

Motion to Council—Redress for employees who missed out on Welsh Government's Financial Recognition Scheme.

This Council recognises and recompenses the hard work and dedication of employees from Workforce Development, Early Years Childcare and Play, Families First, and Flying Start, who are part of the Social Services Directorate.

These members of our workforce did not receive payment from Welsh Government's NHS and Social Care Financial Recognition Scheme despite carrying out the same duties throughout the Covid 19 pandemic as their colleagues in the Health and Social Care sectors, who benefitted from the scheme.

Council notes:

1. There was a profound injustice in this situation. Initial guidance issued in April 2021 stated that all employees under the Director of Social Services were included in the scheme, which was a one off payment of £735. Two weeks later, the guidance changed, resulting in these members of staff missing out on the scheme.

2. Our employees were actively on the front line at the onset of the Covid 19 pandemic. They;

- Supported the most vulnerable children and families in Blaenau Gwent
- Kept all Flying Start childcare settings open and repurposed them to take children of critical workers and our most vulnerable children so that keyworkers could continue work
- Continued face to face contacts throughout the pandemic, putting themselves and their families in the path of the unknown
- Delivered food parcels, children's activity parcels, heating and lighting tokens and carried out welfare checks to keep families safe and stop their needs from escalating into crisis.

3. Many of the staff in this sector are amongst the lowest-paid employees in the Authority, starting from a scale 3 grade. This payment would make a significant difference to them and to their families material well-being. It would also act as recognition of their dedication in such unprecedented circumstances.

4. Approximately 100 workers missed out on the scheme, which would cost around £73,500 in total to right. During the past four years, the Council has

enjoyed the most positive increase in RSG in decades, including an 8.4% rise earlier this year. Despite the poor financial outlook ahead, the council is duty bound to right this wrong.

Therefore, this Council resolves:

To recognise the dedication and hard work of our employees from Workforce Development, Early Years, Childcare and Play, Families First and Flying Start.

To allocate a one-off payment of £735 from the Council's Corporate Budget to the workers who missed out on the scheme and right the injustice suffered by them.

Signed: Cllr H Cunningham, Cllr D Bevan, Cllr K Chaplin, Cllr H Trollope, Cllr P Baldwin.