



Pay and Grading Principles Guidance

Scope

The Pay and Grading Principles Guidance ('the Framework') applies to all employees of West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC) ('the Council'). Where different arrangements apply for example for Chief Officers, this will be made clear within the Framework.

The Framework used at the Council

The Job Evaluation system used within the Council is called Evaluate. It is a job grading system which uses factors to determine the relative value of different roles within the Council and places them into clearly defined levels (see Appendix B).

The purpose of the Framework

The main purposes of having the Framework in place are to:

- aim to ensure that all elements of our pay, grading and reward systems are fully compliant with the Equality Act 2010. The Council is committed to the principle of equal pay for all employees and aims to eliminate any bias which may be identified in our pay and reward systems relating to sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, age, disability, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief
- ensure that the Framework enables the retention of employees and aids recruitment of employees with the right skills and capabilities
- take account of regional, national variations and local market factors
- provide a logic to underpin pay levels, job roles and career paths, making it easier for HR and line managers to make rational and objective decisions on job roles and pay
- make it clear to employees how their role and pay relates to others within the Council and externally
- ensure that jobs of equal value are remunerated fairly and transparently and helps us to demonstrate that this is the case
- support clear procedures for implementing salary increases and progression
- seek to ensure that the Framework is, and remains, affordable and support value for money in the services the Council and its partner organisations provide.

The pay structure is underpinned by three core elements:

- Job value – how the job evaluation system evaluates the roles
- External market value for similar professional grouping– using market data to establish the Council’s position against external comparators
- Peer Group comparisons

The Framework has been designed to create pay grade ranges that are able to take account of the job value of the role and the market value of the role (by profession and/or location).

The structure of the Framework

The Framework aims to ensure that ALL job roles below the level of Director (who are evaluated using the LGA Senior Officer Job Evaluation Scheme through South East Employers) are placed into one of 10 job groups. The 10 job groups are as follows:

Core

1. Process and Internal Support
2. Customer Advisor
3. Level 1 Case and Field Worker
4. Level 1 Specialist

Implement

5. Level 2 Case and Field Worker
6. Level 2 Specialist

Guide

7. Level 3 Specialist
8. Managers

Translate

9. Business Manager
10. Level 4 Specialist

Each Job Group has a minimum, median and a maximum salary.

Within each job group there is a further subcategory of Peer Groups. A Peer Group is made up of job roles that are job evaluated within the same Job Group. As the Council’s Job Groups are wide, having peer groups within the Job Group allows the Council to ensure that job roles that are broadly the same, have similar characteristics and which have a similar level of responsibility to each other, get broadly the same pay. Differences within a Peer Group will be equalised using pay levelling (local pay award) over time (see below).

Each Peer Group has a minimum, average and maximum salary level based on all the job roles within that particular peer grouping.

Pay Progression

There are two ways in which employees' salaries can be increased, and the Council may apply one or both of them to the Framework:

1. Via the annual cost of living award on the 1st April each year (negotiated and agreed nationally via the National Joint Council (JNC for Chief Officers) and once agreed uprating of salaries.
2. Via a local pay award*. The local pay award is made up of two elements, the job group mid-point and the peer group average. A post holder can qualify for part of the local award if they fall below one of these elements or a larger part of the award if they fall below both elements. The following criteria will help calculate any additional local pay award:
 - the difference between an individual's current salary and the mid-point of the job group salary grade; and
 - the difference between an individual's current salary and the average salary of others in the same professional peer group

In this way those employees who are furthest away from the job group grade mid-point and professional peer group average will receive an increase until they reach that peer group average salary. This will ensure that we can align historic pre-TUPE pay equality for all of our employees.

* Please note local pay awards do not apply to employees within probation, are protected by TUPE (from outside of the partnership), apprentices, graduates, interns, Directors and above and those in pay protection.

An annual review of the pay levelling will be undertaken by the Chief Executive, Director of Finance and Strategic People Lead.

Pay levelling, or the Local Pay Award, aims to bring employees who are paid below the average in their peer group towards the average, or move those who are below the mid-point for the job group towards the mid-point. The award is dependent upon the budget available each financial year and replaces incremental pay. WODC committed to pay levelling in 25/26 as part of our TUPE measures letter, and a decision has been made about whether this will continue in 26/27.

Types of pay at the Council

The Real Living Wage

The Real Living Wage is the only UK wage rate that is voluntarily paid by UK businesses who believe their employees deserve a fair day's pay for a hard day's work.

The Council pay the Real Living Wage which is higher than the government minimum. The Real Living Wage is reviewed by the Living Wage Foundation annually

The Council will pay an employee the Real Living Wage if their substantive level of pay is below the Real Living Wage (with the exception of Apprentice pay rates).

