



Memorandum of Cooperation

**June 2023 to until National Agency Rules
come into force**

**The East Midlands Regional Partnership
Arrangements for the Supply and
Engagement of Children's Social Workers**

East Midlands Regional Improvement and Innovation Alliance (RIIA)

Derby City Council, Derbyshire County Council, Leicester City Council, Leicestershire County Council, Lincolnshire County Council, North Northamptonshire Council, Nottingham City Council, Nottinghamshire County Council, Rutland County Council, West Northamptonshire Council, Northamptonshire Children's Trust

1. Introduction

The East Midlands Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) has been in place since December 2015. This version replaces the previous document and has been reviewed and updated with input from all authorities in the region. It is designed to address current challenges in the Children's Social Work workforce with a particular focus on the supply, costs and quality of agency social workers.

2. Scope

The scope of the MoC covers agency workers in all social work roles from post ASYE year through to Team Managers and equivalent roles e.g. IRO's and CP Chairs.

This memorandum applies to both existing and new agency workers placed in all Local Authorities/Trusts across the region.

3. Objectives

Our aim is to introduce a series of principles that are adopted throughout the region and by all suppliers to ensure the safe delivery of social work. These principles are:

- To avoid unmanageable escalation of agency pay rates.
- To reduce the budgetary pressures on authorities by implementing the MoC with all suppliers.
- To ultimately reduce agency rates to provide better alignment against permanent staff salaries and to make permanent roles more attractive overall.
- To implement the principle that ASYE workers are not taken on as agency workers within two years of completing the supported year.
- To ensure all authorities provide core mandatory training to agency workers and will cover the day rate for that training but that specialist non-core training will not be paid.
- To ensure that all agency workers work on-site for a set number of days, as agreed with the authority, in order to visit children, young people and families and to take part in team meetings. Fully remote working will not be accepted in the region.
- To ensure all out-going agency workers serve a suitable notice period to allow for a safe handover of cases. All authorities in the region have agreed that four weeks is a generally acceptable notice period for agency workers. There will be occasions where this is not possible, and those exceptions will be discussed on a case by case basis.
- To refrain from taking on agency workers who have not completed the expected notice period with a previous authority.
- To adopt standardisation in referencing (see 'Appendix A') and vetting of all agency workers and reduce the circulation in the region of poor-quality workers.
- To collaborate and share data across the region including rates, margins and contractual agreements to support wider workforce planning.

- To refrain from employing agency workers who left a permanent role in the previous six months, with the exception of those made redundant and those moving from permanent roles to permanent roles.
- To work collaboratively with other regions to develop and commit to a National MoC if possible.

4. Effective date of Implementation

This updated Memorandum of Cooperation will take effect from 1st June 2023 and will remain effective until National Agency Rules come into force. The MoC will be reviewed on a six-monthly basis, for as long as the MOU remains in effect.

5. MoC Governance

5.1 Regional Directors of Children's Services (DCS) Group

This MoC is overseen by the Regional Directors of Children's Services (DCS) Group who are accountable for ensuring that their Assistant Directors, Service Managers and Heads of Service and HR adopt the MoC alongside their agency suppliers.

They will receive regular updates and, where necessary, determine actions and give instruction/steer based on recommendations presented to them by the Regional Tier 2 Safeguarding Leads Group and the East Midlands HR Leads Group.

5.2 Regional Tier 2 Safeguarding Group

The Directors of Children's Services will be supported by their Regional Tier 2 Safeguarding Group who share responsibility for the development of activity aligned to the MoC.

Where necessary Workforce Leads, Principal Social Workers and RIIA Programme Manager will also support this work.

6. MoC implementation and reporting

The East Midlands HR Leads Group will continue to meet to consider workforce and agency worker themes and will provide reporting and recommendations for action to both governance boards on a regular basis.

7. Regional Rates of pay

All authorities agree to adhere to the objectives and principles of the MoC and not seek to undermine or circumnavigate it.

Each authority and/or Trust will determine rates as currently agreed in their individual commercial frameworks and will manage those agreements via the designated supplier(s).

8. Supplier non-Compliance

If an agency seeks to circumvent the principles of this MoC, the relevant authority will work directly with the supplier to understand the situation, suggest compliant approaches and work together to ensure the MoC is adhered to. Non-compliant agencies could also be restricted from working on new requirements for a defined period and more broadly in the region if deemed necessary.

All instances of non-compliance will be flagged at a regional level and included in the monthly reporting as an item.

