

# **Recruitment and Retention Strategy Social Care Services 2015-2020**

## 1.0 Overview

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 talented and committed people to work in social care but we face a shortage of permanent social care staff.

This strategy sets out how Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) will:

- Improve the recruitment and retention of permanent social care staff,
- Reduce the use of agency workers,
- Maintain and improve quality of the workforce
- Ensure that staffing budgets remain within the allocated resource.

The overall Children, Families and Adults (CFA) strategic vision for social care, as detailed in the Transforming Lives and Working for Families Strategies, is reliant on a quality, permanent workforce as this is critical for effective service delivery and to achieving best value for money at a time of reduced resources.

The level of demand across social care services for all client groups continues to rise. To respond, we need to build, develop and maintain an engaged workforce with sufficient capacity and the right skills, knowledge and capabilities to meet a range of needs, which are often complex, in a flexible way and reduce reliance on statutory services.

We need a committed and consistent social care workforce who have the right skills to deliver excellent service to children, families and adults and are committed to achieving the organisation's strategic vision. We will achieve this by implementing the following approaches

- 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

Children's and adult's social care staff carry out different tasks in their roles. Children's social care workforce support children, young people and their families to remain together wherever possible. They protect children who may be in danger or at risk of harm through providing protection service and child protection plans, and supporting children and families. Where it is not possible for children to remain in their families, social workers support children with extended family, foster carers or adoptive parents. Adult social care (including Older People and Mental Health (OPMH)) support adults who meet eligibility criteria set by the Care Act, due to their needs being assessed as significant and in need of specific packages of support

which might take place in the home, community or in an institutional setting. This may include people who have difficulty carrying out basic personal care or domestic routines, struggle to carry out family responsibilities or are at significant risks in terms of their wellbeing. Adult social care supports these adults to maintain choice and to live healthy, socially engaged independent lives. They also offer support and advice and assessment to people who pay for their own care and their carers.

Although there are some differences in roles, the priority outcomes are the same across CFA directorates. With the same desired outcomes there is significant value in sharing learning and practice across the directorates rather than being confined by artificial boundaries.

The Council faces similar difficulties in both the children and adult social care workforce in recruiting and retaining qualified staff. The problems are not as great as those experienced by many other authorities but we cannot be complacent. This strategy proposes a single approach across Children's Social Care, Adults Social Care and Older People and Mental Health directorates with a view to sharing of best practice for the recruitment and retention of high quality staff.

## 2.0 Where we are now

### 2.1 The Challenge

In September 2015, CCC appointed 52 newly qualified social workers to join our children and adults social care teams. However, this was not enough to meet our needs, particularly for more experienced staff and across CFA the recruitment and retention of staff in social care, in both qualified and unqualified roles, presents an increasing challenge.

There are a total of 449 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) social care posts across CFA. As of September 2015 there are 61 FTE vacancies across the social care workforce - a 14% vacancy rate. The current vacancies are broken down as follows

**Figure 1: Vacancies across social care workforce as of September 2015**

Job Title (FTE) vacancies	Older People 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)
<b>Total</b>	10	11.3	22.7	17
<b>Grand Total</b>	61 (14%)			
<b>% of social work workforce (449 FTE)</b>	2%	3%	5%	4%

In order to deliver an excellent and safe service to children, families and adults, appropriate levels of staffing have to be maintained, which can result in agency workers being recruited to fill vacancies. Experienced agency workers are also engaged in children's social care units to support any unit that has two newly qualified social workers. Although this practice was referenced positively in the most recent Ofsted inspection, it illustrates the shortage of experienced social care staff who are directly employed by CCC. Furthermore, agency workers have been employed to review the highest cost cases in OPMH services, which has proved an effective approach, but it would be more appropriate for this to be carried out by our permanent staff.

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 directly employed staff. However, an inability to recruit permanent social care staff 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.

## 2.2 Why change is needed

### 2.2.1 Strategic Impact

The success of the Council's strategy of prevention and demand management and achieving the desired outcomes is reliant on delivering high quality social care. High quality and confident social care practice reduces demand for more intensive and expensive care packages and prevents the need for more invasive social work, such as taking children into care or placing adults in institutional settings. In this way, we can better support our communities to stay safe and live healthy and independent lifestyles wherever possible. Therefore, investing in our permanent workforce is essential to the overall strategy for business planning.

Within Children's Social Care our 'Working for Families' model is delivered by social workers operating in teams known as 'units' rather than working individually. Units have a shared caseload, work together and advise and challenge one another on cases and share risk across the unit members. A high quality, committed and stable social care workforce is therefore essential for the success of the unit model. If the membership of each unit changes too frequently the model is undermined and the benefits can be lost.