Apprentices

There is a national Apprenticeship Wage set by the Government which is reviewed and updated annually.

The Council will pay their apprentices the National Minimum Wage appropriate for each categorised age group – this is a level significantly higher than the National Apprenticeship Wage.

Graduates and Interns

The Council will pay a fair salary to Graduate and Intern vacancies at a predetermined rate as agreed by available funds. If a graduate placement will also require a further qualification to be funded by the Council, the salary will be adjusted accordingly.

Interns will be paid a fair salary for the work carried out at a predetermined rate as agreed by available funds.

Overtime

As the Council move to a new flexible working approach and business need prevails, there may be occasions where overtime is required to fulfil peaks in business demands.

Overtime will be paid at 1 ½ the hourly rate for any hours worked over the standard working week of Monday to Sunday (37 hours). Any hours worked up to 37 hours will be paid at plain time (hourly rate). All overtime has to be agreed in advance by your Line Manager. Where outside of budget this must be approved by the Director of Finance.

The enhanced rate of time and a half will only be applied once the employee has worked 37 * hours.

Sundays and Bank Holiday Working

* As per the Council's Contract of Employment, the enhanced rate of double time will be applied to all overtime hours worked on a Sunday or Bank Holiday.

Honarium Payment

This is the mechanism by which employees will be rewarded for temporarily undertaking additional duties to their current role or for being rewarded for their contribution for an exceptional piece of work. All requests for honorarium payments should be approved by the appropriate Director in the first instance and by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) where the Director of Finance must be in attendance or provide email authorisation. Honorariums can be paid in regular instalments or one lump sum. See the attached process guidance for Honorarium payments at Appendix A.

Acting up Payment

All requests for Acting up payments should be approved by the appropriate Director in the first instance and by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) where the Director of Finance must be in attendance or provide email authorisation. This payment is made on the basis that an employee is actively taking on additional duties, at a higher level either on a full-time basis or specific hours alongside their current role.

If the arrangement is to last more than 3 months, then following approval at SLT (and subsequent recording on Eploy the Council's Applicant Tracking System (ATS) the employee will be seconded to the higher graded role for the agreed period of time required. The employee's substantive post will not be permanently filled allowing the employee to return at the end of the secondment period.

See attached process guidance for Acting up allowances at Appendix A.

Pay and Salary protection

Any reduction to an employee's pay/salary grade as a result of a restructure will where applicable, be protected for a period of up to three years (or less if proposed pay catches up with protected pay).

Recruitment and Pay

When an external job vacancy is advertised it should normally be advertised detailing the relevant peer group minimum to mid-point.

When the successful applicant is offered the job, they should ordinarily be placed on the salary for the peer group minimum but if the hiring manager wishes to offer a higher salary for a particular reason, they should seek approval with a business case for doing so, from the relevant Director and SLT and before offering check with HR that the increase in salary does not sit negatively against the existing employee base within the service.

*Upon agreeing the budget for the vacancy, the Head of Finance will have provided confirmation based on a salary from Min to average. The Director and SLT agreement therefore is to offer outside of policy.

Promotion/role gained at a higher Job Group

Where internal employees apply for a job at a higher job level than their current role or to a higher Peer Group in the same job group in the Framework and are successful, the salary offered should not place the employee at any detriment.

If the job role sits within the same peer group or is at the same pay level as their current job role, the employee should not suffer any detriment to their current salary.

Pay Progression for Chief Officers

Chief Officers sit within the Joint National Council (JNC) for Chief Officers.

Annual increments shall be payable until the maximum incremental point of the grade is reached subject to the Chief Executive (for Directors) or Performance and Appointments Committee (for Chief Executive) being satisfied that a suitable standard of performance has been achieved.

Annual increments will be payable on 1 April each year to the maximum of the grade. Chief Officers must have completed a minimum of six months service in their current post to qualify for an increment at 1 April.

For clarity, Chief Officers starting in their current post between 1 April and 1 October will receive an increment, if applicable, the following April. Employees starting after 1 October and before 1 April will receive an increment, if applicable, after six months in the post.

Getting it right

Individual employees must not be verbally promised salary increases under any circumstances without prior authorisation nor should the likelihood of an increase be implied.

Individual managers must not undertake any appointment, without prior approval.

A clear and transparent approach to pay and reward will ensure that the Council has the right people, with the right skills at the right time.

Failure to adhere to the rules may lead to disciplinary action, grievances or breach of contract claims.

Appendix A

Honoraria Payments

The Council has a responsibility to ensure equal pay for all employees and so the use of honoraria payments should be carefully considered and be capable of justification. All requests for honorarium payments should be approved by the appropriate Director in the first instance and by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) where the Director of Finance must be in attendance or provide email authorisation. Please speak to HR who will support to advise on the sums to be paid and ensure that these are consistent with payments elsewhere in the the Council.

