



Adult Social Care Select Committee  
Friday 5 September 2014

## Recruitment, retention and introduction to workforce strategy

**Purpose of the report:** Scrutiny of Services and Performance Management

This report provides Select Committee with:

- i) an update on recruitment and retention, and the actions that have been taken to address workforce supply issues since November 2013, and responses to questions raised by the Select Committee on this work; and
- ii) an update on the development of the Adult Social Care Workforce Strategy and a recommendation further involving members in this work.

### Introduction:

1. Demographic changes present a growing challenge of matching the demand for social care services with services with the supply of social care workers. This challenge is impacted by a number of factors including financial austerity, changing service requirements, and the nature of the economy and employment market in Surrey. Making sure there is an adequate supply of suitable, qualified and trained staff means the local authority will be able to support Surrey residents in living independently and safely in the community.
2. The Adult Social Care Select Committee has an important role to play as champions for working in Adult Social Care in Surrey and Social Care as a sector and has been receiving regular reports on recruitment and workforce issues.

### Recruitment and retention

3. In December 2013, the Committee noted the high vacancy rate across the Adult Social Care Directorate, and encouraged officers to continue measures to address this. The position on recruitment and vacancy rates remains very challenging.

4. At this particular point in time the impact of the enhanced voluntary severance scheme has temporarily increased vacancies in some areas where recruitment is still pending. Recruitment in certain areas, such as hospital based teams and Approved Mental Health Practitioners has improved.
5. An update on actions taken to date to improve recruitment and retention is included in Annex A

#### **Closer working with universities and colleges**

6. In December 2013, the Committee recommended that officers develop closer working with universities and colleges to ensure the supply of quality applicants for vacancies within the Directorate. Actions taken to work towards this include:
  7. Transferring resources to the Professional Qualifications Team to improve our capacity to engage with universities around social work, occupational therapy and mental health professions.
  8. Working with Skills for Care, we have reviewed the Social Work Education Group, a regional forum for employer and the higher education sector which supports social worker supply and development. Principle social workers and workforce leads from children's and adult's services now steer the activity of this group.
  9. As part of the multi-agency workforce strategy for social care, we have committed to development of a joint workforce hub for health and social care in Surrey. This will include programmes to reach out to further education colleges, schools and job centres to promote health and social care careers. Together with Health Education, Kent, Surrey and Sussex we have established innovative pilot projects that pave the way for further joint working, these include:
    - Joint education programme on health and social care careers for careers advisors in job centres, schools and colleges;
    - Joint rotational apprenticeship pilot with health and social care placements; and
    - Joint pre-employment programmes for health and social care.

#### **Improving vocational routes into the social work profession**

10. In December 2013, Committee suggested that the Cabinet Member lobby nationally for the development of vocational routes into the social work profession.
11. The Cavendish Review: an Independent Review into Healthcare Assistants and Support Workers in the NHS and care settings, made recommendations to Government to improve the supply of professionally qualified staff to health and social care, including:

- New bridging programmes into pre-registration nursing and other health degrees for health and social care staff;
  - Review the contribution of vocational experience towards degrees so that staff with strong caring experience can undertake 'fast-track' degrees; and
  - Set out a robust career development framework for health and social care support staff.
12. As part of our multi-agency workforce strategy, we have made a commitment with Health Education Kent, Surrey and Sussex to develop vocational and work based routes to professional qualification. We are arranging a meeting with the Open University to review career pathway in place from pre-employment programme to apprentice to qualified nurse.

**Developing regional approaches to sourcing agency staff**

13. In December 2013, the Committee recommended that officers explore a regional and localised approach to sourcing agency staff.
14. The Human Resources Leadership Team met with counterparts in East Sussex and committed to developing a joined-up approach to temporary staffing. The establishment of the Head of Workforce role within Human Resources provides capacity and scope to take this forward at regional level. Additionally, Skills for Care is establishing new workforce cluster groups for regional collaboration across the country. The first meeting in Surrey will take place in September, providing further opportunity to explore this issue.

**Development of a social care workforce strategy**

15. In December 2013, Committee recommended that members are involved in the development of the next workforce strategy, prior to its publication.
16. Work on the draft workforce strategy is continuing and it is now ready to take forward for consultation. Working with Members of the Committee will be a key part of this.
17. The strategic workforce priorities that have been identified are as follows:
- **Community resources and carers;** supporting the community, people who use services and carers to act early and prevent increasing needs for social care services;
  - **Leadership and service integration;** supporting leaders and commissioners to work together to integrate services around the family and improve outcomes for service users;

- **Career and skills development**; supporting social care workers by increasing career opportunities and developing their skills to deliver quality, compassionate care in multi-agency settings; and
- **Image and workforce supply**; supporting social care employers to improve the supply of social care workers and make sure the sector has capacity to meet increasing demands for care.

The workforce strategy will also need to consider the implications of the Care Act for the workforce.

### Conclusions:

18. Work has been taken forward on establishing a strategic approach to recruitment and retention within the Adult Social Care directorate. Operational improvements in recruitment practice have been implemented and there has been some success in recruiting to professionally qualified roles. The approach to reducing vacancy levels in Service Delivery needs to take into account discussions of the future development of the service. Improvements to induction and a review of casework allocation should improve our ability to develop and retain staff.
19. Officers are involved in improving networks at regional level around professionally qualified staff and workforce collaboration. Work has progressed on the Adults Social Care workforce strategy, with key priorities agreed and an opportunity for members to be involved in consultation and implementation of the strategy.

### Recommendations:

It is recommended that the Committee:

- a) Note actions taken in addressing recruitment and retention challenges and filling professional staff vacancies;
- b) Note the adult social care workforce strategy joint priorities
- c) Considers the formation of a members working group on workforce strategy and delivery and suggest volunteers to join this group.

### Next steps:

The next steps are as follows:

- Form a member working group in September to review the workforce strategy; and
- Schedule an update on recruitment, retention and workforce strategy in six months time.

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**Sources/background papers:** Workforce Information Report Adult Social  
Care

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