st</sup> wave, which was subsequently extended, through Democratic Services in October 2020, to enable the Council to respond to the 2<sup>nd</sup> wave of the pandemic over the winter months of 2020/2021.

In light of the emergence of the Omicron Covid-19 variant and the critical challenges this is currently presenting to the council, this report sets out proposals to re-introduce the changes to the terms and conditions for a further period 20 December 2021 to 28 February 2022 where the situation will be reviewed with input from Public Health to clarify if this arrangement needs extending further. In addition, this report is also requesting a further temporary change to terms and conditions in respect of rates of pay applied to overtime worked supporting critical services. This will be reviewed by the Executive Director for Adult Services, Health & Wellbeing at the end of February 2022 with input from Public Health colleagues, to assess whether there will be a requirement to apply this temporary change to the normal terms and conditions for a further month.

#### Recommendation

That the Committee be asked to agree

- (i) Lifting of the overtime cap to enable critical services (supporting and direct delivery) to pay staff above salary scale point 19, overtime in place of accruing time off in lieu which is not practicable at this time. This arrangement will not apply to Heads of Service or Directors.

- (ii) Subject to agreement by the Head of Service, where staff volunteer to work overtime/additional hours in an alternative role in critical services, (e.g. older people care services and disability social care roles) staff to be paid at their substantive grade regardless of the grade of the alternative role (where this is a lower grade). This arrangement will not apply to Heads of Service or Directors.

## **Background and Advice**

As a Council, over the last two years we have had to flex and adapt our services and our workforce to meet the many challenges that the Covid 19 Pandemic has presented for us.

Due to the emergence of the Omicron variant, which is now known as the primary covid variant, we know that the weeks ahead will continue to be challenging despite cases just starting to level off in Lancashire. Our internal provider services and the services that support them remain under significant pressure.

The anticipated surge in demand is further compounded by staff absences, our services are already disrupted by staff who are isolating, creating real pressure across the system. We are already experiencing high levels of staff absence in many of our care settings, and we are urgently recruiting paid volunteers, to support our Adult Services.

To maximise staffing resource as much as possible, we are also asking our own staff to work overtime or additional hours. Acknowledging this extra effort and the tremendous contribution they are making; we are proposing the following temporary change to terms and conditions as below:

- Lifting of the overtime cap to enable critical services (supporting and direct delivery) to pay staff above salary scale point 19, overtime in place of accruing time off in lieu which is not practicable at this time. This arrangement will not apply to Heads of Service or Directors.
- Subject to agreement by the Head of Service, where staff volunteer to work overtime/additional hours, in an alternative role in critical services, (e.g. older people and disability social care roles) staff to be paid at their substantive salary regardless of the grade of the alternative role (where this is a lower grade). This arrangement will not apply to Heads of Service or Directors.

It is requested that this will be applied in retrospect to cover the Christmas 2021 and New Year period until the end of February 2022, at which point the Director of Adult Services Health & Wellbeing with input from Public Health colleagues, will review the situation to assess whether there will be a requirement to apply this change to the normal terms and conditions for a further month.

## **Consultations**

The proposals will be discussed with the recognised trade unions.

**Implications:**

This item has the following implications, as indicated:

**Risk management**

Failure to delegate powers to officers will impact on the council's ability to support the needs of our communities.

**Financial**

The costs will be funded by the government's workforce grant.

**Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985  
List of Background Papers**

Paper	Date	Contact/Tel
N/A		
Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate		
N/A		