

<b>MEETING:</b>	<b>HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE OVERVIEW &amp; SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</b>
<b>MEETING DATE:</b>	<b>11 JULY 2013</b>
<b>TITLE OF REPORT:</b>	<b>CHILDREN'S SERVICES WORKFORCE REPORT</b>
<b>REPORT BY:</b>	<b>INTERIM HEAD OF IMPROVEMENT</b>

## **1. Classification**

Open

## **2. Key Decision**

This is not a key decision

## **3. Wards Affected**

County-wide

## **4. Purpose**

4.1 The purpose of this report is to update members on progress related firstly to the recruitment and retention strategy in children's social care and how this is progressing in relation to the priority areas for action set out in the Improvement Notice.

4.2 This report summarises the information provided to the Herefordshire Safeguarding and Protecting Children Improvement Board in March, 2013.

## **5. Recommendation(s)**

**THAT: The Committee comment on the progress to date.**

## **6. Alternative Options**

6.1 Please reference the presentation.

## **7. Reasons for Recommendations**

7.1 A well trained and supported children's workforce is essential to ensure children's outcomes improve.

7.2 One of the basic requirements of an effective child protection service is the recruitment and retention of talented social workers.

## **8. Key Considerations**

- 8.1 Herefordshire is a rural authority with the offices based primarily in the City centre. Hereford is over an hour's drive from any highly populated areas, making the commute for potential recruits from the most populated surrounding areas, a challenge.
- 8.2 Hereford is however a pleasant area to live and to work, and generic council policies and provisions for staff are what one would expect in a local authority, for example, flexible working arrangements, access to Occupational Health, training and development support.
- 8.3 Social Care staff are currently provided with standard IT equipment and basic mobile phones. Consideration has not yet been given to the benefits of the service and to staff retention, of a more advanced set of mobile devices to support staff in their work.
- 8.4 Herefordshire has an appointed Principal Social Worker at Head of Service level, who leads the Advanced Practitioner service. This service is already valued by newly qualified social workers. The role is developing to improve the quality of practice of all social workers through mentoring, developing specific skills and focussing on the requirements of ensuring social work basics are done extraordinary well.
- 8.5 The Ofsted inspection undertaken in September, 2012, made a number of recommendations which related to workforce issues:
- 8.6 Recommendation 7  
Required the authority to improve the quality and consistency of management oversight and decision making. External coaching and mentoring was delivered to frontline managers during November and December. Additionally a further professional development framework and facility is in place so that it can be delivered to frontline managers as they are recruited to the authority.
- 8.7 Recommendation 14  
Required the authority to ensure that first line managers have sufficient skills, knowledge and experience to effectively undertake their role. ILM training for all first line managers, and recruitment strategy to ensure high calibre managers. ILM training for all first line managers is in place, ready for delivery to newly appointed and existing managers.
- 8.8 Recommendation 19  
Required the authority to reduce the number of changes of social workers experienced by children and their families. Three areas of work are underpinning the response to this recommendation, Firstly a 'Child's Journey' 6 week project is underway to analyse safeguarding and social work through Lean Systems Thinking in order to inform the organisational structure and practice. Secondly an improved career structure is being developed to complement the recruitment and retention plan to create greater stability within the workforce, and thirdly a risk and resilience plan is in development. The department is also piloting a social worker apprenticeship scheme with the aim of encouraging local people to join the department on a long term basis.
- 8.9 Furthermore the Improvement Notice following the Ofsted inspection made some specific requirements for improvement related to workforce as follows:
- 8.10 Attention must be paid to the eight standards for employers of social workers
- 8.11 Implement a programme of induction, training, mentoring and continuous professional development for all social care staff including managers to improve the quality of frontline social work. In particular ensure that this programme includes training for staff and frontline managers on risk analysis. The council should report the impact of the training on improving outcomes for children, to the improvement board.

8.12 Following an analysis of the needs of the service, develop and implement an overall workforce strategy. The strategy should provide clear evidence of impact in creating capable, stable and sustainable workforce which requires fewer agency staff and which includes clear recruitment and retention plans. The aim should be to improve the quality and continuity of social care staff experienced by children and families.

8.13 Review and monitor social workers responsibilities and workloads to ensure staff have a manageable range of work and a caseload consistent with their level of experience and competence. Ensure that the Improvement Board receives workforce management information to confirm that this is achieved and sustained.

8.14 Current Workforce Arrangements

This section provides some data and information on the details of workforce issues that inform strategic direction.

8.15 **Based on 12/13 budgeted establishment**

Role	Establishment	Permanent	Agency	Vacant	(Over)/ under establishment
Service Manager	6.00	4.00	2.00	0.00	0.00
Assistant Team Manager	9.00	4.00	6.00	2.00	(3.00)
AP's	8.00	4.00	0.00	4.00	4.00
Social Workers	56.05	54.66	14.00	1.59	(14.20)
<b>Total</b>	<b>79.05</b>	<b>66.66</b>	<b>22.00</b>	<b>7.59</b>	<b>(13.20)</b>

8.16 The current children's social care workforce structure is comprised of Service Managers, Team Leaders, Advanced Practitioners, Social Workers and a number of unqualified workers with a range of titles. The unqualified workers include, family support workers, 16+workers, homelessness workers, and post adoption support workers.

