

Cambridgeshire County Council

STRATEGY UNDER DEVELOPMENT

Draft Recruitment and Retention Strategy CFA Social Care Services



2015

1.0 Introduction/Vision/Purpose

The strategy sets out how Cambridgeshire County Council will improve the recruitment and retention of permanent social care staff to enable Cambridgeshire Social Care service to deliver an excellent service to children, families and adults.

2.0 Where we are now

Across CFA the recruitment and retention of staff in social care, in both qualified and unqualified roles, presents an increasing challenge. As of June 2015 there are 69 FTE vacancies across the social work workforce. This level of vacancy is a significant risk to safeguarding the welfare of children, families and adults. To ensure there are always appropriate levels of staff, CFA recruit agency workers to meet service capacity needs. Agency staff are intended as a short term solution to quickly and flexibly fill a gap in recruitment. However, an inability to recruit permanent social workers has resulted in a reliance on agency social workers. This reliance has a negative impact on the overarching CFA strategy, the quality of service delivery and is an additional cost to CFA social care services.

Strategic Impact

The success of CFA social care strategy of prevention and demand management is reliant on high quality social care. Having the right staff with the right skills is key to the success of the Children's Social Care, Older People's and Mental Health and Adults Social Care strategic vision. High quality social work reduces demand for more intensive and expensive care packages and prevents the need for more invasive social work such as taking children into care. Therefore, investing in our permanent workforce is in line with the overall strategy for business planning.

Children's Social Care: Working For Families supports families by a social care unit, rather than individual workers. A high quality, committed social care workforce is essential for the success of the unit model. The unit model provides a seamless service for families so that should one social worker be unavailable, the other members of the unit are equipped to provide the appropriate support tailored to the family's needs and support them back to independence.

Adult Social Care Transforming Lives strategy, which will be critical to the delivery of the Older People's Strategy, is a social work model that is proactive, preventative and personalised. The success of this model is reliant on having the right staff with the right skills that have a personal investment in achieving the aims of the Transforming Lives Strategy. Successfully implemented, Transforming Lives model enables people to exert choice and control and ultimately to live healthy, fulfilled, socially engaged and independent lives.

Successful delivery of CFA Children's Social Care Working for Families, the Older People's Strategy and Transforming Lives strategies will help people to remain safe

and also equip people to live as independently as possible. These strategies will therefore decrease demand and result in improved lives for many children, families and adults and create increased savings for CCC. However, lack of ability to fill permanent posts and therefore wide use of agency staff jeopardises the success of the overarching CFA strategy.

Service Implications

Lack of ability to recruit and retain permanent social work staff has huge impact on the quality of service delivery. Due to the very short notice period of agency staff there is very rarely enough time for suitable handover of cases to new workers and can present challenges in ensuring that strategic changes are delivered. This results in a lack of continuity for the people and families we support and partners. This lack of consistent support threatens the level of trust between the service user and social care services and risks a reversal of any progress made by the individual or family and therefore can necessitate further intervention by social care.

Permanent, committed staff enable team members to recognise and build on each other's strengths which helps enhance service delivery and improve staff professional development through peer support. Constant changes can unsettle team and the regular reallocation of cases and/or having to induct or update new workers on cases threatens the quality of support and lowers staff morale. Regular changes in teams also impact manager's ability to lead and improve practice within their teams as they will have to spend a lot of their time getting to know new workers strengths and capabilities to ensure they are confident to support families, adults and older people.

Cost Implications

The inability to recruit and retain permanent staff has a huge impact on the cost to CFA as agency staff are significantly more expensive than permanent staff. For example, the average 1 FTE CFA children's social worker cost CCC £34,720 per year (including on costs), whereas the average 1FTE agency children's social worker costs CCC £78,000 per year – over twice the cost of a CFA social worker.

At the present time Children's Social Care (CSC) teams incur significant overspends on their budgets due to the cost of agency workers. In financial year 2014/15 children's social care had an overspend of £894k due to the cost of agency workers. Both the Access and Children in Need Teams are currently projected to overspend approximately £400k each in 2015/16.

In the Older People's and Mental Health (OPMH) and Adults Social Care (ASC) the use of agency staff has not led to an overspend because of funding from existing resources due to staff vacancies and additional funding to support legislative change. However, with agency staff costing significantly more than CFA social workers this presents a missed opportunity for not only better support to individuals and families via permanent staff, but also the opportunity for savings.

Furthermore, CCC have comparatively low pay rates for all levels of social workers compared to other local authorities. These low pay rates are a key reason to why we are unable to recruit and retain sufficient levels of permanent staff; from the latest report of 19 relevant leavers, eight recorded salary as a main or contributing factor for leaving. Similarly some existing social work staff have left the organisation to move into the agency market; 12 CSC social workers left CFA employment for the agency market in 2014. The lower pay rates offered by CCC are causing a loss of current permanent staff and make the recruitment of a permanent workforce extremely challenging.

3.0 How we will achieve our vision

To overcome the challenges of recruitment and retention of staff and successfully deliver the strategic vision, CFA Social Care services propose the following four improvements to increase the levels of CCC permanent social care staff.

Re-evaluation of roles

Cambridgeshire County Council has comparatively low pay rates for all levels of social workers compared to other local authorities. These low pay rates are a key reason to why we are unable to recruit and retain sufficient levels of permanent staff. Recent work undertaken by Human Resources has re-evaluated all social work qualified posts resulting in uplift in grade for each role. Re-evaluation of the roles has not been undertaken for a considerable period of time, during which time the roles have evolved with increasing responsibilities.