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.

The Adult Social Care Transforming Lives Strategy, which will also be critical to the delivery of the Older People's Strategy, is a social care model that is proactive,

preventative and personalised. The success of the 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, the Transforming Lives model enables people to exert choice and control and ultimately to live healthy, fulfilled, socially engaged and independent lives. This in turn reduces demand of statutory support.

Successful delivery of CFA Children's Social Care Working for Families, the Older People's 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 outcomes 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 workers jeopardises the success of the overarching CFA strategy.

### 2.2.2 Service Implications

Difficulty in retaining a permanent social care workforce can have a significant impact on service delivery. Although many agency social workers make a very positive contribution to service delivery, the very nature and flexibility of agency work makes it impossible to know how long the social worker is planning to work for CCC and more difficult for us to fully train workers to our Working for Families or Transforming Lives models of work. This can make it difficult for the worker to fully engage with the model and may reduce consistency for families, service users and carers in terms of their support which may in turn have a negative impact on their progress and can necessitate further intervention by social care.

Permanent, committed staff better enable effective team working, which requires team members to recognise and build on each other's strengths which enhances service delivery. Constant changes can unsettle a team and the regular reallocation of cases and/or having to induct or update new workers on cases reduces the quality of support. Regular changes in teams also impact on a 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 children, families, adults, older people and carers.

### 2.2.3 Cost Implications

The inability to recruit and retain permanent staff has a huge impact on the cost to CFA as agency workers are significantly more expensive than permanent staff. For example, the average directly employed full time social worker in CCC costs £39,500 (including on costs) a year, whereas the average agency workers costs CCC £64,000 per year.

With a 40% reduction in government grants over the next five years and increases in population, most notably in the number of older people, all services are required

to meet care needs within a reduced budget. We must conduct workforce planning on the basis that funding is decreasing whilst demand is increasing and any changes we make have to be in line with proposals and challenges that have emerged through the business planning process. Reducing spend on agency workers is in line with CFA Strategy and Business Planning proposals.

In the financial year 2014/15 CFA spent an additional £1.1 million on agency staff in social care. In OPMH and adult social care the costs resulting from use of agency staff were met from existing resources. However, children's social care had an overspend of £894k due to the cost of agency workers. Our expectation is that by the end of 2016/17 we will have reached the point where agency workers are used less regularly and spend on agency staff is reduced as a result of the changes proposed in this strategy.

### **3.0 How we will recruit and retain the social care workforce**

There are a variety of factors that will influence the recruitment and retention of staff. The following section details the actions we will undertake to improve recruitment and retention and to deliver our vision of a consistent and committed social care workforce who have the right skills to deliver our services.

#### **3.1 Recruitment**

##### **3.1.1 Structure and Procedure**

The current process of recruitment can be time consuming for individual managers resulting in lost hours when they could be supporting their workers or working directly with individuals and families. To tackle this and ensure we are making best use of available resources we will streamline procedure around recruitment for roles in social care where appropriate.

At the present time e-recruitment is self-service for managers. While there are many benefits, it has also presented some challenges for front line managers and staff and has resulted in variety of approaches being taken.

To address this, we will work with LGSS HR and across CFA Directorates that employ social care staff to develop a streamlined approach to the recruitment process. Alongside the current plans to streamline business support, we will establish a dedicated recruitment function within the current business support resource for social care recruitment. The costs associated with this will be met within existing resources. While managers will remain responsible for their recruitment budgets and have ultimate responsibility for recruitment, there will be a clear and consistent process to support a cross-directorate approach to all aspects of social care recruitment including advertising, shortlisting, interviewing and appointment. In turn we expect this to reduce delays and shorten time scales between advertising a post and the member of staff taking on the role.

The overall aim will be to provide a streamlined approach to recruitment and selection to enable us to compete effectively in the job market and to attract the most talented individuals.

### 3.1.2 Recruitment Marketing

We will improve the current use of marketing approaches to streamline our current approach to marketing and ensure we are targeting the most fruitful advertising options within current resources. Currently, advertising is conducted by individual managers meaning that we may be missing opportunities to more effectively target the best advertising options, therefore limiting our exposure.

Targeting the most productive advertising sources in a concerted way will ensure that the most talented candidates are more likely to be exposed to the advertisements. We will ensure that advertising clearly promotes Cambridgeshire as a great place to work and the County Council as an employer, highlighting the recent Council decision to review pay scales for social care staff and the other proposals within this strategy. They will also provide clear reinforcement of our approach to social work, exemplified by the unit model within Children's Social Care and Transforming Lives within Adult Social Care and OPMH.

