

## Adult Social Care Retention Payments

To: Adults & Health Committee

Meeting Date: 13 January 2022

From: Charlotte Black, Executive Director, People & Communities

Electoral division(s): All

Key decision: Yes

Forward Plan ref: 2022/027

Outcome: Committee are being asked to agree to a retention payment scheme for Adult Social Workers, where we are experiencing high turnover and vacancy rates.

The aim of the proposed scheme is to retain our current Adult Social Worker capacity and have a positive impact on outcomes, quality, performance, management of demand and prepare to meet the additional requirements resulting from adult social care reform.

Recommendation: The Adults and Health Committee is being asked to:

- a) agree to the implementation of a retention payment scheme for Adult Social Workers, with an investment of £302k in 2022/23 and a further £152k in 2023/24.

### Officer contact:

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### Member contacts:

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# 1. Background

1.1 Over the last 12 months the Adults and Safeguarding directorate have experienced significant difficulties in recruiting to social work roles, as a result we now have a robust vacancy monitoring system in place. This has shown us that we are beginning to experience a recruitment trend similar to that of children’s social workers. We would like to take the learning from our Children’s Social Care, where a retention payment scheme for Social Workers has already been introduced and get ahead of this issue before it escalates further. Evidence so far is this scheme has been effective in retaining staff.

# 2. Main Issues

2.1 The Adult Social Care reform set out in the White Paper means that by September 2023 we will need to have completed a social work assessment for all those who currently pay for their own care who may be eligible for financial support as a result of the Social Care reforms. Currently we provide financial support for less than 1 in 25 of over 65s and national estimates are that approximately 14% of over 65s will meet the cap for care costs in the future. It is essential that we are able to retain our current Adult Social Worker capacity to meet our current statutory requirements and be in a position to successfully expand it further to meet these future demands.

2.2 The Association of Directors of Adults Services (ADASS) network is reporting similar issues with Social Work recruitment across all LA’s following the covid pandemic and many are also considering introducing retention schemes as a result. Therefore, we need to ensure that we remain competitive with other authorities by offering our Adult Social Workers a financial benefit to stay with us.

2.3 High levels of vacancy and instability amongst social workers and team managers have an adverse impact on outcomes, quality, performance and management of demand. In adults this impacts on our ability to meet statutory requirements and means we miss opportunities to take actions that will improve outcomes, manage demand and prevent need from escalating and cost increasing. High vacancy levels lead to other costs such as the need to bring in external agencies to deal with our backlogs in reviews. Vacancy levels have reached 32% in some teams demonstrating that both recruitment and retention is an issue. The full detail of vacancy percentage by team and month is shown:

	Vacancies as a percentage					
	Apr-21	May-21	Jun-21	Aug-21	Sep-21	Oct-21
Older People/ Physical Disability	15.84%	16.93%	13.96%	16.16%	16.16%	19.21%
Transfer of Care	12.23%	12.57%	17.55%	13.69%	10.71%	8.82%
Learning Disability/ Adults with Autism	2.63%	9.52%	7.32%	12.20%	23.40%	32.57%
Mental Health	9.76%	12.20%	16.82%	14.29%	18.60%	18.60%

The graph below shows the total social worker headcount comparison across all teams suggested to be in scope and the gap between budgeted posts and posts that are filled showing the increase in turnover.



2.4 The impact of turnover in teams is significant, causing backlogs and delays to allocate services to meet need early and prevent escalation. It also puts additional pressure on social workers in the service, with high case- loads, resulting in reduced job satisfaction and stress, on occasion resulting in sickness absences. When a vacancy is created there is often a gap whilst recruitment is undertaken, resulting in delays to casework being undertaken and appropriate and timely support being provided which leads to increased risks and cost.

When considering a retention scheme for Social Workers and which teams this should apply to, we have considered the overall impact that this is likely to have across the directorate. Several teams have been excluded including the MASH, Adult Early Help, Quality and Practice Teams, Care Home Support Team and several other teams where there doesn't appear to be an issue.

The teams that are suggested to be in scope are those that are dealing with complex social work assessments and long term care planning, where the impact of vacancies and turnover create the greatest issues. The Teams in scope would be:

- Older People and Physical Disability
- Mental Health
- Transfer of Care Team
- Learning Disability Partnership
- 0-25 includes Young Adults Team and Children's Disability Services

2.5 The principles of the scheme already introduced to Children's Social Workers would apply to Adult Social Care. The Retention Payment Scheme will see Social Workers and Senior

Social Workers receiving a total of 20% of starting salary of P1 or P2 respectively, paid as three non-consolidated incremental payments over a period of three years, followed by a fixed rate payment thereafter. Team Managers will receive a fixed payment each year following one year's service.

## 2.6 General Principles:

It will be clear in our pay policy that retention payments are non-contractual discretionary payments, and the Council reserves the right to discontinue payments in the event of significant financial difficulty. Individual teams or roles can be removed from the agreed list of eligible teams/roles in the event that retention and recruitment is no longer an issue. In both situations, 6 months' notice of the withdrawal of payments will be given and those in eligible roles will be made aware of this.

Where an individual voluntarily moves to a role that does not attract a retention reward the eligibility for payment will cease from the date of change of appointment and will not be paid if they are in their notice period and leaving the organisation or subject to formal disciplinary or work performance processes.

Employees who receive a retention reward and subsequently leave the Council's employment are not expected to pay back the reward.

A review of the Adults and Children's retention payment schemes will be led by HR annually to ensure that the scheme is in line with market conditions

## 2.7 Costs:

The option of doing nothing would be likely to result in increased staff turnover. This would result in ever increasing agency social workers costs and a reduced quality of service and expose the County Council to a considerable level of risk.