8.17 *\*\* Please note that from 1<sup>st</sup> April the majority of the Assistant Team Managers are now budgeted as Team Leaders. This information was produced in March, 2013.*

8.18 **Based on 13/14 budgeted establishment**

Role	Establishment	Permanent	Agency	Vacant	(Over)/ under establishment
Service Manager	6.00	4.00	2.00	0.00	0.00
Team Leaders	11.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	11.00
Assistant Team Manager	1.00	4.00	6.00	2.00	(9.00)
AP's	4.00	4.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Senior Social Worker	4.00	0.00	0.00	4.00	4.00
Social Workers	61.19	54.66	14.00	1.59	(7.47)
<b>Total</b>	<b>87.19</b>	<b>66.66</b>	<b>22.00</b>	<b>7.59</b>	<b>(1.47)</b>

8.19 Additionally there 29.5 fte Family Support workers and these are in part dedicated to teams at varying levels and in part fully staffing the Intensive Family Support Service (13).

8.20 The recent change in structure relating to titles in the team means that the workforce data baseline information will be based on the 2013/14 workforce establishment. Meanwhile, during the transition to the new structure, teams will currently show some differences in job titles. An additional anomaly is that some teams, e.g. FAST are currently temporarily overstaffed in order to combat pressures following the restructure.

- 8.21 Herefordshire Council have experienced a reasonable level of success in recruiting newly qualified Social Workers due to four main factors;
- 8.22 Pay scales for this particular group of Social Workers is higher than in other Local Authorities.
- 8.23 Herefordshire Council runs its own Social Work Scholarship Scheme which attracts candidates from HC staff.
- 8.24 Herefordshire Council has a number of established partnerships with Universities which provide a good range of placements and thereby a pool of good candidates who wants to come and work with us following placement experience.
- 8.25 Herefordshire Council offers Post Qualification to all NQSW joining the Local Authority.
- 8.26 A staged approach to the recruitment and retention issues in children's social care has taken place over the last six months.
- 8.27 In October, 2012 a proposal was agreed for:
- a) The post of Assistant Team Manager be revised as Team Leader, and upgraded to HC 10, and increased in compliment by 2 fte: and
  - b) That the post of Advanced Practitioner be regraded to HC 10, and reduced in compliment by 2 fte posts; and
  - c) That the post of Senior Social Worker be established at HC9.
- 8.28 The rationale for this was that by securing the right balance of staff within the Social work component of the workforce, it was expected that it would be more possible to achieve the aspiration of having the most appropriately skilled worker working with the right child and family, and thus more likely to be achieving better outcomes for children. This set the scene for the future structuring and placing of staff in the service.
- 8.29 In January and February 2013 a recruitment campaign was initiated which included a one-off offer of Golden Hello supplements.
- 8.30 Training and Development
- Supervision improvements have been made within the context of the practice workstream of the improvement board and these include the introduction of a single supervision template. The Institute of Leadership and Management training programme has continued and this has been enhanced by practice focus on recording of supervision records, as well as workshop activity. The children's social care workforce development plan for 2013/2014 has been developed and is attached.
- 8.31 The core training programme has continued and this has been enhanced by practice workshops on the following:
- Strategy meetings and s.47 investigations
  - Feedback from the audit programme
  - Core Groups
  - Voice of the Child
- 8.32 Staff Engagement
- The Assistant Director for children and young people provider services, has initiated a programme of all staff briefings which are themed on the various elements of the improvement plan.

- 8.33 There is also a long established, 'improving working lives' group at which children's social care staff attend. This group oversaw a council wide staff survey during 2012 and are in the process of reporting back on this survey. Whilst responses were higher than previously, the general nature of responses indicated a sense of poor morale across the service.
- 8.34 There have also been a series of 6 'root and branch' workshops specifically for Social Work staff to consult on the outcomes of the Ofsted inspection, the challenges facing the service in the light of its findings and recommendations, and the implications for our future structural arrangements. The majority of the staff group felt that there were too many artificial transition points in the service currently, impacting on both outcomes for children and job satisfaction for workers.
- 8.35 Introduction of MASH  
From July 2013, the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub will begin operation, combining elements of the current FAST Service with Police, Health, Education and Women's Aid colleagues in improving information sharing and decision making arrangements with respect to new contacts to Children's Social Care. From the current FAST Service, 2 Team Leaders, 4 Social Workers, 3 Customer Support Officers and an Information and Needs Assessment Coordinator will transfer to the MASH, where all Contact screening will take place, as well as s47 investigations. If a case requires an assessment (other than s47), in the immediate future it will transfer to the remainder of the FAST Service, which will be split into 2 teams for management purposes, and which will focus on Initial Assessments, and where necessary, Core Assessments (in advance of the new single assessment being implemented).
- 8.36 Business Support  
Over recent months it has become clear that capacity to deliver against current demand in children's social care is too limited with the balance of managers (2) to business support staff (60) being inadequate. Therefore remedial action has taken place on a balance of both permanent and temporary bases, pending an urgent review of the business support arrangements taking place. This review will consider the demand for business support in the context of the Child's Journey review.

## **9. Community Impact**

- 9.1 The improvements planned will lead to a positive impact on the most vulnerable children and families in Herefordshire.

## **10. Equality and Human Rights**

By the nature of its work Children's social care services, in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to -

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by or under this Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it."

## **11. Financial Implications**

- 11.1 There are no specific implications to this report, however further recruitment and retention proposals may have financial implications.

## **12. Legal Implications**

- 12.1 This report does not raise any legal issues and arises from a mandatory statutory process.

### **13. Risk Management**

- 13.1 Risks related to the Improvement Plan are recorded on a risk register and the recruitment and retention of a stable workforce is a critical area related to the necessary improvements required in the Improvement plan and notice.

### **14. Consultees**

- 14.1 Multi-agency membership of the Improvement Board.

### **15. Appendices**

- 15.1 None.

### **16. Background Papers**

- 16.1 None identified.