



## Social Care Services Board

20 January 2017

### Report on Adult Social Care and Children's Workforce

**Purpose of report:** To provide an update on the impact of the initiatives to improve recruitment and retention of key staff in Adult Social Care and Children's Services.

#### Introduction:

1. The recruitment and retention of staff into both Adult Social Care (ASC) and Children's Services, is important as this enables the Council to deliver statutory Adults and Children's Services and supports the delivery of the Councils strategic priorities.
2. It is recognised there are areas of challenge for recruitment and retention of staff in Adults and Children's Services. For both, the main challenge is recruitment of qualified social workers.
3. Therefore Adults and Children's Services have implemented recruitment and retention strategies and action plans to reduce vacancies and turnover of staff.

#### Adult Social Care

4. In 2014 Adult Social Care developed a comprehensive 3 year recruitment and retention strategy. The overall aim was to improve the recruitment and retention of staff through a program management approach, with an action plan delivering in the key areas as noted below:-
  - Boosting the supply of qualified social workers
  - Boosting the supply of non-qualified staff
  - Increasing the attractiveness of SCC ASC offer
  - Improving candidates experience of joining SCC
  - Building and promoting a strong and consistent employer value promise across the service
  - Providing easier more accessible pathways for staff to get qualified
  - Maximising potential of existing staff and minimising the reason for staff to leave
- 4.1 The strategy is at the mid way point and therefore the service is undertaking a review of the progress made to date. The service has developed metrics to evidence the progress made and to inform areas for further work. New opportunities have also emerged to help improve our recruitment and retention of the workforce. The review will provide a refreshed recruitment and retention strategy for the service.

4.2. Since implementation of the strategy there has been an overall improvement in recruitment as the vacancy rate has reduced from 16.2% in August 2015 to 12.4% as of August 2016.

4.3. Retention rates have remained high and stable with the turnover rate across all posts in locality and hospital teams at 7.66%. By comparison the regional turnover rate is higher at 13.8%. In February 2016, in order to learn from leavers the service implemented a robust exit interview process for staff leaving our locality and hospital teams. The report for period January to October 2016 identified 60 leavers across these teams (note during this time there were 77 new starters into these teams). The key messages from exit interviews were:

- Main reason for leaving is due to promotional opportunities elsewhere
- Generally people feel career development / prospects options need to be improved
- Staff feel training is good quality
- Staff in general feel supported whilst working in ASC

This information is helping the service to refine where we need to focus our attention to improve retention of staff, and the service is doing further work on career development opportunities.

4.4. Examples of initiatives the service has put in place include, refer a friend, I Care Ambassadors and videos of staff testimonials. Initiatives that have worked particularly well include:-

- The service recruited 28 Apprentices from January 2015 to October 2016 and 32% have since moved to permanent posts within the Council. Through this year's campaign we have recruited 9 business administration and 9 Social Care Apprentices. The recruitment of 9 Social Care Apprentices is an increase on the previous year.
- Since July 2016 we have implemented a new approach to locum conversion and 5 people have transferred into permanent qualified posts.
- The service has made 5 permanent appointments for qualified posts through targeted work with recruitment agencies.
- In the period of January 2016 to October 2016 the service has supported 21 newly qualified social workers (NQSW) through the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) to successful completion. The service expects 5 more NQSW's to complete this year.

4.5. Examples of initiatives in development include:-

- A regional Association Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS) Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), based on the regional Memorandum of Cooperation (MOC) in place in children's services.
- Working closely with Health Education Kent, Surrey and Sussex (HEEKSS) to develop promotional materials for careers events particularly focussing on young people.
- Using social media more effectively as an attraction tool

- Developing detailed recruitment and resourcing plans for each area

### **Challenges and Opportunities**

5. While there has been an improvement in recruitment, the service continues to face challenges in attracting and recruiting people into experienced qualified posts. This is a key area of focus for the refresh of our recruitment strategy.
6. The outcome of the pay and reward review has increased the pay scale for this group of workers and so the service has developed a recruitment campaign to highlight these benefits of working in Surrey. The service will be monitoring the impact of this closely, anticipating a positive impact.
7. Adults and Children's Services have been sharing information on our respective initiatives and identifying opportunities to work together. We have highlighted an opportunity to have a more joined up approach in attracting qualified social workers, e.g. engaging with schools and universities.

<b>Children's Services</b>
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8. Children's Services has also started on a journey to recruit and retain the best Social Care staff, which is based on a focused approach using quantitative data. There have been developments in the way social workers are recruited, which includes some initiatives which have already started and some more which are due to start in 2017. These initiatives include:
  - The development of 2 dedicated posts within HR which support the strategic and operational tasks within recruitment and retention. They have helped the Service to develop the Children's recruitment and retention strategy which will be completed by the end of 2016,
  - The development of workforce data has helped to identify specific areas of work required, as well as the ongoing monitoring of recruitment and retention,
  - The marketing and communications plan for the recruitment of experienced social workers has been refreshed; this is an ongoing process and has included an update of the social work recruitment website,
  - There have been a number of engagement sessions with key recruitment agencies, (where the majority of our applicants for permanent posts come from) which have resulted in excellent feedback and a higher engagement rate, and this has seen an increase in applications through recruitment agencies,
  - Surrey is an established member of the Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) for the South East of England. The key aims of the MoC are to improve stability in the regional children's social care workforce, reduce the reliance upon agency staff and control/decrease the costs of agency staffing. The MoC has a structured governance procedure, which ensures it is adhered to. The success of the MoC has not yet been reviewed however this will happen in 2017,

