

RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION STRATEGY: SOCIAL CARE SERVICES

To: **General Purpose Committee**

Meeting Date: **22nd December 2015**

From: **Adrian Loades,
Executive Director: Children, Families and Adults Services**

Electoral division(s): **All**

Forward Plan ref: **N/A** *Key decision:* **No**

Purpose: **For the Committee to review and agree the proposed strategy to improve the recruitment and retention of social care staff. The Strategy is attached at Appendix A.**

Recommendation: **The Committee is asked to endorse the Children, Families and Adults (CFA) Social Care Recruitment and Retention Strategy.**

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1.0 BACKGROUND

1.1 The social care workforce supports the most vulnerable in our society to enable them to live healthy, independent and safe lives within their community. This is both a highly rewarding and very challenging role. Cambridgeshire has attracted many extremely talented and committed people to work in social care but we face a shortage of permanent social care staff.

1.2 There are a total of 449 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) social care posts across the Council and as of September 2015 there were 61 FTE vacancies across this workforce – a vacancy rate of 14%. The table below shows a breakdown of this.

Job Title (FTE) Vacancies	Older People's Services	Mental Health	Adult Social Care	Children's Social Care
Care Manager	4	0	16.9	N/A
Social Worker	5	4.3	4.8	3
Unit Social Worker	N/A	N/A	N/A	3.5
Senior Social Worker	0	7	1	7
Consultant Social Worker	N/A	N/A	N/A	2.5
Team Manager	1	N/A	0	1 (Group Manager)
Total	10	11.3	22.7	17
Grand Total	61 (14%)			
% of social care workforce (449 FTE)	2%	3%	5%	4%

1.3 To ensure we meet service needs, agency staff are often recruited to fill the gap created by vacancies. Agency workers are intended as a short term solution to quickly and flexibly fill a gap in recruitment or fulfil a need where we cannot secure through directly employed staff. However, an inability to recruit permanent social care staff has resulted in a reliance on agency social workers. Agency workers can bring many benefits to social care including experience of working in other Local Authorities, but the wide use of agency staff can jeopardise the successful implementation of the overarching CFA strategy and is more costly to the Authority.

1.4 More broadly, a confident, high quality social work workforce is better equipped to be creative in their work to support vulnerable people and to manage risk. This will generally lead to both better outcomes for service users and reduced spend for the Council. Staff need to have the opportunities to develop and work within an environment in which they feel supported when making difficult decisions.

1.5 In July 2015, following consideration from the Adults and Children and Young People Committees, General Purposes Committee (GPC) approved a re-grading of qualified social care staff as a result of job evaluation, resulting in an uplift in salary for each role. The re-grading brings the Council more in line with neighbouring authorities, improving the Council's competitiveness in recruiting for social work roles when advertising alongside other Local

Authorities. This has since been implemented from 1st October 2015.

- 1.6 At the July meetings an early draft of the recruitment and retention strategy was shared at both the Adults and Children and Young People Committees and subsequently General Purposes Committee. It was requested that the final draft strategy be brought back to the committees, setting out the full range of actions that the Council will take to improve recruitment and retention of social care staff.
- 1.7 The strategy has been presented and endorsed at both the Adults and Children's Committees. Feedback from Adults Committee included a request for the addition of the monitoring and reporting of turnover rates of staff and to incorporate reference to seven day working where appropriate; this will be developed for inclusion in the final version.

2.0 RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION STRATEGY

- 2.1 The Council is reliant on high quality social work in order to achieve its strategic outcomes within the financial constraints set out in the business plan. Through high quality social work, we can better support people in our communities to stay safe and live healthy and independent lives wherever possible. This reduces demand for more intensive and expensive forms of support and care packages and prevents the need for more invasive social work, such as taking children into care or placing adults in institutional settings.
- 2.2 A stable, fully trained and qualified workforce is essential to delivering this high quality social work and achieving desired outcomes. Recruiting, retaining and investing in a permanent workforce is therefore at the heart of the strategy and business plan for Children, Families and Adults Services over the next five years. It will secure savings and reduce costs by both minimising our reliance on agency staff and ensuring we have high calibre staff who can effectively manage and prioritise the use of the Council's resources.
- 2.3 The Recruitment and Retention Strategy (**Appendix A**) sets out how the Council will improve the recruitment and retention of permanent social care staff, reduce the use of agency staff, maintain and improve quality of the workforce and ensure that staffing budgets remain within budget. The strategy focuses on four areas to achieve these outcomes:
- Recruitment – a streamlined recruitment process
 - Rewarding staff – improved benefits for staff
 - Workforce development – improved learning and development opportunities
 - Flexible workforce – increasing the flexibility of our workforce to respond to needs.
- 2.4 To further improve recruitment we will establish a dedicated recruitment function within current business support resource to streamline procedures around recruitment for roles in social care, where we are struggling to recruit. This resource will enable us to more efficiently and effectively compete in the job market to attract the most talented individuals.