A streamlining of marketing will make efficient use of available resource and enable us to improve the way in which we market CCC as an employer. We will work closely with corporate colleagues to enhance our communications and digital marketing approach, in line with the principles in the Operating Model.

The provision of information and advertising has recently been improved through the development and improvement of the recruitment webpage on CCC corporate website. The recent improvement has resulted in a simple customer journey, making the case clearly for the benefits of working for CCC social care. We will continue to evaluate and improve the webpage ensuring it is attractive and easy to use for prospective employees.

As part of the overall improvement in recruitment marketing we will use an intelligence based approach, using data to inform decisions about which forms of advertisement gives us the best return. Marketing methods to be considered include but are not limited to:

- Paid advertising opportunities through digital media, such as search engines or social media, to target specific audiences. Online marketing is highly flexible and can be low cost compared to other forms of marketing.
- Continued development and improvement of the CCC corporate webpage advertising social care roles
- Attendance at jobs fairs with the potential to host our own job fair.
- Continue close relationships with Anglia Ruskin University and also forge closer links with other academic partners across the region.

## 3.2 Rewarding Staff

### 3.2.1 Review of Roles

A core element of the strategy is to ensure we offer our social care staff competitive and fair rates of pay in recognition of their skill and contribution to the lives of the most vulnerable in our society. We must also remain competitive with neighbouring authorities. We have recently reviewed and implemented new job descriptions and pay grades of posts within social care teams. The review of social work roles had not been undertaken for a considerable period of time, during which time the roles have evolved with increasing responsibilities.

Prior to this re-grading, Cambridgeshire County Council had comparatively low rates of pay for all levels of social care compared to other local authorities in the region which hindered our ability to recruit and retain sufficient levels of permanent staff. This re-evaluation brings the Council more in line with other neighbouring authorities and improves our position in recruiting when we advertise alongside other authorities. Furthermore, it will help our current staff feel more valued for their work they currently do with the aim to improve retention rates. The re-grade has been in effect from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2015 and all new posts being advertised will include the rebranded job descriptions and increased pay.

### 3.2.2 Benefits for Staff

We will introduce a diverse range of benefits and total reward offering that is attractive to the broadest possible range of staff while providing value for money to the organisation. Ensuring staff are not only financially rewarded for their work but have access to other benefits will help attract, retain and motivate current staff.

The Council currently offers all CCC staff a number of employee benefits including:

- Options for healthcare
- Childcare voucher scheme to enable Council employees to make savings on the cost of childcare provided by certain registered providers
- Gym membership discounts
- Travel for work cycle discounts giving money off the purchase of bikes and accessories.
- A comprehensive flexible working policy
- Access to the local government and teachers' pension schemes
- The ability to buy additional annual leave through a salary sacrifice scheme

We will work to promote these existing benefits and develop new features of the benefit scheme. LGSS are in the process of developing a new employee discount scheme that will encompass and widen the benefits on offer. It is anticipated that these new benefits will be implemented in early 2016. Some of the key new features being developed may include a private car lease scheme and a benefits card which



provides opportunities for staff to achieve savings on a variety of products and services from general shopping to savings on insurance.

### 3.2.3 Recognising Contribution

We will also focus on how we provide non-financial recognition for the work of our social care staff and celebrate the individual contribution made by staff across CFA. An employee recognition scheme has been agreed that will publically identify employees for their commitment and loyalty 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's annual leave for that specific leave year.

### 3.3 Workforce development

The workforce development team are working to create a 'life-long learning culture', an environment within which staff will feel valued, supported and empowered. 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, competence and experience. A clear workforce development offer will also incentivise quality staff to apply for posts as they see the benefits to their own career progression potential by joining the organisation

Social Care directorates have worked closely with the workforce development team to improve our current workforce offer and have created a model which lays out clear training and career pathways for all social care staff based on consultation with staff and a consideration of the needs of the organisation. The key elements of our workforce offer include:

