

Supplement – schedule of questions received for meeting of children and young people scrutiny committee – 16 March 2020

Agenda item no. 6 - Questions from members of the Council

Question Number	Questioner	Question	Question to
MQ 1	Councillor Jeremy Milln, Central	Referring to Ofsted's letter of 21 st January following its 18 th December inspection of Herefordshire's children's services what is the leadership team doing to understand and address key shortcomings in its own management and supervision of staff? For example it would be a good idea to give an opportunity for leavers (anonymously and via 3 rd parties if need be) to feed back their experience of employment with Herefordshire Council and share their reasons for leaving. Social workers are like teachers: before applying for a job they check the Ofsted report. We cannot hope to attract and retain experienced staff to a service where leadership, support and management are seen as deficient.	Cabinet Member Children and Families

Response:

Referring to Ofsted's letter of 21st January following its 18th December inspection of Herefordshire's children's services what is the leadership team doing to understand and address key shortcomings in its own management and supervision of staff?

Response; Key performance information is available to heads of service on a weekly basis, to enable them to drill down with team managers into the performance of individual teams. Data is provided at mid-month point as to the % of social workers that have received supervision, so heads of service have oversight of how many supervisions are required in that month, and can have these conversations with team managers accordingly.

To have an overview on the quality of supervision, heads of service are required to observe two supervision sessions per quarter.

The Assistant Director chairs monthly performance meetings with heads of service.

The Director chairs quarterly performance challenge sessions with AD and Heads of service, and from April, team managers will be attending these meetings as well.

It would be a good idea to give an opportunity for leavers (anonymously and via 3rd parties if need be) to feed back their experience of employment with Herefordshire Council and share their reasons for leaving.

Response; All leavers are offered an exit interview. In the last twelve months, there have been six social work employees that have left Herefordshire County Council.

There have been a number of employees that have moved posts within the council; the data on this is being pulled together by HR.

The confirmation of resignation letter details that staff should complete the exit survey online or if they prefer they can request a face to face exit interview.

Only 1 person completed the online survey.

We cannot hope to attract and retain experienced staff to a service where leadership, support and management are seen as deficient.

Response; The focused visit in January 2019 evaluated one service area. There is now a new Head of Service in post in this service area who took up post the week after Ofsted had conducted their visit. They are aware of the challenges in the service area and are making every effort to address these.

We are working with Essex County Council, as performance improvement partners, to learn from them and develop approaches which can drive up the quality of practice

We are implementing signs of safety to help embed strengths based practice and improve our service offer to children and families.

Recruitment is challenging against a national shortage of social workers, and we acknowledge adverse publicity can impact on this. However, prior to the Ofsted visit, recruitment drives and initiatives were not successful in attracting experienced social workers to work in Hereford, and we are now actively recruiting newly qualified social workers in an attempt to “grow our own” social workers for the future. We also have six people who commenced the social work apprenticeship scheme with the Open University in February 2019.