Recruitment, Retention and Culture Workforce Strategy for
Children's Social Workers

Workforce Strategy
2022 – 2025

Our approach to workforce planning

We:
- ✓ Looked at data through the 5 lenses – Affordability, EDI, Geography, Skills and Wellbeing
- ✓ Supported managers/leadership to think about their future services and workforce.
- ✓ Ensured that the strategy underpins the work undertaken by the Recruitment, Retention and Culture (RRC) Programme
- ✓ Agreed to approach strategic workforce planning as an ongoing activity and one in which we continually invest our time.

Directorate strategy

This document sets out the aims, outcomes and drivers for change for the directorate.

Workforce insight

We examined the makeup of our workforce . This helps us understand the key risks and opportunities we need to look at.

The national picture

We looked at what is happening around us that influences the demand for our services, and the wider impacts on our workforce. This took into account the Government agenda for Social Workers.

The strategy for our workforce

All this information enabled us to create the themes for our Recruitment, Retention and Culture strategy that are broadly linked to the RRC programme. This strategy will help us to shape what our SW workforce will be doing in the coming years, how we need to organise ourselves to deliver these services, and the skills, behaviours and resources we will need to achieve this.

TOGETHER, WE ARE LIVING OUR PURPOSE.

We root children and families in our hearts and minds because it is our purpose to ensure that every child is seen and heard, feels safe and can grow.

SURREY
COUNTY COUNCIL

TOGETHER, WE GROW

- We follow the Time 4 Kids principles: Connect, Trust, Hope, Belong, Believe
- We collaborate and value our partnerships.
- We support and empower our staff: We all matter, We are all learners, We are all rewarded, We care.
- We function at our best by effectively managing:
  - Performance and quality assurance
  - Finances

TOGETHER, WE FOCUS ON

- Improvement of our children's social care
- Transformation of services for children with additional needs
- Emotional wellbeing and mental health

OUR AMBITION

BRIGHTER FUTURES
We work with Educational settings from early years to Adult learning so people can lead the lives they want to lead. All of Surrey's children should be able to reach their full potential.

HEALTHY LIVES
We support families and enable children and young people to be healthy and make good choices about their wellbeing.

SAFE & RESILIENT
We ensure that Surrey's children and families have access to a range of services that keep them safe, tackle inequalities, support independence and enhance lives.

SURREY ROOTS
We aim for our services to be rooted in Surrey, from meeting additional needs to foster care to specialist services. Helping families early to ensure a child and family friendly Surrey.

Children, Families and Lifelong Learning 2022-23

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

[Time for Kids Surrey](#) is themed around five values / principles and they can provide a simple framework to guide our approach to our work for children, young people and families.

These principles are considered as part of the overall strategy when assessing the impact of our themes and workstream activities

Connect

Be crazy about the kid

We need to focus on building a human connection with a child. With patience and passion, we can help them achieve their very best.

Provide children with a consistent relationship with at least one adult that they trust

Many young people feel lost and don't believe they have anyone to turn to. We need to provide professionals and volunteers with the time and resources to provide stability for a child or young person and gain their trust.

Trust

Hope

Encourage children to tell their story and learn to hope

We should encourage young people to express themselves and tell their story. We need to listen, to believe and to help the young person to make the changes they need to develop hope for the future.

Give children a sense of belonging and encourage them to shine

We need to find ways to build on the individual strengths of each child, whatever they might be, and help them to find places where they belong and shine.

Belong

Believe in what they can achieve

We all need to believe in the child or young person and what they can achieve, and inspire them to believe in themselves.

Believe

Workforce insight – who are we?

Sickness Absence Rate is 8.53% per FTE – Sickness has increased from 6.60% in December 2020 . It is higher than the CFLL average of 5.05%

SW pay gap between perm and locums is high. Locums are paid up to £10 more per hour than permanent staff.

52% of SW **have an average tenure of 5 years+** and at least 28.33% of SW leavers have 4+ years service (at Nov 21). Around **26% of leavers** have **less than 2 years service and 15% less than 1 year** (31.07.22)

35% vacancy rate (29% in CFL) - vacancy rate here refers to unfilled posts (31.7.22)
- **Vacancy rate for SW - 30.77%**
- **Vacancy rate for SSW – 40.45%**
- **Vacancy rate for ASW - 43.85%**

30.70% Voluntary turnover* (16.38% CFLL) Aug 21 – July 22 (upward trend).
- **Voluntary Turnover for ASW** roles decreased from 38.30% to 30.19%
- **Voluntary Turnover for SSW** roles rose from 23.53% to 28.57%
- **Voluntary Turnover for SW** roles rose from 15.82% to 31.84%

86% of our SW workforce are **women** compared to 81.72% in CFL.

65% of the SW workforce (SW,SSW &ASW) are between the **ages of 30-49**

274 FTE permanent (423 FTE establishment)

This is the number of permanent SW we employ in our directorate (31.07.22).

14.70% of the SW workforce are from **Minority Ethnic Group (MEG).** CFLL workforce average (10.80%).

4% (2.93% CFLL) of the SW workforce have declared a **disability** and **1.84%** of the SW workforce are **LGBTQ+**

The 30-40s age group have the highest leavers as 57.33% of SW leavers are aged between 30 - 49 with just 25% of leavers aged 50+. (Nov 21 data)

Data reported in November 21 showed 13.33% of SW leavers as having a disability. This was compared to 9.70% of leavers in CFLL.