9. Measuring Success

The Regional DCS Group and Tier 2 Safeguarding Group will receive regular reports on the overall impact of the MoC including where there is evidence of financial efficiencies, improvements in quality of supply, reduced reliance on agency workers and greater stability in the regional workforce. Specific measures of success will include, but not be limited to:

- Reduction in the use of agency workers
- Reduction in the number of agency workers dismissed due to poor performance
- Improved and consistent references for agency staff
- Improved and consistent resignation periods for agency staff
- Reduction in spend on agency workers
- Data on agency numbers and all associated costs

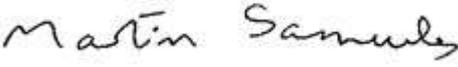
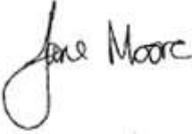
10. Variations and Charges

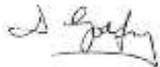
- The MoC and associated annexes may only be varied by agreement of the Regional DCS Group.
- Each authority shall bear their own costs of implementing and complying with the MoC.

11. Signatories

We the undersigned endorse and agree to uphold this East Midlands Regional Memorandum of Cooperation.

Local Authority	Derby City Council
Name of the DCS	Andy Smith
Signatures	
Date	01.06.2023

Local Authority	Derbyshire County Council
Name of the DCS	Carol Cammiss
Signatures	
Date	01.06.2023
Local Authority	Leicester City Council Lincolnshire County Council
Name of the DCS	Martin Samuels
Signatures	
Date	01.06.2023
Local Authority	Leicestershire County Council
Name of the DCS	Jane Moore
Signatures	
Date	01.06.2023
Local Authority	Lincolnshire County Council
Name of the DCS	Heather Sandy
Signatures	
Date	01.06.2023

Local Authority	North Northamptonshire Council
Name of the DCS	Ann Marie Dodds
Signatures	
Date	01.06.2023
Local Authority	Nottingham City Council
Name of the DCS	Catherine Underwood
Signatures	
Date	01.06.2023
Local Authority	Nottinghamshire County Council
Name of the DCS	Colin Pettigrew
Signatures	
Date	01.06.2023
Local Authority	Rutland County Council
Name of the DCS	Dawn Godfrey
Signatures	
Date	01.06.2023

Local Authority	West Northamptonshire County Council
Name of the DCS	Stuart Lackenby
Signatures	
Date	01.06.2023
Northamptonshire Children’s Trust	
Name of the Chief Executive	Colin Foster
Signatures	
Date	01.06.2023

Appendix A

Reference Request /End of Assignment Template for Agency Social Workers in Children’s Services

The post for which the person has applied involves working closely with, having contact with, or having responsibility for the safeguarding and welfare of children, young or vulnerable people. To comply with Safeguarding Guidance, you need to ensure the reference is accurate and does not contain any material mis-statement or omission. Relevant factual reference content should be discussed with the worker.

Section 1 – Basic Information

Referee Details – Note the reference needs to be completed by a manager directly responsible for the worker.

Referee Name:	
Referee Job Title:	
Name of your organisation:	
Contact information - Email and phone number:	
How long have you known the worker and in what capacity are you providing this reference:	

Worker Details

Worker’s Name:	
Worker’s Job title and summary of key duties and responsibilities:	

Engaged/ Assignment from:		Engaged/Assignment to:	
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Section 2 - Competency Assessment

Please assess the worker’s competency – mark the relevant box:

	Excellent	Good	Competent	Requires Development	Unproven
Oral communication					
Written communication including report writing					
Court work (if applicable)					
Quality of work					
IT skills and data entry to required systems					
Able to distinguish between confidentiality and disclosure					
Able to set and maintain appropriate professional boundaries					
Colleague interaction					
Client interaction					
Knowledge of legislation					
Able to adhere to professional codes of conduct/ practice					
Able to engage fully and constructively with the supervision process					
Attendance record					

<p>1. *If you have ticked Requires Development in any of the boxes above please insert your reasons why, providing examples, where possible.</p>	
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Section 3 - General Assessment:

<p>Have you, or your colleagues, ever had cause for concern about the worker's conduct or performance related to the safety and welfare of children, young or vulnerable people or have they ever been subject to disciplinary or capability procedures whilst in your employment.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Yes No</p> <p>If yes, please provide details (you may provide additional attachments as necessary)</p>
<p>If the worker was supplied to you via an agency have you raised your concerns/allegations with the agency and the outcome if known</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Yes No</p> <p>If yes, please provide details (you may provide additional attachments as necessary)</p>
<p>Would you re-employ / re-engage this worker in the same or any other capacity within your organisation?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Yes No</p> <p>If yes, please provide details (you may provide additional attachments as necessary)</p>
<p>Any additional comments?</p>	

Declaration

I confirm that I am authorised to give the reference details outlined on this form. Please put 'x' in the box to confirm:

By supplying this reference, I understand I am giving you permission to disclose information contained in this document to third parties - to include the worker and potential employers Please put 'x' in the box to confirm:

Full Name:	
Organisation:	
Signature:	
Date:	