

# **Title of report: Children and Young People's Workforce Strategy 2024 – 2028**

**Decision maker: Cabinet Member Children & Young People**

**Decision Date: 19<sup>th</sup> September 2024**

**Report by: HR Business Partner on behalf of Children & Young People Directorate Leadership Team**

## **Classification**

Open

## **Decision type**

Non-key

## **Wards affected**

(All Wards);

## **Purpose**

To approve, for implementation in September 2024 the council's Children & Young People Workforce Strategy 2024-2028.

## **Recommendation(s)**

**That:**

- a) The Children`s and Young Peoples Workforce Strategy be approved.**
- b) Delegated authority be given to the Corporate Director for Children and Young People to take all operational decisions that fall within the responsibility of Herefordshire Council to complete, as set out within this strategy.**
- c) Delegated authority be given to the Corporate Director for Children and Young People to make technical, grammatical and minor amendments to the strategy.**

## **Alternative options**

1. The report could not be noted nor approved. This is not a recommended course of action as the children and young people workforce is one of the council's key priority areas for improvement as part of the wider children's services improvement programme.

## **Key considerations**

2. The Council has recently implemented a Corporate Workforce Strategy earlier in 2024. The purpose of which is to be able to build on the Council's key ambitions and integrate the Council Plan priorities into the strategy as a golden thread for all of the workforce.
3. The Children and Young People Workforce Strategy directly links to the Corporate Workforce Strategy, however, specifically focusses on our children and young people services and our ambitions for all staff within the directorate.
4. This requires new ways of thinking and working across the directorate. We have therefore undertaken engagement with the children and young people workforce to inform a new Children and Young People Workforce Strategy through management teams, a staff reference group and an aiming high group.
5. This strategy will set out how we recruit, retain, develop and support our children and young people workforce and ensure we have the skills and capabilities we need to build resilience and deliver children's services in new ways for the future.

## **Drivers for change**

6. The Children and Young People Workforce Strategy, has been shaped in response to a range of drivers which will create change within the directorate, including external factors and trends, themes within our key strategic plans, and the internal and external challenges we face. It has been developed using feedback from managers and employees engagement via manager meetings, a staff reference group and an aiming high group.
7. Workforce drivers from children's services improvement has influenced the Children and Young People Workforce Strategy themes. If we are to build strong, trusting relationships with families and partners, we need a skilled and motivated workforce.
8. We are focussing on reducing our use of agency staff, and investing in a clear focus on permanent recruitment and developing staff internally. Although recruitment in a number of our children's services, particularly social worker roles, is a challenge, both regionally and nationally, the inter-connected themes within the strategy will support the retention of staff and seek to attract new talent to the council.
9. However, there is more that can be done. The directorate needs to review and benchmark its terms and conditions to create a workplace environment that supports and retains its workforce talent and demonstrates an inclusive culture. Analysis and insight highlight that we need to do more to demonstrate inclusivity and improve staff engagement. Building a more engaged workforce in the directorate means our staff will be more receptive to change and drive higher performance, which in turn will drive better outcomes for children, young people and families in Herefordshire.
10. The children's workforce itself is also changing. There are different expectations and aspirations regarding work, career and life and retirement has changed and evolved for many people. This is why a children and workforce strategy has been developed in order to set out the council's commitment to its children and young people workforce. The strategy will support

the commitments in the Corporate Workforce Strategy and Council Plan and will provide a clear promise to our current and future children and young people workforce to make the experience of working for Herefordshire Council a collaborative, inclusive, productive and happy one.

### **Developing the new Workforce Strategy**

11. The Children and Young People Workforce Strategy has been developed over a number of months and picks up on the themes of the overall children's services improvement programme and specifically the work of the workforce children's improvement programme.
12. The following themes are at the core of the strategy and set out how we can support our children and young people workforce to be the best they can be and sets out our shared values and vision. The themes within the strategy cover the following areas:
  - a. **Our commitment to equality and diversity**
  - b. **Your wellbeing**
  - c. **A workforce that is engaged**
  - d. **A workforce that is agile and adaptable**
  - e. **A workforce that is skilled**
  - f. **Our leadership**
13. Each theme is supported in the strategy by a number key priorities and what our children's workforce can expect. All of these, if realised, will ensure we have a capable and talented children's workforce empowered to deliver the Council's priorities and ambition whilst being supported to thrive.
14. The strategy was reviewed by the CYP Scrutiny in June 2024 and the strategy has now been updated to reflect the comments / recommendations from scrutiny. See Appendix B SMB Executive Response.
15. The Children and Young People Workforce Strategy is attached as Appendix A.

