

**Workforce Development: Recruitment, Retention and Training**

*To:* **Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee**

*Meeting Date:* **20 March 2019**

*From:* **Jitka Kohoutova  
Head of Safeguarding, Huntingdon & Fenland**

*Electoral division(s):* **All**

*Purpose:* **The Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee requested bi-meeting reports on workforce development issues.**

*Recommendation:* **The Sub-Committee is recommended to review and comment on the update provided.**

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**Summary:**

In recognition of our current recruitment challenges and in reflection of our organisational development, we have rewritten our Workforce Development Strategy and created an action plan to ensure that everyone who works with children and young people – whatever their role – has the knowledge, skills, and motivation to do the best job they possibly can. The Workforce Development Strategy action plan is monitored through the Workforce Development Group that meets on a regular basis (at least four times a year) and is overseen by the Children and Safeguarding Assistant Director, Sarah-Jane Smedmor.

This document expands on the previous Learning and Development Pathway 2017/2018 and incorporates the changes that the Change for Children Programme introduced to service delivery in 2018. The Change for Children Programme led to a transformation of Children Services in 2018 and a re-evaluation of the support available to staff. A service-level Training Needs Analysis and staff survey gave us a strong steer as to what was needed and a specific project plan was put in place to support all managers and their teams to manage change and transition safely and productively.

The summarised points of our new strategy are in this report.

**1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1. Previously the Committee was 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.
- 1.3. The new structure of service delivery has been designed to provide focused specialist services, including specialist assessment teams, long term teams, adolescent teams, Children in Care and Care Leaver teams.
- 1.4. Children and families now move through the structure in a timely and targeted way and Children in Care and Care Leavers are now able to build the long-term stable relationships with their worker that we know is crucial for them.
- 1.5. We are now four months into the new structure and are embedding delivery of our statutory services.

## 2. MAIN ISSUES

- 2.1. Every Local Authority is required to provide 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 2017 (last set of available figures), we had a staff turnover rate of 15%, a vacancy rate of 17% and an agency worker rate of 16%.
- 2.2. Currently, the workforce within the safeguarding teams in the north of the county consists of 91.7% permanent staff with 3 vacancies that are covered by agency workers and permanent workers have already been recruited into these posts. The workforce within the safeguarding teams in the south of the county consists of 66.7% permanent staff with 13 vacant posts currently covered by 12 agency workers. The workforce within our Corporate Parenting Teams consists of 75.5% permanent staff with 10.5 vacant posts, 6 of which are covered by agency workers.
- 2.3. Across the whole of the service (including the Children with Disability Team) we employ 230 workers, both qualified social workers and alternatively qualified staff. We currently have 26 vacancies (11.3%) and we have 22 agency staff (9.6%) covering these whilst waiting for our new starters to arrive with us.
- 2.4. In recognition of our current recruitment challenges, specifically to teams in the south of the county, our recruitment team is in the process of redesigning our recruitment strategy and shortening and simplifying the recruitment process for qualified social workers while using a modern approach to marketing via social media. We have also successfully completed an international recruitment campaign. The plan to repeat the success of our Recruitment Showcase Day, held in January 2018 is underway and we have also planned an internal good practice celebration day for 1 May 2019.
- 2.5. We now also have a more up to date, innovative recruitment website, Cambridgeshire Social Care Jobs, which provides a wealth of information for potential applicants of what Cambridgeshire has to offer. Prospective candidates are able to register interest and have direct conversations with the specialist social work recruitment and retention service.
- 2.6. Newly Qualified Social Worker recruitment remains successful and our workforce consists of between 10 -15% of newly qualified staff. This has formed a crucial part of our recruitment strategy in recent years and will continue to do so. Our Assessed Supported Year of Employment (ASYE) programme is well established and seen as an essential part of workforce development.

- 2.7. As part of the service re-structure, we have now made alternatively qualified workers permanent members of our teams and these posts have been called Child Practitioners. The Child Practitioners are crucial in supporting our Social Work staff in their work with families and provide a valuable contribution to the department.
- 2.8. We also are continuing our well- established ASYE programme, Systemic training offer, Step up to Social Work offer, Practice Educator training, Apprenticeship programme, and Management Development pathway which includes the Frontline Social Work offer and Oxford Brookes Management training.
- 2.9. A specific project plan was put in place to support all managers and their teams to manage change and transition safely and productively. Feedback from the workforce confirmed that staff appreciated clarity around practice standards and a core toolkit to support the work we do was made available in advance of the new structure coming into place on our newly developed Children's Services Portal.
- 2.10. We are now in the process of developing one central training record database which would inform training needs for the future. A new learning and development pathway and leadership and management pathway are being updated. Our current offer for all staff continues to be available via our i-Learn portal, and our Workforce Development Team which is all complemented by bespoke bite-size workshops that are delivered on a District or county-wide basis.
- 2.11. All professionals have access to the Learning and Development pathway document for the Early Help and Social Work workforce. This document has been designed to provide a guide through the Learning Pathway for all staff working with Children, Young People and Families. It includes mandatory training, and specialist training opportunities as well as information about vocational qualifications and available learning resources.

### **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**

##### **4.1. Resource Implications**

n/a

##### **4.2. Procurement/Contractual/Council Contract Procedure Rules Implications**

n/a

##### **4.3. Statutory, Legal and Risk Implications**

n/a

##### **4.4. Equality and Diversity Implications**

n/a

##### **4.5. Engagement and Communications Implications**

n/a

##### **4.6. Localism and Local Member Involvement**

n/a

##### **4.7. Public Health Implications**

n/a

<b>Source Documents</b>	<b>Location</b>
None	