Honoraria payments can be used:

- by making a single payment to an employee to recognise a *specific* contribution that they have made
- **or**
- to recognise that an employee is temporarily undertaking some higher additional responsibility for a continuous period of at least four weeks (e.g. to cover some of the work of another employee during a period of absence) by making a regular monthly payment to them during that temporary period

Where used, honorarium payments should be for a maximum of six months and only in exceptional circumstances and with SLT agreement should continue past this.

Where only part of the duties of a higher graded post is undertaken, or a number of employees share the duties, a proportion of the difference between the employees and the higher salaried role should be paid as an honorarium. Normally payment should be made at the end of the period of time in question. Where there is the likelihood that the arrangements will continue for the maximum of six months, payment may be made on a monthly basis.

Acting up allowances

All requests for Acting up payments should be approved by the appropriate Director in the first instance and by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) where the Director of Finance must be in attendance or provide email authorisation.

An Acting Up allowance will only be agreed where the employee is required to undertake the full duties of the higher graded post for a continuous period of at least four weeks. If the arrangement is to last more than 3 months, then following approval at SLT (and subsequent recording on Eploy the Council's Applicant Tracking System (ATS) the employee will be seconded to the higher graded role for the agreed period of time required. The employee's substantive post will not be permanently filled allowing the employee to return at the end of the secondment period.

The individual employee must agree to the arrangement. Payment may not be made where the higher graded officer is on annual leave, but it may be appropriate for an absence through long-term sickness, provided finances are available.

Where the higher graded post is vacant, care should be taken not to create expectations in the mind of the employee that they will automatically be promoted to the higher post.

Payment should be made after four weeks and backdated to the first day of undertaking the higher duties. If it is known in advance that the acting up period will be longer than 4 weeks, then the payment can be made

from the 1st day. The new temporary rate of pay will be that which would have been paid had the employee been promoted to the more senior post (usually the Peer Group min for the role).

Where the duties and responsibilities are shared between more than one employee an acting up allowance is not the correct method of payment. Instead, an honorarium payment should be considered and the business case should factor in the fact that the duties of the higher graded post are being shared.

Appendix B

The Council's Job Evaluation Process

Job Evaluation of roles within the Council

- The grading of job roles within the Council is based on a system known as job evaluation. This is quite simply, a method of comparing different jobs within the Council, to provide a fair basis for a grading and pay structure
- Job evaluation helps to accommodate new or revised jobs into the existing grading structure. It can help to remove anomalies or inequalities in a pay system by providing a more objective and structured basis for deciding grading levels
- Job evaluation scores specific factors within a job role. It does not measure the individual post holder or their qualifications and experiences. It is important to remember that it is an evaluation of the role, not the person carrying it out

Which Council jobs can be evaluated under this procedure?

This Framework covers all positions employed by the Council below Director level jobs and on NJC terms and conditions.

The Council uses the Evaluate system for evaluating these jobs.

What are the reasons for jobs to be evaluated?

There are two criteria where the job evaluation system will be used:

1. Newly created jobs.
These need to be graded using the Council's job evaluation system. All new roles should be approved in the usual way and job descriptions sent to HR. Evaluation will be based on their duties and responsibilities and placed alongside all other jobs in the grading structure
2. Existing jobs where duties and responsibilities of a job or several jobs have substantially changed or increased

Determining the Salary banding of a New Job

All new posts must be graded via the Council's job evaluation system.

1. Line manager completes the job description using the Job Description Convention Document and seeking advice from HR (if required), based on the duties and responsibilities of the role.
2. The completed job description must then be sent to HR who will quality assure it and put it through the job evaluation system. The outcome of this will determine the Job Group level of the job in the Council's pay structure.
3. Job Evaluations will be undertaken by the HR Job Evaluation Panel made up of the Strategic People Lead and the Assistant Human Resources Business Partner.
4. Relevant Peer Groups must be referred to and accurate comparison made to the job role being evaluated.
5. The relevant Peer Group will be allocated by the HR Job Evaluation Panel.
6. Job Groups and Peer Groups for new posts should be confirmed via the Council's job evaluation system Evaluate, before being confirmed to the line manager of the role.

Re-grading of an Existing Post

An employee may be eligible to put their job forward for a re-grading request where they can demonstrate that there are or have been substantial changes/increases to their duties and responsibilities.

The level of responsibility, duties and expectations are all taken into consideration when the job is ranked in the overall grading structure of the Council. Some expansion of the job is often anticipated and incorporated within the Job Description. The duties and responsibilities of jobs are not necessarily subject to detailed definition and may vary from time to time, without changing the character of the post or its level of responsibility. Such changes are inevitable and are a common occurrence and cannot themselves justify reconsideration of re-grading.

