

Appendix D: Retention and exit interviews

Background

The council-wide exit interview process offers two, non-mandatory feedback routes for staff leaving the council:

1. they can complete an online exit survey; or
2. they can request a 'face to face' exit interview with their line manager or another appropriate person.

To try to encourage staff to share their feedback as part of the exit interview process, an alert is automatically sent to those staff who are put through as leavers on Business World, reminding them of the exit interview process and providing a hyperlink to the online exit survey.

The data from completed online exit surveys is captured centrally, whereas records of 'face to face' exit interviews would be held locally by managers. Where managers send records from 'face to face' exit interviews to the HR Team, these are reviewed then saved on the member of staff's personnel file. No manual database is maintained, therefore this summary does not include data for 'face to face' exit interviews conducted with managers.

Exit and retention interview pilot

In September 2021, the Children and Young People (C&YP) directorate launched a 'soft' pilot of a new exit and retention interview procedure. The procedure seeks to strengthen the existing, council-wide exit interview process, whilst introducing retention interviews for the first time. The procedure is aimed at all staff across the directorate who are either thinking of leaving their role or have already resigned. The former will be offered a retention interview and the latter will be offered an exit interview. It should be noted that these interviews are purely voluntary and the directorate has made it clear that no member of staff is to be pressured, intimidated or compelled to participate in one. Staff are given the opportunity to decide who they undertake their interview with and this may be the Assistant Principal Social Worker or a member of the HR Team.

The effectiveness of the 'soft' pilot is currently being reviewed and a decision is due in February 2022 about formalising the exit and retention interview procedure. In the meantime, these interviews remain available to staff within the directorate.

The data in this appendix comprises that which was presented in a previous overview in November 2021 plus an update covering the period 27 October 2021 until 31 January 2022.

1. Position from 1 October 2020 until 31 August 2021

This covers the period when only the council-wide exit interview process was in operation. The data relates to the C&YP directorate only.

	1 October 2020 – 31 August 2021	1 September 2021 – 26 October 2021	27 October 2021 – 31 January 2022
Number of leavers (<i>employees only</i>)	52	10	23
Number of online exit surveys completed	20	5	8
Number of exit interviews conducted ('soft' pilot)	N/A	5	3
% of leavers captured by online exit survey and exit interview	38.5%	100%	47.83%
Number of retention interviews conducted ('soft' pilot)	N/A	20	7

2. C&YP online exit survey feedback from 29 September 2019 until 30 September 2020

2.1 The broad themes of feedback captured in online exit surveys completed by staff working in the C&YP directorate during the period from 29 September 2019 until 30 September 2020:

Things that are working well	Things that could be better
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friendly and welcoming • Desire for creativity • A focus on the value of the work carried out in communities • Good culture on the whole 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Too stressful • Working relationships • Workload and work/life balance • Effectiveness and consistency of leadership

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional • Feel supported by most colleagues • Dedicated workforce • Opportunity to gain invaluable skills, experience and knowledge • Enjoyable place to work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning and development • Impact of financial constraints • Communication • Greater recognition for staff • Openness to flexible working e.g. part time and home-working • Change is implemented more quickly
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3. C&YP online exit survey, retention and exit interview feedback from 1 October 2020 until 26 October 2021

3.1 The below table sets out the number of leavers during the period from 1 October 2020 until 26 October 2021, versus the number of online exit surveys completed by employees in the C&YP directorate. It should be noted that the retention and exit interview ‘soft pilot’ in C&YP directorate was launched in September 2021.

Number of leavers <i>(employees only)</i>	89
Number of online exit surveys completed	21
Number of exit interviews conducted	5
% of leavers captured by online exit survey and exit interview	29.21%
Number of retention interviews conducted	20

3.2 The broad themes of feedback from online exit surveys, retention and exit interviews completed by staff working in the C&YP directorate are set out below, in no particular order. This feedback covers the full period from 1 October 2020 until 26 October 2021.

Things that are working well	Things that could be better
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most people felt well equipped to do their job 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication and engagement • Workload and work/life balance

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good work/life balance • Friendly and welcoming • Feel supported by most colleagues • Several people have enjoyed their time working here • Supervision / team meetings to discuss cases and learn from colleagues • Caring and committed teams • Family-friendly, child-focussed approach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safe working environment • Employee benefits including relocation package • Internal recruitment and selection processes • Diversity and inclusion • Systems and processes • Career progression pathways • Knowledge transfer • Management behaviours (including some perceptions of bullying, a lack of support and visibility) • Induction and training • Salary appropriate to the work • Administrative support for social work teams
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4. C&YP online exit survey, retention and exit interviews from 27 October 2021 until 31 January 2022

4.1 The below table sets out the number of leavers during the period from 27 October 2021 until 31 January 2022, versus the number of online exit surveys completed by employees in the C&YP directorate.

Number of leavers (<i>employees only</i>)	23
Number of online exit surveys completed	8
Number of exit interviews conducted	3
% of leavers captured by online exit survey and exit interview	47.83%
Number of retention interviews conducted	7

4.2 The broad themes of feedback from online exit surveys, retention and exit interviews completed by staff working in the C&YP directorate during the above period are set out below, in no particular order:

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Things that are working well	Things that could be better
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Feeling supported by colleagues• Recent improvements in relation to realistic expectations about work/life balance• Impact on some children and young people and making a difference• Some good and supportive managers• Feeling positive about work• Flexibility regarding own personal circumstances	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Supervision and support• Management behaviours (including culture and some perceptions of bullying) and therefore levels of trust• Behaviours of some colleagues towards their managers• Caseloads and more realistic expectations• Pay and conditions• Feeling valued• Clearer service processes and procedures• Understanding of impact of organisational history on some parts of the service and on particular staff• Challenges in making a positive impact on the lives of BAME children and families given the local context and responses including by partner agencies• Allyship and understanding of some white managers managing BAME colleagues• Gaps in some resources and lack of information about services available in Herefordshire e.g. placements, short breaks• Timeliness of recruitment processes• More clarity about roles and responsibilities of service managers/team managers as potential for duplication and more meetings• Balance between focus on improvement and the 'day job'• Impact of project teams on openings for permanent staff to move between teams