To apply the model agreed for Children's Social Care which would see an incremental payment rising to 10%, the direct cost of retention payments would be £650k at the high point (2023/24) and require additional funding of £454k. This would ensure parity between adults and children's and would also future proof the Council as many other neighbouring Councils are developing similar approaches.

The table below shows the modelled annual cost of the scheme and the additional funding that will be requested. It should be noted that no additional funding is requested in 2021/22 as it is proposed that the costs are funded from Workforce Funding for Adult Social Care received from the government. Learning Disability and Young Adults Team costs will be a funded from the pooled budget. The Committee is being asked to agree funding for the cost of retention payments for the remaining Adult social care teams (Older People, Physical Disability, Mental Health, Transfers of Care and Adults and Autism Team). Historic over-achievement against the internal Learning Disability pooled budget vacancy savings target is sufficient to absorb the cost without requiring additional funding. It is assumed that costs for the Children's Disability Team (budget is not part of A&S) will be funded from excess vacancy savings consistent with the Children's scheme.

The impact on in-year Adults & Safeguarding vacancy savings from reducing average social worker and senior social worker vacancy levels has been assessed as £162.5k. It is

proposed that this risk can be absorbed within Adults & Safeguarding without requiring additional funding due to historic over-achievement against in-year vacancy savings.

It should also be noted that DHSC may continue to provide Workforce Funding for Adult Social Care to Local Authorities in future years and it would be reasonable to call on this to meet some of these costs where they meet the criteria.

	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000	2025/26 £000	2026/27 £000
<b>Adults &amp; Safeguarding Funding Request</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>302</b>	<b>454</b>	<b>392</b>	<b>402</b>	<b>353</b>
Learning Disability & Young Adults Team - Cost to Pool Budget	35	82	129	119	125	110
Children's Disability - Cost funded by Vacancy Savings	19	43	67	60	62	55
<b>Total Cost</b>	<b>182</b>	<b>427</b>	<b>650</b>	<b>571</b>	<b>589</b>	<b>518</b>

Business Planning Bid	0	302	152	-62	0	0
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### 3. Alignment with corporate priorities

#### 3.1 Communities at the heart of everything we do

There are no significant implications for this priority.

#### 3.2 A good quality of life for everyone

There are no significant implications for this priority.

#### 3.3 Helping our children learn, develop and live life to the full

There are no significant implications for this priority.

#### 3.4 Cambridgeshire: a well-connected, safe, clean, green environment

There are no significant implications for this priority.

#### 3.5 Protecting and caring for those who need us

There are no significant implications for this priority.

### 4. Significant Implications

#### 4.1 Resource Implications

The report above sets out details of the cost implications in section 2.7.

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

Whilst no specific procurement implications are raised within this report, we will continue to work with procurement to ensure compliant processes are developed to deliver the required aims.

- 4.3 Statutory, Legal and Risk Implications  
There are no significant implications within this category.
- 4.4 Equality and Diversity Implications  
Payments will be made to all staff in eligible posts. Work will be undertaken to review pay rates of other lower paid staff who play a crucial role in Adult Social Care without a social work qualification.
- 4.5 Engagement and Communications Implications  
There will be engagement with the relevant unions.
- 4.6 Localism and Local Member Involvement  
There are no significant implications within this category.
- 4.7 Public Health Implications  
There are no significant implications within this category.
- 4.8 Environment and Climate Change Implications on Priority Areas  
There are no environment and climate change implications.
- 4.8.1 Implication 1: Energy efficient, low carbon buildings.  
Positive/neutral/negative Status: Neutral  
Explanation: The proposal has no impact on this.
- 4.8.2 Implication 2: Low carbon transport.  
Positive/neutral/negative Status: Neutral  
Explanation: The proposal has no impact on this.
- 4.8.3 Implication 3: Green spaces, peatland, afforestation, habitats and land management.  
Positive/neutral/negative Status: Neutral  
Explanation: The proposal has no impact on this.
- 4.8.4 Implication 4: Waste Management and Tackling Plastic Pollution.  
Positive/neutral/negative Status: Neutral  
Explanation: The proposal has no impact on this.
- 4.8.5 Implication 5: Water use, availability and management:  
Positive/neutral/negative Status: Neutral  
Explanation: The proposal has no impact on this.
- 4.8.6 Implication 6: Air Pollution.  
Positive/neutral/negative Status: Neutral  
Explanation: The proposal has no impact on this.
- 4.8.7 Implication 7: Resilience of our services and infrastructure, and supporting vulnerable people to cope with climate change.  
Positive/neutral/negative Status: Neutral  
Explanation: The proposal has no impact on this.

Have the resource implications been cleared by Finance? Yes

Name of Financial Officer: Justine Hartley

Have the procurement/contractual/ Council Contract Procedure Rules implications been cleared by the Head of Procurement? Yes

Name of Officer: Henry Swan

Has the impact on statutory, legal and risk implications been cleared by the Council's Monitoring Officer or LGSS Law? Yes

Name of Legal Officer: Amy Brown

Have the equality and diversity implications been cleared by your Service Contact?

Yes

Name of Officer: Will Patten

Have any engagement and communication implications been cleared by Communications?

Yes

Name of Officer: Matthew Hall

Have any localism and Local Member involvement issues been cleared by your Service Contact? Yes

Name of Officer: Will Patten

Have any Public Health implications been cleared by Public Health?

Yes

Name of Officer: Emily Smith

If a Key decision, have any Environment and Climate Change implications been cleared by the Climate Change Officer?

Yes

Name of Officer: Sarah Wilkinson

## 5. Source documents guidance

### 5.1 None