A change in the volume of work is not a relevant factor, nor are variations brought about by new or amended legislation, unless there is a substantial impact upon the role.

Jobs placed for re-grading will be reviewed in their entirety which means that some factors may go down as well as up.

Procedure to be followed for a Re-grading Application

Jobs which have already been through a challenge meeting/reviewed or re-graded will not normally be considered for a further re-grading review unless there has been a substantial change to the job description.

No more than one application for a re-evaluation of a role will be considered in a 12-month period.

All individual review requests must be submitted via a formal business case outlining the reasons for the re-grading request and should be submitted by or via the post holder's Line Manager. The report must be endorsed by the relevant Director.

The employee and their line manager must also complete the job description with a full list of duties, essential and desirable qualifications and skills for the role. This must be sent to HR who will quality assure the job description and put it through the job evaluation system at the HR Job Evaluation Panel.

Service re-organisations, where more than one job has, or are proposed to change, will usually be the subject of a Business Case report to the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). All proposed changes must usually be confirmed via the Council's Evaluate job evaluation system before any reports are placed before SLT. The line manager is responsible for ensuring that individual job descriptions are completed and sent to HR so that revised Job Group/Peer Group can be determined before SLT report deadlines are met.

Any individual Job Group/Peer Group changes that are due to a significant change in the duties or responsibilities of a post will be subject to the approval of the Head of Service, Director and Director of Finance.

After a Job has been evaluated

HR will inform the relevant manager of the outcome of the evaluation panel by email. If there are any further points that need clarification, then HR will contact the relevant manager immediately.

Communication of outcome to the individual post holder (i.e. where an existing post has been regraded)

Once the Service Head, Director and Director of Finance have agreed the grade of a post following evaluation, HR will send the individual a confirmation email including the right of appeal, copied to the relevant line manager. The email needs to be agreed and returned to HR by the post holder.

Appeals Procedure

If the applicant is not happy with the outcome of the grading decision, they will have the right to appeal.

An employee who is dissatisfied with the grading of their job can appeal on one or more of the following reasons:-

- The scheme has been wrongly applied e.g. factor levels within each Job Group have been wrongly allocated
- The wrong Peer Group has been allocated
- The job description failed to capture some essential aspects of the job
- It is believed that a job of equivalent responsibility within the Council is more highly graded

The Appeal request must be formally submitted to the Strategic People Lead and the relevant line manager on the Job Grading Appeals Form (see the Appendix C). The grounds for appeal must be clearly stated on the form. A Director who will be accompanied by an *HR representative not involved in the original evaluation (*who sits within the wider partnership) will review the appeal documentation prior to an Appeal Meeting being arranged.

The applicant will be invited to attend the Appeal meeting and to make their case for a higher grading. They may be accompanied by a Trade Union representative or a colleague if they wish. The Line Manager should also attend the meeting.

The resulting decision of the Appeal meeting will be final. The decision will be given in writing/email to the applicant as soon as practicably possible after the meeting, and certainly within 5 days.

If an Appeal is upheld and the grade is increased, the outcome and revised grading will be backdated to the date of the original request.

Appendix C

Job Evaluation Appeal form

Name(s) of employee	
Role title	
Mapped as	
Where the individual(s) wanted to be mapped to	
<p>Reason for appeal: Choose from the following</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The scheme has been wrongly applied e.g. factor levels within each Job Group have been wrongly allocated. • The wrong Peer group has been allocated • The job description failed to capture some essential aspects of the job • It is believed that a job of equivalent responsibility within the Council is more highly graded <p>Please explain the reasons behind the above:</p>	
Panel Completion (only) Following Appeal	
Evaluate Criteria Appeal Assessment	
Expertise Outcome	
Reasons why at this level	The role is - Pick some key phrases from evaluate criteria and examples from the challenge paperwork / discussion
Reason why not at next level	The role is not - doing (key phrases from criteria) as evidenced by (challenge documentation and meeting)
Complexity Outcome	
Reasons why at this level	
Reason why not at next level	
Impact Outcome	
Reasons why at this level	

Reason why not at next level	
Influence Outcome	
Reasons why at this level	
Reason why not at next level	
Resource Outcome	
Reasons why at this level	
Reason why not at next level	
Appeal outcome	<p>Brief synopsis: Declined on basis of - e.g; a) not working at Translate level b) comparable roles within the Council are not at this level c) Not working in a specialist job group (nature of the role is case work)</p>

Additional information Appendix for panel only

Impact of movement to new band	<p>Would be £xxxx below MIN for Level 4 specialist (so would get an instant pay increase)</p> <p>Or</p> <p>Would fall within new range at MIN - MID</p>
Comparable roles in other areas of the Council	

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