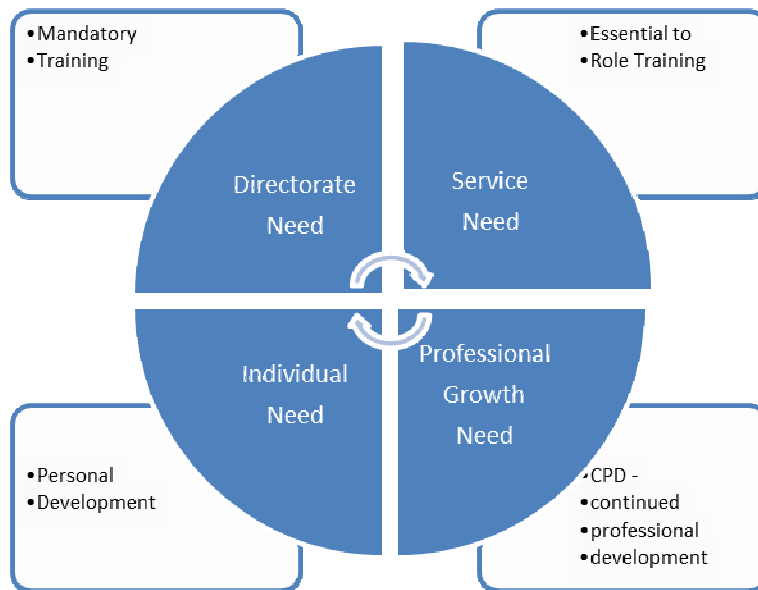
#### 3.3.1 The Cambridgeshire Virtual College of Social Work

The College will be a virtual learning environment within the County Council. It will be a single place where staff can look for all learning opportunities for social care. The virtual college will provide staff with a clear learning and career pathway relevant to their roles and will link in with the appropriate training found on 'Learn Together Cambridgeshire.' It will include comprehensive details regarding traditional classroom based opportunities whether they are offered by the County Council or our partners. Individuals will be able to identify their role and responsibility within the organisation and the associated learning opportunities related to their current role. It is anticipated that the 'classrooms' will be structured into the following domains:

- **Mandatory:** Essential training for all staff within the directorate.
- **Essential to Role (core):** Suites of essential training bespoke to that role and responsibility.
- **Specialist to role:** Additional training to update and improve professional skills and knowledge. This includes ensuring those staff that are required to be professionally registered are able to fulfil the relevant criteria.

- Personal Development

The relationships between these virtual classrooms and the organisation are represented in the diagram below;



### 3.3.2 Programme for Newly Qualified Social Workers

We currently have a very successful support and training programme for newly qualified social workers during the Assessed and Supported Year of Employment (ASYE). This includes a core training programme of 10 skills training days (over 10 months) which include Action Learning Sets and a range of guest speakers and service leads to teach on different topics. It also includes a five day Anglia Ruskin University module which can contribute towards a Master's Degree and five or six days of bespoke individual training. Cambridgeshire already has very high rates of retention of employees who joined the organisation as newly qualified social workers and undertook their ASYE year at the authority. Over 90% of ASYEs who have joined the organisation since 2012 are still CCC employees and some have moved into more senior roles.

We plan to maintain and build upon the successes of the current programme and continue to seek ways to improve the provision, particularly in relation to improving supervision from qualified senior staff. Research into the training available to ASYE's at other local authorities is being undertaken to consider options to improve our offer including the benefits of formal social work academies. Initial research suggests there is a variety of models, many of which are costly and could not be delivered within existing resources. However we are clear that continuing to improve this support 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 and develop as the future leaders within the Council.

### 3.3.3 Qualified Staff who are Newly Recruited by Cambridgeshire

To help social care staff who have recently joined the organisation but are not in their ASYE year, we will continue to develop the induction programme to provide all new recruits with a clear learning pathway for them to undertake during their six month probationary period. This pathway will identify opportunities for learning and development that will include an overview to the CFA strategic vision for social care, develop expertise and extend opportunities for further career development, potentially by allowing new staff to shadow social workers in other departments or even across directorate (where appropriate) and pair them with a mentor who can support them in their transition. This will provide new recruits with additional support while they are new to the organisation and enable managers to identify particularly talented individuals and encourage them to remain working for CCC.

### 3.3.4 Leadership Development

For those staff wishing to pursue a career in management, an aspirant manager programme is already in place. This complements a wider programme of leadership and management development based on either vocational qualifications or academic through the Institute of Leadership & Management (ILM). These programmes are delivered through LGSS Organisational and Workforce Development and delivered with the aim of equipping aspiring leaders with the skills required to meet the challenges facing social care. Other available courses include: Essential Skills for Aspiring and New Managers; Building High Performance Teams; Managing Change Successfully; Budget Management; Project Management; Situational Leadership and Leading an Empowered Organisation.