### **Next steps: developing and implementing the strategy**

16. The Children and Young People Workforce Strategy has been developed through staff and leadership engagement to create a clear mutuality of expectation between us as an employer and the workforce.
17. Subject to the strategy being approved, a communications plan for implementation is in place and it is proposed to launch the strategy September 2024.

### **Community impact**

18. The council has a Corporate Workforce Strategy, Council Plan, Delivery Plan and an ambitious THRIVE transformation programme, as well as a number of other council priorities, such as the Children's Services Improvement Plan. This ambition for children's services and our communities requires a talented, diverse, committed, engaged and high performing workforce to deliver and realise our priorities. In order to deliver the commitments set out, we must ensure that we have an aligned Children and Young People Workforce Strategy that is

developed to recruit, retain and invest in a skilled and children, young people and family focussed workforce.

19. A key priority for the council has been improving the services we provide to our children and young people. We already have a dedicated Children's Services Improvement Plan and Corporate Workforce Strategy in place and the Children and Young People Workforce Strategy will compliment these by setting out an overall framework to attract, retain and develop our children and young people workforce.

## **Environmental Impact**

20. This will have minimal environmental impacts, consideration has been made to minimise waste and resource use in line with the council's environmental policy.

## **Equality Duty**

21. The Children and Young People Workforce Strategy complements the Corporate Workforce Strategy which embeds specific actions for the council to reflect the range of equality, diversity and inclusion related issues identified through staff engagement sessions. The strategy also seeks to ensure that we are delivering against best practice and to achieve our aspirations to be an employer of choice.

22. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the 'general duty' on public authorities is set out as follows:

A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to –

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

23. The public sector equality duty (specific duty) requires us to consider how we can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations, and demonstrate that we are paying 'due regard' in our decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services. Page 9 of the strategy details what we have considered, and what actions we are going to put in place to achieve our goals.
24. The implementation of the Children and Young People Workforce Strategy will have a significant, positive, impact on our council compliance with the Equality Act. The proposed themes will enhance diversity by continuing to recruit, develop and retain talent from a broad spectrum of backgrounds and with different protected characteristics as we do currently. This allows the council to continue to benefit from a wide pool of skills, perspectives and experiences. This not only continues to enrich the potential of the children and young people workforce but also continues to foster a sense of belonging for staff and seeks to improve employee experiences of working for the council and encourages retention with an employer that values and supports diversity and equality.

## Resource implications

25. The Children and Young People Workforce Strategy is a directorate Strategy and any financial implications arising from the implementation of this strategy or new initiatives will need to be met from within existing budgets.

## Legal implications

26. There are no specific legal implications.

## Risk management

27. The Children and Young People Workforce Strategy reflects activities that will mitigate against the following corporate risks:

Risk / opportunity Mitigation	Risk / opportunity Mitigation
The inability to recruit and retain staff.	The Children and Young People Workforce Strategy will support new ways of addressing this need.
Failure to adhere to the Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty.	Appropriate measures are in place to ensure compliance as part of the council's wider policies.
Failure to comply with HR related legislative requirements.	HR policies, procedures and training is being developed to help support line managers in their responsibilities.

## Appendices

Appendix A Children and Young People Workforce Strategy 2024-2028  
Appendix B SMB Executive Response

## Background papers

None.

## Report Reviewers Used for appraising this report:

Please note this section must be completed before the report can be published		
Governance	John Coleman	Date 07/06/2024
Finance	Wendy Pickering	Date 11/06/2024
Legal	Tess Burgess	Date 12/06/2024
Communications	Michela Lee	Date 23/05/2024

Equality Duty	Harriet Yellin	Date 29/05/2024
Procurement	Carrie Christopher	Date 06/06/2024
Risk	Chris Jones	Date 21/05/2024

Approved by	Click or tap here to enter text.	Date Click or tap to enter a date.
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