

# PAY AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Report By: Head of Human Resources

## Wards Affected

County-wide

## Purpose

1. To report on employee turnover, and to provide an update on the findings of Exit Surveys.

## Financial Implications

2. None.

## Background

3. On 13 February, 2006, in considering the Minutes of its meeting on 26th January, 2006 the Committee requested a report on staff turnover showing a breakdown of the overall figure. An update was also requested on the findings from exit interviews
4. The Council's Pay and Workforce Development Strategy 2005-8 sets out five key strategic themes for improvement, one of which is to improve resourcing within the Council. The main performance indicator measuring success of improvement actions in this area is employee turnover. A target of 9% turnover per year has been agreed, against a median average for local government of 14.5% and English Unitary average of 16.5% (Source: People Skills Scoreboard 2005). Employee turnover within the Council continues to be steady at just under 9%, and more recently has fallen to 6.95% as shown below (Note that not all leaver data for March 06 is included. The final outturn is likely to be higher).

Directorate	01/04/05	31/03/06	Average employed	Voluntary Leavers	Turnover
Adult & Community	804	773	788.50	80	10.15%
Chief Executive	56	57	56.50	7	12.39%
Children's Services	3717	3868	3792.50	212	5.59%
Corporate & Customer	250	237	243.50	34	13.95%
Environment	388	389	388.50	33	8.49%
Resources	195	198	196.50	14	7.12%
TOTAL	5410	5522	5466	380	6.95%

### Calculation – Best Value Performance Indicator (BVPI) 13

Further information on the subject of this report is available from  
David Johnson, Head of Human Resources on 01432 383055

5. Within the overall turnover figures there are areas within Directorates where turnover issues are to be addressed via the Pay and Workforce Development Strategy annual Operational Plan 2006-7. A range of actions has been identified to address turnover and key shortage areas, and address the Joint Area Review findings. Actions include:
  - Develop a system for analysing skills/workforce shortage areas to include local and national trends to inform workforce planning, and
  - Development of initiatives to address identified key shortage areas e.g. in Social Care (Children's and Adults), Planning, Environmental Health, Trading Standards based on workforce planning information developed by end July 2006.
6. Particular focus within the overall turnover figures is to be given to Social Care (Children's), and Adult Learning Disability.
7. The average Council turnover rate for Social Workers is approximately 10%, against a national turnover figure of 10.6% and a West Midlands region turnover figure of 10.1%.
8. The national vacancy rate for Children's Social Workers is 11.4% and the West Midlands area figure is 12.9%. The Council does not currently operate a fixed establishment and it is difficult therefore to accurately assess vacancy rates. If, however, the Council takes a baseline figure of 14 FTE per 10,000 head of population aged 0-17 (Audit Family Group) the current rate for comparison could be potentially 13.3%.
9. Overall turnover in the Children's Social Work teams has seen 11 leavers in the last 12 month period. This is higher than previous years however, three retired at age 60+, one was dismissed following prolonged sickness absence and two were job share partners who left to take up a job share post with our local PCT. Over the same period the Council recruited 12.5 full time equivalent qualified Social Workers to cover the losses and other vacancies. Discussions are currently underway regarding resourcing levels given projected demographic changes for this age group in the longer term.
10. The Children's Duty Team did not have a disproportionate number of social worker leavers in the past 12 months compared to the other Children's teams, but did lose its team manager in that time.
11. The Adult Services turnover rate for social workers in past 12 months has been 9.25%, consistent with previous years. The national annual turnover rate is 10% and the West Midlands area annual turnover rate is 10.5%. The national vacancy rate is 10.4% and West Midlands area figure is 11.8%. Without an agreed establishment figure, it is estimated that the Council's current vacancy rate is around 10.62%. Work is in hand to make an assessment against the relevant audit family group.
12. The Community Learning Disability Team currently has 2 FTE Social Worker vacancies. Within the Integrated Learning Disability Team the Primary Care Trust (PCT) are currently working to address shortages of 1.4 FTE nursing posts. There is combined PCT/Council effort planned for March and April to jointly promote, advertise, and recruit to these vacancies.
13. To help better assess staffing issues, it is intended to set in place an establishment for the Council. A degree of flexibility will need to be retained within this context, so

that employee levels can continue to be managed according to service delivery needs. With an establishment in place, vacancy levels will be easier to identify and manage in the future.

14. Actions to address the issues identified have been planned and set in progress to cover both Adults and Children's Social Work, these include:
- monies allocated from the National Training Support Grant to sponsor existing employees through the social work degree;
  - there are currently 11 sponsored employees at various stages on the social work degree to whom the Council will offer posts;
  - there are a number of external final year degree students on placement with the Council and we looking to recruit and retain them;
  - over the past 16 months the Council has piloted a traineeship scheme for existing employees to facilitate a career move into a social care occupation. It is planned to roll this out in a simplified form across the council;
  - the possibility of offering bursaries to external final year students as an aid to recruitment/retention is being investigated;
  - actively promoting social work as a viable career (for example a recent press release resulted in over 50 enquiries about social work careers, and a drop in event is being held on 26<sup>th</sup> April).
  - An open advert on the Council website to attract Social Workers on an on-going basis
  - A specialised campaign targeted at regional social work job seekers.
15. The Council continues to carry out quarterly surveys of leavers from the organisation. Response rates to date have been above 30%. This means findings can be relied upon statistically as being broadly representative of the majority of leavers. In 2004-5 the primary reasons for leaving were job content dissatisfaction, lack of job security and career prospects, lack of recognition, and management. Lack of recognition was the most common *secondary* reason. In the second quarter of 2005-6 the most common *primary* reason for leaving was job content dissatisfaction. The Leaver Survey for the third quarter of 2005/6 reveals
- Job content dissatisfaction, and inadequacy of pay and benefits were the most commonly cited reasons for leaving, each quoted by 36% of respondents – against 41% for the full year 2004-5 and 26% in 2003-4).
  - The most common theme in the comments about reasons for leaving was that respondents had relocated and it would no longer be possible to work for the Council. Career progression and pay were the most commonly cited attractions of a new organisation, similar to the second quarter findings.
  - Consistent with previous surveys, the largest group of third quarter respondents (25%) left for a job in another local authority. 21% joined the private sector. 68% of respondents found their work satisfying or very satisfying. 79% felt communication in their section was adequate or better. 54% felt training needs were met well or very well. 61% thought opportunities for career development were adequate or better. 89% of respondents rated the Council fair, good, or very good as an employer.
16. The Pay and Workforce Development Strategy aims to continue to address these leaver survey issues through the identified actions in the operational plan 2006-7,

and as part of the longer-term aims for 2008 – in particular actions to address pay, reward and recognition and developing a generic careers structure for the Council.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

**THAT the report be noted, subject to any comments Members might wish to make.**

### **Background Papers**

- None