



Adults Social Care Select Committee  
10 April 2015

**Recruitment and Retention & Workforce Strategy update**

**Purpose of the report:**

This report provides an update on progress in addressing the recruitment and retention challenges faced by the Adult Social Care Directorate (ASC) since the last report to the Committee in September 2014.

At that time Members recommended that: the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet concentrate on urgently finding ways to recruit to the key frontline vacancies that exist across the Adult Social Care Directorate.

**Introduction:**

1. Demographic changes present a growing challenge of matching demand for social care work and a supply of social care workers. This challenge is impacted by a number of factors including financial austerity in the public sector, changing service requirements, housing costs, and the nature of the economy and employment market in Surrey. Making sure there is an adequate supply of suitable, qualified and trained staff is fundamental to Surrey County Council's aim to support Surrey residents in living independently and safely in the community. It will, however, continue to be an ongoing challenge for the sector as a whole as well as the council as an employer.
2. The external factors impacting on our ability to recruit and retain staff have intensified as the private sector returns to growth, the number of residents claiming benefits has dropped to under 1% and housing costs in the county, whether to rent or buy, remain high in relation to our median earnings. In order to compete the council is having to work harder to retain and attract staff and has made progress to improve its "offer" as a social care employer. However the situation remains very challenging and it will take a range of short and longer term actions to make sustained progress.

<b>Current position</b>
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### 3. Vacancy rate as of 1 December 2014 provided by ASC

Teams	Vacancy %	Total FTE	Vacant FTE
Locality and Hospital Teams	12.4%	672.91	83.64
Mental Health Service	18.2%	228.57	41.64
Reablement	27.7%	306.37	84.91

#### **Locality and Hospital Teams**

It is worth noting that over the last 12 months the vacancy rate has remained between 10%-15%. Flexibility in the level of staffing resource is important to be able to provide some resilience to cope with seasonal pressures.

#### **Mental Health Service**

The introduction of a training scheme for training the Council's mental health workers to become Approved Mental Health Practitioners (AMHPs) is continuing to improve our retention of this difficult to recruit role. The vacancy rate for AMHPs has reduced since March 2013 from 42% to 17% in March 2015. A further 6 AMHPs are due to complete their training in the summer. The vacancy rate for mental health social workers is manageable at 7%, this reflects the fact that some workers have gone on to AMHP training.

#### **Reablement**

The reablement service is under review as they are now part of local Better Care Fund integration project which is reviewing job descriptions. One impact of this change is that not all vacancies are being actively recruited to at present. In some cases work is covered by existing staff varying their hours according to demand. The ability to offer flexible working hours is a key attraction of working in the service.

#### **Redeploying service delivery staff**

Following the Cabinet's decision to close residential care provision at the council's six older people's homes, the consultation and planning process to redeploy several hundred staff on a phased basis can now begin. Many of these staff will have transferable care skills and can either move to different homes as the closures will be phased or into other services such as reablement. The location of new opportunities and the need to have their own transport for some roles may present challenges for some individuals. We can also work with other council services such as commercial services and children's social care and partners in the voluntary and independent sector to provide information on the local employment opportunities they have to offer.

### 4. Voluntary turnover

Voluntary turnover for ASC was 8.4% for the 12 months ending January 2015, an improvement on 10.29% in September 2014. The council wide figures for voluntary turnover were 8.5% and 9.10%

respectively. This suggests a recent reduction in ASC turnover which in turn should reduce the pressure on recruitment. This turnover rate is also much lower than the average turnover rate for social care employers in Surrey which is around 20%.