Reducing agency spend will be a significant challenge and there will always be a requirement for some agency workers to cover periods of absence. It is anticipated that a realistic timescale of two years to reduce agency spend to 30%. Therefore additional resource will be required to secure the increased pay scale and some agency workers.

Employee Recognition Scheme

We will introduce an employee recognition scheme across CFA as part of a retention initiative to reward and recognise employees who show commitment and loyalty beyond their normal day jobs. The scheme will provide a way to recognise and reward the extra contribution of employees. A more publically appreciated workforce will make staff feel more valued in their roles, improve morale and retention rates which will contribute to reducing demand on overall social care services.

It is recommended that up to 20 winners would be selected each time (80 per year). The winners would receive a £50 voucher plus one additional day's holiday.

Recruitment Marketing

Officers will continue to improve marketing of social work job opportunities focusing on the key benefits of working for CCC such as training opportunities to further professional development and the benefits of living and working in Cambridgeshire. This will be achieved through an improved online presence to enhance digital recruitment, attending jobs fairs and building links with universities and colleges. Officers will also explore further marketing and advertising campaign opportunities.

To enhance digital recruitment, officers have undertaken a review of the recruitment webpage on the CCC corporate site. This review will improve the customer journey and makes the case more clearly for the benefits of working for CCC social care, such as training opportunities to further professional development and the benefits of living and working in Cambridgeshire. Once an improved website is in place we will begin by using free marketing tools available to us, such as: the front of the corporate website, Facebook, Twitter and Linked In. We will then explore the benefits of paid advertising opportunities on social media or search engines. Advertising through social media is low cost compared to other forms of advertising and can also target specified audiences to enhance its effect.

We will undertake the necessary actions to attend jobs fairs and to cost these events. It is proposed that officers will attend the Compass Jobs Fair in London on 30th November 2015. These are designed for Social Workers to view the latest employment, training and career development opportunities in Social Work. Another proposal being explored is a 'Cambridgeshire Jobs Fair' which we ourselves host in March 2016.

Social care directorates will continue to work closely with Anglia Ruskin University (ARU) in 2015/16 to offer placements within Cambridgeshire. Although we will maintain close links with ARU we need to forge closer links with other regional universities. This will be achieved by attending careers events and delivering presentations on the career opportunities at CCC to other universities and colleges. A number of universities have already been contacted to explore these options.

Furthermore, a joint recruitment approach between Children's and Adult's services can be effective in a number of areas of advertising outside the digital strategy. We will consider advertising options such as: using local newspapers or magazines as part of a recruitment drive, radio adverts or a Youtube video advertising what it is like to be a social worker in Cambridgeshire.

Workforce development

CCC's workforce development offer across CFA is integral to our recruitment and retention efforts. Workforce development not only encourages staff loyalty as staff benefit from training that will enhance their career but will also improve practice as staff progress in knowledge and experience. This will help to reduce demand on services as staff become more effective at supporting children families and adults. Officers from CSC, ASC and OPMH are already working closely with the

workforce development team to integrate the Councils training offer into our recruitment marketing. Officers are aiming to create a model which lays out clear training pathways and opportunities on an annual basis based on consultation with social workers and a consideration of the needs of the organisation. Within CSC a task and finish group has already been convened to consider Unit Development and Induction programmes.

It is essential that the Assessed and Supported Year of Employment ASYE programme for social workers in their first year of practice is laid out clearly and trainees are aware of the training opportunities and support they will receive if they come to Cambridgeshire. This will incentivise ASYE staff to join CCC and ensure that if recruited they continue to develop their skills in a supportive environment, thereby encouraging them to stay working at CCC as they gain experience. An ASYE programme has been developed across CSC and ASC in line with the new knowledge and skills framework

4.0 How do we know we've been successful

The outcomes to establish whether CCC is improving recruitment and retention of staff are:

- More permanent staff recruited and remaining with CCC therefore a better ratio of permanent staff to agency
- Improved service user feedback/less complaints received regarding staff quality
- Staffing budgets remain within allocated resource
- Successful delivery of CFA social care strategies

Progress Monitoring

To monitor the effectiveness of the Recruitment and Retention Strategy, recruitment rates and staff turnover will be monitored by a report produced by Human Resources. Equivalent reports are currently produced by LGSS for Northamptonshire.

5.0 Delivering the strategy

CSC, OPMH and ASC will take a joint approach to recruitment across all CFA social care services in collaboration with LGSS (Human Resources). A joint approach is a significant benefit to all services as it enables a greater sharing of knowledge across the directorates and is a more efficient use of resource to ensure best practice for the recruitment and retention of high quality staff.

To enable cross directorate working a strategic recruitment and workforce development board has been created which is proactively addressing the issue of recruitment and retention and the development of relevant skills and expertise.

In addition, a Social Work Recruitment and Retention Task and Finish Group is being established to take forward any actions to deliver the strategy. The Social Care Recruitment and Retention Task and Finish Group will work collaboratively with partners, other working groups and colleagues to maximise the recruitment and retention of social workers across CFA. A Service Director will take on a role as 'Recruitment Lead', working across both directorates and chairing the Task and Finish Group.

DRAFT