## 3.4 A Flexible Workforce

There are a variety of roles within frontline social care. However we currently offer limited flexibility to enable social care staff to move between social care posts in different parts of the organisation without going through a formal process. We will work with LGSS HR to establish a process that enables social care staff to rotate within social care roles. This will provide opportunities for social workers to attain skills and experiences in different areas. This will also support the movement of resources where it is most needed and provide opportunities for personal and professional development. For example, within Children's Social Care, it has been extremely difficult to recruit to the First Response and Emergency Duty Team (FREDt). Newly qualified Social Workers could benefit enormously from the experience of spending some time working in this environment where a variety of requests for support are managed and processed.

Being part of a flexible workforce that can work across the variety of roles may be appealing to some current and potential new social workers who like the security and sense of belonging when working for one local authority but enjoy the challenge of working in different environments. This flexibility will enable us to fill vacant posts

quickly with a worker who is familiar with the organisation, skilled, and committed to our strategic vision.

We are also considering whether there are any tasks current undertaken by qualified social care staff that could be undertaken by unqualified staff. This will enable those within social care who are in unqualified roles to take on tasks that will widen their experience whilst also enabling qualified social workers to undertake more specific tasks that benefit from someone having a professional qualification. This could then lessen CCC need to employ agency social workers.

The ability for social care staff to move between teams and directorates and widen the roles of unqualified staff will have significant benefits in terms of the knowledge and experience of staff. In addition, this approach can help to retain employees who have returned after a period of absence (such as maternity leave) who no longer want to remain in their previous role but would like to remain working for CCC. This will prevent them from having to reapply for a different role when we already know they are suitable, or lose them to another organisation.

#### 4.0 Delivering the strategy

The CFA directorates that employ social care staff are taking a joint approach to recruitment in collaboration with LGSS (HR). To enable cross directorate working, the Strategic Recruitment and Workforce Development Board has been created to proactively address the issues of recruitment and retention and the development of relevant skills and experience. The board is chaired by the LGSS Head of People with membership including Service Directors of Older People and Mental Health, Adult Social Care, Children's Social Care and Director of Learning who leads on workforce development. They own and are responsible for the delivery of this strategy.

**Figure 2: Social Care Recruitment and Retention Governance Structure**



In addition, a Social Work Recruitment and Retention Task and Finish Group has been established which is developing an action plan for the strategy with steer from the Strategic Recruitment and Workforce Development Board. The Task and Finish group will then be responsible for taking forward any actions to deliver the strategy.

## **5.0 How will we know we've been successful?**

If we are achieve our goal to have a consistent permanent social care workforce who have the right skills to deliver excellent service to children, families and adults we will ensure that staffing costs are within budget and there will be successful delivery of CFA social care strategies.

To ensure that the proposals within this strategy are bringing about the necessary improvements in our ability to recruit and retain a permanent workforce we will ensure that there is regular monitoring of the following indicators

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

Through the budget setting process, CFA have identified a savings for spend on agency of £502k for the financial year 2016-17. To achieve this target Children's Social Care will need to reduce agency staff by 10 posts and Adult Social Care, Older People and Mental Health will need to reduce their agency numbers by 10 posts across the directorates over the next financial year.

For the other indicators we will set a target based on the baseline established on the position in December 2015, prior to a recruitment drive, and monitor how we are progressing against this benchmark.

### **5.1 Progress Monitoring**

To monitor the effectiveness of the Recruitment and Retention Strategy we will regularly review the impact of the changes we are making and will monitor the anticipated reduction in spend on agency workers. A dashboard will be created to monitor the indicators identified above that will be updated quarterly and reported to the Strategic Recruitment and Workforce Development Board. Furthermore, a monthly action update document will be produced to ensure robust managing of actions. Exception reports will be discussed at Spokesmeeting and Adults and Children's Committees will be kept informed about progress. This data will not only enable us to ensure that the strategy is being successful in its goal but will also support effective workforce planning so that managers are able to deploy resource and plan recruitment drives appropriately.

## **6.0 Staff Engagement**

Engagement with staff is key to the success of this strategy. Social care staff affected by the re-grade that was applied on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2015 have been individually contacted and offered the opportunity to meet with their line managers to discuss. We will continue to enhance communication channels so staff and managers can ensure effective communication and obtain feedback to identify areas where development is required to help find solutions for recruitment and retention. Social care staff will be consulted and feedback gained on the approaches set out on this strategy

Work is also underway to ensure that the requirements set out in the job descriptions issued for staff work in Adult Social Care and Older people and Mental Health Directorates to identify any training and development needs they have in order to work in a 'Transforming Lives' way.

For staff who choose to leave the organisation a new emphasis will be placed on the importance of exit interviews. All social care staff will be offered an exit interview which will be undertaken in good time before they leave the organisation and feedback will be regularly reported to the Strategic Recruitment and Workforce Development Board so we can continually improve our recruitment and retention offer.