

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

To: **Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee**

Meeting Date: **21st February 2018**

From: **Sarah-Jane Smedmor
Assistant Director, Children's Services**

Electoral division(s): **All**

Purpose: Members asked for a regular report on workforce development.

Recommendation: Members are invited to:

- a) note and comment on the report.
- b) say what information they would find useful regarding workforce development in future, and in what format they would like to have this information delivered.

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Summary:

This is a short update about the allocation of social workers and available training.

This report confirms that each Looked After Child (LAC child) has an allocated social worker and gives an overview of the training available to social workers.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 A request was made by the Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee for further information about the allocation of a social worker to each Looked After Child (LAC), and confirming that appropriate training is available to social work staff.

2. MAIN ISSUES

- 2.1 All Looked After Children have a qualified social worker allocated to their case and is recorded on the Integrated Children's System (ICS).
- 2.2 Cambridgeshire County Council, in partnership with LGSS has a wide-ranging training and development offer in place for Children's Services. Social work staff have a defined training pathway for each stage of their social work career. The pathway is refreshed and updated each year, and courses are updated regularly to offer the latest guidance, policies and up to date practice. Staff have mandatory training that they must attend additional to their core corporate training. This covers a variety of subjects including domestic violence, undertaking child abuse investigations and courses with a focus for Looked After Children including child sexual exploitation and life story work. With the exception of the 14-25 team, social workers hold generic children's social work caseloads, so are expected to develop expertise throughout the child's social care journey – from Child in Need, Child Protection and associated work for looked after children. There is a specific course regarding looked after children available to all Children's Services staff, but especially aimed at social workers, fostering officers and so on which gives an in-depth guide to working with LAC children, the legal framework, understanding permanence and managing contact.
- 2.3 Alongside this core offer, there are a number of options available to workers to help them develop their practice in more depth and in a variety of learning styles. All Newly qualified workers undertake the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment, which has a set level of learning days, enhanced levels of supervision and a portfolio of work to provide for assessment. They are expected to show their development and application to increasingly complex social work tasks throughout their year, and good practice will see them have a managed caseload, which will in due course include work with a LAC child as appropriate.
- 2.4 Less formally, there are a number of in-house workshops available – Partnerships and Quality Assurance (PQA) has initiated a monthly workshop available across the county focusing on key social work skills and tasks – this is being developed by the Principal Social Worker and in February is focusing on the Voice of the Child. Future workshops will

concentrate on direct work with children (which will include life story work) and good practice around statutory visits. The needs of LAC children are considered in each workshop, as are those children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Alongside this, our practice experts for court work and permanence meet with practitioners countywide both to offer individual advice and coaching and also offer bespoke training workshops on aspects of their work – again, aimed at the generic workload, but ultimately thinking of the welfare of and planning for LAC children.

- 2.5 Practice groups, District team workshops, e-learning courses and webinars and external conferences and workshops are also available to staff. These cover a wide-ranging number of topics and often meet local needs and current or emerging trends. This enables staff to access 'bite-sized' sessions of learning on topics ranging from working with specific cultures within Cambridgeshire, to trafficking, to information on County Lines drug-running – an emerging concern for Cambridgeshire and for our most vulnerable young people. Staff are encouraged to attend the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) practice groups, and can access LSCB training. Cambridgeshire also has a licence for Community Care Inform, Making Research Count and Research in Practice, who all have a wide-ranging set of resources to support social work staff.

3. SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS

N/A

3.1 Resource Implications

N/A

3.2 Procurement/Contractual/Council Contract Procedure Rules Implications

N/A

3.3 Statutory, Legal and Risk Implications

N/A

3.4 Equality and Diversity Implications

N/A

3.5 Engagement and Communications Implications

N/A

3.6 Localism and Local Member Involvement

N/A

3.7 Public Health Implications

N/A

SOURCE DOCUMENTS

Source Documents	Location
None	