- The ASYE academy in Children's Services was launched in 2015, with a cohort of 18 social workers across 2 Areas. In September 2016 the academy expanded, with the recruitment of 40 ASYE students across all 4 Areas,
- There is an established Recruitment Group with membership that includes Service Managers. This group shares ideas and initiatives about recruitment; these have included the development of a specific plan to recruit social workers from overseas,
- The Surrey Offer has been developed and promoted to ensure that Surrey offer the best incentives and rewards to attract new applicants (this included working with ASC on the introduction of the Refer a Friend Scheme),
- There have been a number of conversion conversation workshops for locum social workers in order to encourage them to apply for permanent posts within the Service,
- Surrey Communications Team developed and delivered a recruitment campaign over June and July 2016 which resulted in an increase in applications.

8.1. There is a national shortage of experienced social workers, with vacancy rates of between \*10% – 20% (of 155 LA's surveyed). Surrey are tackling this by engaging with the Local Government Association (LGA) on the 'Return to Social Worker Pilot' and creating the ASYE academy in Children's services.

*'Long-term supply shortages - Our research carried out using the Centre for Workforce Intelligence Supply and Demand model suggests that even with optimistic projections of the proportion of social work students moving into the profession the supply of social workers will only be close to equalling demand in 2022'. Taken from, [policyexchange.org.uk](http://policyexchange.org.uk).*

8.2. Despite the challenges we have had an overall reduction in our vacancy rate, from 29% in August to 22% as of October, this has been attributed to the overall work that is being done on recruitment and retention, as part of the Children's Improvement plan.

8.3. Whilst recruitment has understandably been the focus of work to date, figures show that retention also remains a key challenge in Children's Services. In 2015 56 Social Worker/Senior Social Workers in our Child Protection, Looked after Children and Referral Assessment & Intervention Services left the authority – 7 more than were recruited in the same period. However, this year, to date (January to September 2016) 25 Social Workers/Senior Social Workers have left (during which time 26 were recruited). This is fewer than the 44 who had left in the same period in 2015 (during which 30 were recruited).

8.4. The latest turnover figures for all Social Worker/Senior Social Workers in the Child Protection, Looked after Children and the RAIS (now the MASH and Assessment and Intervention Hubs) indicate that we have reduced our turnover, from 23% in July 2016 to 20.63% as of 31 October 2016.

8.5. The Service ran an exit interview pilot with permanent and agency Social Work Staff and other social care staff for one year (March 2015 to March 2016) in order to better understand why staff were leaving. In total 48 qualified Social Work staff and 32 non-qualified staff were interviewed and the key messages were:

- Main reason given by Social Workers leaving was the wish to reduce travel and caseloads and to improve work/life balance.
- The main reasons for other social work staff leaving was the wish to improve career development opportunities and pay.
- Feedback was also that inductions and support for non-qualified staff could be improved.
- Generally staff indicated that they had good training and development opportunities, caring and supportive line managers and colleagues, good benefits and access to flexible working.

This information is helping the service to refine where we need to focus our attention to improve retention of staff.

8.6. Work taking place since then has included the implementation of the Corporate Pay & Reward Strategy to ensure pay and career development is appropriate for all qualified and non-qualified staff; a review of our induction processes; and a project to better understand the workload and caseloads of Children's Social Work staff to help ensure that cases are allocated appropriately and supervisions used to help support staff to balance their work demands, ensure complexity of cases is taken into account in their allocation and to ensure cases are closed in an appropriate and timely manner.

8.7. Children's Services will continue to focus on the recruitment of newly qualified social workers and to support, develop and retain them. The development of the Academy both on terms of numbers and their placement (there are now 4 separate Academies placed within the 4 Areas) is fundamental in the drive to establish a workforce that meets the needs of vulnerable children. The Academies are now attached to the social work teams which have been historically hard to recruit to and they have been very successfully it that they have attracted high quality applicants from social workers with great potential. The large number of new recruits within the 2016 Academy will have a significant impact on our vacancy rate over the next year and the social workers leave the Academy next Summer and fill the vacancies in the social work teams.

<b>Common Challenges and opportunities ASC and Children's workforce</b>
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9. We recognise there are a number of workforce challenges shared across ASC and Children's services. Currently we have monthly joint meetings to share best practice and initiatives, e.g. our approach with recruitment agencies, developing candidate packs.
10. Children's services are involved with the Local Government Association (LGA), pilot a 'return to social work' scheme, aimed at attracting social workers who have

not practised for between 2-8years, and who left the profession at a Senior Social Worker or Assistant Team Manager level. ASC have recently joined up to be part of this scheme.

11. As noted above there is scope to work together more closely on the attraction of social workers into the Council, e.g. in our engagement programs with schools and universities.

<b>Conclusion:</b>
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12. There has been progress on improving recruitment and retention across ASC and Children's Services. Both services have plans in place to continue to develop, monitor and improve recruitment and retention. However it has been noted that there is scope and benefit in having more joined up approaches, where the services have shared recruitment and retention challenges.

<b>Recommendations:</b>
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13. It is recommended that the Board:-

- a) Notes the work carried out to date on improving recruitment and retention in ASC and Children's Services.
- b) Supports the proposal to align and join up on initiatives where ASC and Children's Services have shared recruitment and retention challenges, notably, but not exclusive to, the recruitment of qualified social workers.
- c) Receive a further update in 12 months' time.

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