- 2.5 We will improve the current use of marketing approaches to ensure better promotion of Cambridgeshire as a place to work and the County Council as an employer. We will ensure that advertising clearly highlights the recent Council decision to review pay scales for social care staff and the other proposals within this strategy. They will also provide clear reinforcements of our approach to social work, exemplified by the Social Work: Working for Families unit model within Children's Social Care and Transforming Lives within Adult Social Care and Older People and Mental Health Services.
- 2.6 An improved offer to reward staff includes the agreed re-evaluation of social work qualified posts. In addition, we will promote existing benefits and are developing new features of the benefit schemes. New features may include a private car lease scheme and a benefit card which will provide opportunities to save money on a variety of goods and services.
- 2.7 An employee recognition scheme will explicitly identify employees for their commitment to the service. Twenty members of staff will be formally recognised for their contribution each quarter and will receive a £50 voucher and an additional day of annual leave; this will take place within a new corporate staff recognition scheme.
- 2.8 The strategy outlines our commitment to the professional development of the social care workforce, whether they are a new starter or an experienced member of the organisation. Social Care directorates have worked closely with the workforce development team to improve our current workforce offer. Feedback from our staff emphasises the importance of high quality development opportunities to retention. A model has been created which lays out clear training and career pathways for all social care staff following consultation with staff and a consideration of the needs of the organisation.
- 2.9 The key elements of our workforce offer include continuing to improve the successful programme for newly qualified social workers and further developing the induction programme for experienced staff new to the Council. There is also a programme in place for those staff wishing to pursue a career in management, to equip aspiring leaders with the skills required to meet the challenges facing social care. In addition a virtual college of social work will be implemented to offer staff a single place where they can find structured learning and development opportunities.
- 2.10 We will develop a process to enable more flexibility for staff to move between roles in different teams and client groups. This will provide opportunities for social workers to develop experience across client groups and fill vacant posts quickly with a worker who is familiar with the organisation, skilled and committed to our strategic vision.
- 2.11 Consideration is being given to whether any current tasks being undertaken by qualified social care staff could be undertaken by alternatively qualified staff. This would enable those in unqualified roles to widen their experience and allow staff with a social work qualification to focus on tasks which require someone to have a professional qualification; which would potentially reduce the need to employ agency social workers.
- 2.12 The ability to move between teams and widening the roles of unqualified staff will improve the knowledge and experience of our staff and help retain

employees who have returned from a period of absence (such as maternity leave) and no longer want to remain in their previous role. This will prevent them having to reapply for a different role when we know they are suitable and reduces the risk of losing our staff to other organisations.

3.0 DELIVERING THE STRATEGY

3.1 Savings for spend on agency staff of £502k have been identified in CFA for the financial year 2016-17. To ensure that this savings target is being met and that the proposals in the strategy are bringing about the necessary improvements there will be regular monitoring of the following indicators:

- Spend on agency staff within social care workforce
- Vacancy rates of identified key social care roles
- Number of staff transferring from agency to permanent workers.
- Turnover rates of social care staff

3.2 A Strategic Recruitment and Workforce Development Board and Task and Finish Group have been established to deliver the strategy. Monthly action updates and a dashboard will be created to monitor the indicators identified above; exception reports will be discussed at Spokes meetings and Adults and Children's Committees will be kept informed of progress.

3.3 An action plan (**Appendix B**) for the strategy is being developed by the Task and Finish group. The action plan will be brought to the December Strategic Recruitment and Workforce Development Board for discussion and sign off.

4.0 STAFF ENGAGEMENT

4.1 We will continue to enhance communication channels so staff and managers can identify areas where development is required to find solutions for recruitment and retention. Social care staff will be consulted and will provide feedback on the approaches set out in the strategy.

4.2 We will ensure all leavers are offered an exit interview. Feedback from this will be regularly reported to the Strategic Recruitment and Workforce Development Board so we can continually improve our recruitment and retention offer.

5.0 ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PRIORITIES

5.1 Developing the local economy for the benefit of all

5.1.1 Improving recruitment and retention of high skilled, quality staff will help more vulnerable individuals and families regain independence and help them back into employment, education or training.

5.2 Helping people live healthy and independent lives

5.2.1 Investing in the recruitment and retention of social workers will ensure that, if needed, people have access to the best social care support that will improve their health and enable them to remain healthy and independent without the continuing support of services.

5.3 Supporting and protecting vulnerable people

5.3.1 Staffing social care services with high quality, permanent staff will ensure we are providing the right care and support at the right time to protect vulnerable children, families and adults within our community.

5.3.2 In order to ensure we can continue to support and protect vulnerable people in line with CFA overarching strategy it is necessary to implement a long term strategy to ensure the maintenance of a highly skilled workforce.

6.0 SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Resource Implications

6.1.1 The staff re-grade has been incorporated into the business plan proposals for 2016-17 as a cost of £1,304k

6.2 Statutory, Risk and Legal Implications

6.2.1 Prior to implementation of this strategy there was a greater risk of being unable to attract and retain high quality permanent staff. Although many agency social workers make a very positive contribution to service delivery, a stable and committed workforce is essential to achieve the strategic outcomes and to manage demand within allocated resource.

6.3 Equality and Diversity Implications

6.3.1 The recruitment and retention strategy maintains CFA social care services commitment to fairness, equality and diversity within the workforce and service users.

6.4 Engagement and Consultation Implications

6.4.1 This report builds on previous formal and informal consultations with staff including evidence gathered through exit interviews and discussions with staff. A wider consultation with staff on the strategy will be undertaken.

6.5 Localism and Local Member Involvement

6.5.1 Spokes have been consulted in the development of this strategy.

6.6 Public Health Implications

6.6.1 There are no significant implications within this category.

Source Documents	Location
Agenda & Minutes – Adults Policy and Service Committee (01/12/15) & Children and Young People’s Policy and Service Committee (08/12/15)	http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/info/20146/council_meetings