

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT: RECRUITMENT, RETENTION AND TRAINING

To: **Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee**

Meeting Date: **20 November 2019**

From: **Anna Cullen, Principal Social Worker
Lesley Liston, Senior Learning and Development Advisor,
LGSS**

Electoral division(s): **All**

Purpose: **The Sub-Committee has requested regular updates on
workforce development issues.**

Recommendation: **The Sub-Committee is recommended to note and
comment on the report.**

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Summary:

Since the last update to the Sub-Committee in March 2019 there have been a number of developments affecting workforce development, some of which members of the Sub-Committee will already be aware.

This includes the re-alignment of Assistant Directors across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, leading to a reallocation of key roles and responsibilities. Workforce Development now falls under the responsibility of Nicola Curley who will prioritise updating the Workforce Development Strategy to unify both authorities.

The workforce are in the process of training for and embedding the Family Safeguarding Model across Cambridgeshire. This will improve outcomes for children, particularly as one of the successes of the model in other authorities has been to keep larger numbers of children safely at home with their families.

The Social Work Apprenticeship has finally started to be rolled out across the country, with our Cambridgeshire County Council apprenticeships about to start in early December 2019.

The new social work regulator, Social Work England, will take over from the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) on 5th December 2019, giving clearer standards, expectations and accountability of social workers.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Sub-Committee was previously provided with the proposed plan of supporting staff through transition into a new structure in September 2018.
- 1.2 The Change for Children Programme led to a transformation of Children Services being launched in November 2018 and a follow up update was requested on our recruitment, retention and training by the Sub-Committee in March 2019.

2. MAIN ISSUES

- 2.1 As previously noted, each Local Authority is required to give information annually to the Department for Education about the numbers of social workers, vacancies and agency worker rates, which can then be compared with neighbouring authorities. For Cambridgeshire in 2018 (last set of available figures), we had a turnover rate of 17.9%, (15% in 2017) which compares with a regional rate of 14.00%. Our vacancy rate in 2018 was 13.7% (had been 17% in 2017) whereas the regional rate is worse than ours at 16.6%. In terms of percentage of agency staff, in 2018 we had a rate of 11.2% (16% in 2017) which was the same as the regional average rate, so an improvement for Cambridgeshire and comparable with neighbours. The Census is requested on 30 September each year, and the new data will be available nationally in the

New Year.

- 2.2 Currently, safeguarding teams in the north have 95% permanent staff with three vacancies, and 14 agency workers (21%). Safeguarding teams in the south have 94% permanent staff (was 67% in March of this year) with five vacancies and 11 agency workers (11%). The Corporate Parenting service (including Fostering) has 96% permanent staff in posts with four vacancies and 10 agency workers (5%). The Integrated Front Door has 92% permanent posts filled, with four vacancies and six agency workers (13%). Safeguarding and Quality Assurance has 97% permanent posts filled, with one vacancy and 4 agency workers (9%). Overall, this represents 94.8% of permanent posts filled, 17 vacancies and an agency worker rate of 11%. This is an improvement on our vacancy rate, and our agency worker rate appears to be roughly the same as the end of 2018.
- 2.3 To address the recruitment challenges this year, Cambridgeshire developed an award-winning recruitment campaign for social workers in both Children's and Adults services, with a tailored approach for each sector. This appears to be having a positive impact, reaching potential colleagues via social media. The focus for our recruitment team is now to streamline their 'onboarding' process, ensuring that colleagues can start work as smoothly and quickly as possible to minimise the time lag in filling any vacancies
- 2.4 We continue to recruit a proportion of Newly-Qualified social workers (NQSWs) into the Authority, and working with the Greater Cambridgeshire Social Work Teaching Partnership, we are developing a workforce projection model for the next few years, which will help us predict more accurately how many newly-qualified staff we need to recruit each year, which also ensures we have the right support in place to nurture this staff group and encourage them to remain within the Authority. There are currently 33 NQSW's undertaking the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) across Children's Services across three cohorts.
- 2.5 Our well-established ASYE programme continues to support new staff in the field, and our Step up to Social Work offer and Practice Educator training complement this for both newly-qualified staff and established practitioners who are looking to develop their careers. Our Social Work Apprenticeship programme will be commencing in Early December through the University of Warwick with assessment days by the University happening shortly. Additionally, Apprenticeships are also available in Leadership and Management and being developed for Children, Young People and Families practitioners.
- 2.6 With the change of remit for our Assistant Directors, the Workforce Development Strategy Group is now being chaired by Nicola Curley. The Group has just met for the first time in October and will focus on developing a Management Development pathway, recruitment and retention issues, developing a progression framework and career pathway.

2.7 All professionals have access to the Learning and Development pathway document for the Early Help and Social Work workforce. This document is being reviewed with Peterborough City Council to establish commonalities and necessary differences in the offer and will be approved by the Workforce Development Strategy Group. The offer will include mandatory training, specialist training opportunities as well as information on Apprenticeships and other vocational qualifications. Alongside face to face training there will be a blended learning offer including eLearning and online resources.

2.8 In terms of a practice model, Cambridgeshire is embracing the Family Safeguarding Model, developed in Hertfordshire and rolled out successfully in Peterborough in the past couple of years. This model focuses on direct work with families and aims to keep children safely at home where possible. It should reduce the numbers of children in care over time. Staff in Cambridgeshire are training at the moment to implement the new model, and are also being trained in one of its core skills, Motivational Interviewing. Alongside this, staff are also being trained to use the new Liquid Logic system. Both Family Safeguarding and Liquid Logic are rolling out in January 2020, which, whilst both positive developments in themselves, does represent a major change for staff.

2.9 On a national basis, the new social work regulator, Social Work England, comes into effect on 5th December 2019. Social workers will transfer over automatically from the HCPC, and will be required to maintain their professional development records online with the regulator on a regular basis. Staff will be required to espouse a new set of professional standards, specific to the profession.

3. ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PRIORITIES

3.1 A good quality of life for everyone

There are no significant implications for this priority.

3.2 Thriving places for people to live

There are no significant implications for this priority.

3.3 The best start for Cambridgeshire’s children

There are no significant implications for this priority.

4. SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS

n/a

Source Documents	Location
None	