

RECRUITMENT STRATEGY REPORT

To: General Purpose Committee

Meeting Date: 28th July 2015

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

Electoral division(s): All

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

Purpose: To inform Members of the steps being taken by Children, Families and Adults Services to recruit and retain social care staff.

Recommendation: Following consideration by Adults and Children and Young People Committees, the Committee is asked to:

- a) review and comment on the proposed measures to improve recruitment and retention of social care staff.
- b) approve the in-year revenue virement of £0.74m set out in paragraph 5.1.1 and confirm that the future full year costs (£1.59m) will be addressed by Children, Families and Adults through the Business Planning process.

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1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Across Children, Families and Adults Services (CFA) the recruitment and retention of staff in social care, in both qualified and unqualified roles, presents an increasing challenge. Due to the significance of this problem members of the committee previously requested information regarding the measures being undertaken to tackle this challenge.
- 1.2 There are a total of 449 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) social work posts across CFA. CFA currently employ 380 FTE permanent social work staff across directorates (see table below for breakdown but please note this is based on headcount not FTE).

Directorate	Older People and Mental Health	Adult Social Care	Children's Social Care
Job Title (Headcount) Permanent Staff			
Care Manager	58	63	0
Social Worker	54	1	43
Unit Social Worker	0	0	76
Senior Social Worker	32	4	32
Consultant Social Worker	0	0	44
Team Manager	0	6	12
Total	144	74	207
Total			425

- 1.3 As of June 2015 there are 69 FTE vacancies across the social work workforce (see table below for breakdown) as shown below. This is a vacancy rate of 15%. This level of vacancy could be a significant risk to safeguarding the welfare of children, families and adults and the ability to meet the County Council's (CCC) statutory responsibilities. To ensure that there are always appropriate levels of staff and that risks are managed, CFA recruits 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 an over reliance on agency social workers. Whilst agency workers are often of good quality, a significant number of agency staff in a team can cause problems in terms of continuity of service and adherence to local processes.

Job Title (FTE) Vacancies	Older People and Mental Health	Adult Social Care	Children's Social Care
Care Manager	9.3	12.8	
Social Worker	9.5	4.5	
Unit Social Worker			7.5
Senior Social Worker	9.5		4
Consultant Social Worker			10
Team Manager	0	0	2
Total	28.3	17.3	23.5
Total			69.1

- 1.4 Failure to provide a well-qualified and effective workforce is flagged as a residual red risk in the CFA risk register and has been for some time. Maintaining the current situation is not an option; unless action is taken to improve the recruitment and retention of social workers and reduce the risk to CFA our reliance on agency workers will continue. This situation will only exacerbate in the long term as more staff leave CCC for other organisations or to become agency staff themselves; this could result in CCC having to pay the same staff significantly higher agency rates with no guarantee of their commitment to CCC.
- 1.5 A recruitment and retention strategy is being developed (see **Appendix 1**) for both Children's and Adults Social Care Services as the issues are largely the same in both areas. As a consequence this paper has been taken to both the Children and Young People's Committee and the Adult's Committee for review and comment on the proposed measures to improve recruitment and retention of social care staff. Both Committees have reviewed and agreed the draft recruitment and retention strategy and the arrangements for funding the outcome of the re-evaluation of Social Worker posts.

2.0 THE CASE FOR CHANGE

- 2.1 The success of overall CFA social care strategy of prevention and demand management is reliant on having a stable high quality social care workforce who are committed to the CFA strategic vision. Having the right staff with the right skills is key to the achievement of the overarching strategic goals for Children's Social Care (CSC) as set out in the Social Work Working For Families programme and of Older People and Mental Health (OPMH) and Adult Social Care (ASC) Services as set out in the Transforming Lives Programme. 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.
- 2.2 Successful delivery of these strategies will not only ensure children, families and adults remain safe and independent, but investing in our social work workforce is in line with the developing strategy for business planning over the next five years to secure savings by minimising demand on high cost services.
- 2.3 CCC has comparatively low pay rates for all levels of social workers compared to other local authorities in the Eastern Region (see **Appendix 2**). These low pay rates are a key reason 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.
- 2.4 The inability to fill permanent posts has resulted in the wide use of agency staff. Agency staff are significantly more expensive than CFA permanent staff. For example the average 1 FTE CFA children's social worker costs CCC £34,720 per year (including on costs), whereas the average 1FTE agency children's social worker costs CCC £78,000 per year. In the last

financial year CFA spent £3.1 million on agency staff. Of this, £1.8 million was for CSC agency staff and £1.3 for ASC and OPMH agency staff. Because the recruitment and retention issues are worsening and the use of agency staff is increasing the financial position will continue to deteriorate in the next few years if we do not take the appropriate steps. Taking action now to improve recruitment and retention will mitigate additional business planning pressures which would result from the current trends continuing unchecked.

- 2.5 CCC have signed memorandums of co-operation with regional authorities to help take a more collaborated and strategic approach to the management of agency and permanent worker supply and demand. For example, all regional authorities have agreed to cap rates of pay for both adults and children's agency social workers. Although a positive and significant step in helping to manage supply and demand of social workers, this capped rate does not improve our situation when comparing CCC permanent staff pay rates to other Eastern Region authorities.
- 2.6 A reliance on agency staff may limit the implementation of the CFA strategies because they are less likely to have the same commitment to CFA social work delivery models as permanent staff due to the short term and flexible nature of their employment status. Furthermore, although agency staff are often of good quality and can bring additional value due to the variety of experiences, there is less guarantee of stability because they do not have to agree to CCC terms and conditions of employment.