#### **Progress since September 2014**

5. In the autumn of 2014 the ASC Directorate restructured its senior management team and created Area Director posts to strengthen local partnerships with health. Sonya Sellar will now lead on all workforce related activity in ASC. Since December 2014 Ken Akers is leading on pay and reward for the council and Emily Boynton is leading on developing a council wide strategy on recruitment and retention and has given support to ASC in this area. As a result of these changes we have adopted a new partnership approach to ASC recruitment and retention.
6. The service is committed to fully staffing frontline services in a flexible way to ensure it can respond to seasonal fluctuations in demand. A project commissioned in May 2013 to develop a new recruitment and retention strategy for the service has drawn to a close. This included a wide ranging analysis including researching attitudes of new starters, candidate experience and understanding challenges in relation to specific posts and locations. Workshops have been held with teams to explore what further initiatives could further support recruitment and retention efforts. A strategy and detailed action plan has been developed for the service. This will be delivered via the service led workforce steering group.
7. The wider Adult Social Care Workforce Strategy for the sector was co-designed with partners and has now been condensed into an easy read version, see Annex B. This has been shared with the ASC leadership team and providers. The strategy highlights the need to continue to expand and attract new entrants to the social care sector in Surrey in order to meet growing demand for health and social care in the county due to population growth. It estimates there will need to be between 8,135 to 27,798 extra jobs in Adult Social Care in Surrey by 2025 in order to meet the needs of the local population, on top of the 33,900 already employed in the sector. Given the average turnover of 20% in the social care sector in Surrey this means potentially attracting over 12,000 new hires each year into the adult social care sector. Only a minority of these new entrants will be working directly for the council but it gives an indication of the growing competition for workers in the sector.
8. The lack of access to affordable housing in some parts of the county is a factor that makes recruiting and retaining staff locally a challenge. Our median basic salary is £24,040 while average house prices in Surrey are 12.5 times that at £300,000. The annual average rent on a three bedroom house in Surrey is £15,552 per annum so would be similarly unaffordable for our staff with families. A public sector housing strategy is under discussion to try and create more opportunities for employees to live and work in Surrey which will require collaboration with colleagues in Districts and Boroughs. Experienced social workers in particular who have highly transferable professional qualifications may opt either to

move to areas of the country with lower housing costs or to seek a higher income through locum work in order to improve their standard of living.

9. Details of progress that has been achieved by the Directorate and planned next steps is summarised in the table at Annex A. The framework used is based on the corporate recruitment and retention strategy, the impact of which should also help to improve the council's position. It is structured around the following themes:

Recruitment:	1. Hard to recruit areas
	2. High volume recruitment
	3. Employer brand
	4. Clear offer for new entrants
Retention:	5. Line Managers role
	6. Job design
	7. Productivity
	8. Work environment
Strategic enablers:	9. Candidate experience
	10. Recruitment process
	11. Partnership approach
	12. Pay & Reward
	13. Monitoring progress

#### **Conclusions:**

10. Ensuring that ASC can recruit and retain sufficient numbers of skilled individuals to deliver services now and in the future will be an ongoing challenge. There are a number of coherent actions being undertaken that should support the service to meet this challenge. Strategic issues such as the lack of access to affordable housing in some parts of the county combined with population and economic growth in the county will mean this will be an ongoing challenge and our intention is that the internal ASC recruitment and retention strategy and the wider ASC workforce strategy provides the framework to address this challenge.

#### **Recommendations:**

11. The select committee continues to monitor the situation in relation to recruitment and retention in the service and receives a further report in January 2016.
12. Members note and support the strategic enablers that will support the service to recruit and retain the necessary staff numbers in the future. In particular in reviewing the council's approach to pay and reward and in efforts to increase the supply of affordable housing for public sector staff in the county.

#### **Next steps:**

13. The ASC Workforce steering group has been launched and this will drive forward the delivery of the actions identified in the recruitment and retention plan – see Annex A.

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**Sources/background papers:**

ASC select committee report – Recruitment & Retention and Introduction to Workforce Strategy September 2014; Surrey County Council Recruitment & Retention Strategy

Annex A: Plan to improve recruitment and retention

Annex B: Easy read version of workforce strategy

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