3.0 SOCIAL CARE RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION STRATEGY

- 3.1 The current recruitment and retention situation is unsustainable. If we do not address our ability to recruit and retain a permanent social care workforce we will be unable to manage demand on our services which will lead to an escalation in more intrusive and expensive social care support. This will result in poor outcomes for the most vulnerable people and additional pressures on budgets.
- 3.2 To overcome the challenges of recruitment and retention of staff, Children's Social Care, Older People and Mental Health and Adult Social Care services are taking a joint approach in the development of a Social Care Recruitment and Retention Strategy. The strategy is under development (see **Appendix 1**) but the proposed measures of how we are going to improve recruitment and retention are detailed below.

3.3 Cross Directorate Working

- 3.3.1 The CSC, OPMH and ASC Service Directorates will take a joint approach to recruitment across all CFA social care services. 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. A joint approach also offers ways of exploring options to actively enable more movement between the services. To take forward the strategy and proactively address the issue of recruitment and retention, a cross directorate Strategic Recruitment and Workforce Development Board and Social Work Recruitment and Retention Task and Finish Group have been

established.

3.4 Re-evaluation of roles

- 3.4.1 As previously noted, CCC pay comparatively low pay rates compared to other local authorities in the region. This is presenting an increasing challenge for CFA as it is hard to attract permanent workers when other organisations, who we are advertising alongside, are offering more money for the same position.
- 3.4.2 As part of a standard review of roles, Human Resources have recently re-evaluated all social work qualified posts resulting in an uplift in grade and salary for each role. Re-evaluation of the roles had not been undertaken for a considerable period of time, during which time the roles have evolved. On average the re-grade will result in an uplift of 9.8%. Using the current modelling the re-grading based on movement upwards to the new grade has been modelled as having an additional cost of up to £1,590,000. The salary re-grades will bring CCC to a more competitive position by aligning more closely to regional average salaries which will significantly contribute to an improvement in the CFA recruitment offer and improved staff retention.
- 3.4.3 The additional cost of re-grading staff roles will be met within existing CFA financial resources and will not create an additional corporate pressure in business planning. The uplift in salary for the 2015/16 financial year will be funded via CFA reserves, the allocation of some Care Act funding and savings from reducing agency staff. Details of the finances are in **Appendix 3**. In the longer term the additional cost will be met through the delivery of savings to CFA budgets, with stable and high quality social work teams supporting reductions in demand for high cost services.

3.5 Recruitment Marketing

- 3.5.1 Officers will continue to improve marketing of social work job opportunities to ensure we are reaching as many potential employees as possible. All avenues of marketing will be considered and will focus 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.
- 3.5.2 Work is already underway to improve our marketing via an improved online presence. The new social care recruitment pages on the corporate website went live in June and can be viewed via the following link:
http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/homepage/188/social_care_jobs
- 3.5.3 CFA social care services will also improve recruitment marketing by attending job fairs, building more links with universities and colleges and exploring further marketing and advertising campaigns such as radio advertising.

3.6 Workforce Development

- 3.6.1 The 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 also improve practice as staff progress in knowledge and experience.

- 3.6.2 Officers from CSC, ASC and OPMH are working closely with the workforce development team to better integrate the Council's training offer into our recruitment marketing. A new model is being created which lays out clear training pathways for progression and opportunities for professional development on an annual basis based on consultation with social workers and 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

3.7 Employee Recognition Scheme

- 3.7.1 It is proposed to 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. It is proposed that there will be a three monthly nomination process used to identify employees for their commitment and loyalty to the service, incorporating CCC's vision and values. The CFA management Team will consider the nominations and choose who should be formally recognised and receive an award.
- 3.7.2 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 efforts to manage demand on social care services.

3.8 Progress Monitoring

- 3.8.1 To monitor the effectiveness of the Recruitment and Retention Strategy, recruitment rates and staff turnover will be monitored quarterly through a report produced by Human Resources by the cross directorate Strategic Recruitment and Workforce Development Board. Equivalent reports are currently produced by LGSS for Northamptonshire.

4.0 ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PRIORITIES

4.1 Developing the local economy for the benefit of all

- 4.1.1 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.

4.2 Helping people live healthy and independent lives

- 4.2.1 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.

4.3 Supporting and protecting vulnerable people

- 4.3.1 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.

- 4.3.2 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.

5.0 SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Resource Implications

- 5.1.1 Implementing the staff re-grade has been modelled as having an additional cost of up to £1,590,000 in a full year. If the staff re-grading is implemented from 1st October 2015, and agency expenditure can be reduced by 20% from 1st January 2016, the cost will be met for this financial year from savings from reduced agency spend, Care Act funding and CFA reserves. Committee is asked to approve the in-year virement of £0.74m to fund the re-grading of staff. The full year costs from 2016-17 onwards will be met within CFA resource. Please see **Appendix 3** for further details.

5.2 Statutory, Risk and Legal Implications

- 5.2.1 Failure to implement the recruitment and retention strategy will result in CFA social care services being at greater risk of being unable to attract and retain high quality permanent staff. This will result in a continued reliance on agency staff and an ongoing overspend and a lower quality of support to service users putting them at additional risk of remaining vulnerable

5.3 Equality and Diversity Implications

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

5.4 Engagement and Consultation Implications

- 5.4.1 This report built 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.

5.5 Localism and Local Member Involvement

- 5.5.1 There are no significant implications within this category. Spokes have been consulted.

5.6 Public Health Implications

- 5.6.1 There are no significant implications within this category.

Source Documents	Location
Adult Social Care Transforming Lives	http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/info/20166/working_together/579/delivering_the_care_act/3
Cambridgeshire Older People Strategy	http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/info/20166/working_together/577/strategies_and_plans
Social Work: Working for Families	http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/info/20107/children_s_social_care/376/social_work_working_for_families