What does this mean for our future workforce?
- Consider whether we need to attract more men to balance the larger proportion of our female workforce
- We need to think about how we organise work to support the significant sector of our workforce who are female.
- We need to understand why and invest in retention for the parts of our SW workforce with higher turnover.
- We are spending a lot of money on our temporary workforce, we need to improve recruitment and retention in these areas to reduce our reliance and expenditure on agency workers.
- We need to focus on onboarding and support for NQSW and new starters
- We need to understand why 26% of our SW workforce leave with less that 2 years service.

*Benchmarking data taken from the Children's Social Work Workforce Census (2017 – 2022). y/e Data 09/21 Surrey is comparable to national rate for turnover but vacancy rate and agency use rate is higher than national and local comparators (SE)

Data sets used are taken from November 21 and July 22

The National Context

Increase in demand and funding needs

The Independent Review of Children's Social Care was announced in January 2021 and published on 23 May 2022
The report includes the following:

➤ The need to invest further in early help for children and families;
➤ better support for kinship carers ;
➤ having the right homes for children in care, as well as;
➤ ensuring better futures for those leaving care.

The recommendations within the report will require significant funding to deliver and reform services.

Recruitment and Retention

The report* also highlighted widespread issues with social workers' workloads, recruitment and retention. In its final report, issued in May the review recommended a new early career framework for social workers, with progression linked to pay, to enhance retention and improve skills.

A community care article states an estimated 2,785 full-time equivalent (FTE) posts were vacated in the year to September 2021 without the social workers concerned joining another council or taking up a locum role in an authority, found the Department for Education. This was up from 2,283 in the year to September 2020.

The number of council child and family social workers in England quitting children's services altogether rose by 22% last year, suggest government figures.

*The statistics, a deeper analysis of the DfE's annual workforce statistics, came as a report for the Independent Review of Children's Social

Reasons why Social Workers are likely to leave

Top 5 temptations to change jobs

2021	2018
1 Increased pay (51%)	1 Better work-life balance (56%)
2 Better work-life balance (49%)	2 Increased salary/renumeration (49%)
3 Better career opportunities (39%)	3 Less stress (39%)
4 New work challenges and experiences (31%)	4 Lower caseloads (33%)
5 For a more senior position (30%)	5 New work challenges and experiences (31%)

What does this mean for our future workforce?

▪ Our sector is growing which means demand for our services is going to increase.

▪ Recruitment and retention is a national challenge and we are competing in a limited labour market for our staff, this means we need to think creatively about how we shape our roles as well as our attraction and retention strategies.

What does this mean for our workforce?

These workforce planning themes have been developed through workforce conversations using the data taken from the 5 lenses model; the Recruitment, Retention and Culture Programme activities and; our understanding of the way the sector is changing.

It reflects what we believe is needed to create a sustainable environment in which our workforce can feel motivated and supported. We aim to have an increased permanent workforce with a reduced turnover rate by of at least 10% in 3 years.

Each theme is linked to a Recruitment Retention and Culture Programme (RRC) workstream and represented by a set of short, medium and long term outcomes which will be delivered through the programme.

To ensure these themes remain true to the direction of the Service, they will be monitored and reviewed through the programme initially and service level workforce planning sessions. Equality , diversity and Inclusion will be a feature in everything we do.

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Develop, grow and progress (Workstream 4 - Develop)

- We need to establish our own pipeline for our future workforce.
- We need new and creative approaches to address the SW shortages by looking at alternative approaches such as admin support, re-shaping roles such as ASWs and other roles taking on non statutory work etc.
- We need to enable our workforce to have access to self directed learning
- We need to induct and onboard our NQSW/new starters in a supportive and considered way
- We need to review and build career pathways to support growth and retention.
- We need to create links with Universities and academic environments
- We need to provide professional and cultural support to our international workforce

Employee Experience (Workstream 1 - Explore)

- We need to look at what appeals to our workforce and makes them want to stay with us.
- We need to understand why people are leaving and then report on it.
- We need to analyse and review any corporate, directorate or service related surveys that impact on our SW workforce and develop any actions
- We need to routinely benchmark against other LAs and the national sector on pay, reward and benefits to determine if our reward packages remain competitive.
- We will regularly monitor the effectiveness of our SW welcome and retention payments

Recruitment, Resourcing and benefits (Workstream - 2 Attract)

- We will create tools to provide accurate recruitment data that enables strategic decision making
- We will continue to use various channels and social media platforms for advertising roles.
- We will promote our benefits internally and externally.
- We will be creative and consider whether our benefits are competitive and attractive to the demographics of our workforce/external market e.g shift/ weekend working, reduced working week, key worker housing etc.
- We will review our interview and assessment processes to ensure they are inclusive and get the best out of people.
- Through our C2S relationship we will incentivise the temp to perm transfer

Data insights, talent and succession planning (Workstream 5 Succeed)

- We will use data and insight to monitor and manage our workforce and report on this regularly.
- We will review the demographics of our workforce and identify the trends to helps us understand the key risks and opportunities we need to look at
- We need to develop future leaders who embody our values
- We need to manage our talent and build succession plans for key areas.
- We will identify critical roles for succession planning
- We will create an automated resource planning tool that will enable better forward planning and awareness of future / expected vacancies.

Engagement , retention and inclusion/diversity (Workstream 3 – Engage and Retain)

- We need to ensure that we have a supportive culture that enables the retention of the workforce.
- We need to focus on employee wellbeing and creating a resilient workforce.
- We need to establish behaviours and values that embody the purpose of the workforce.
- We will ensure that there is an EDI lens in all that we do and where necessary work collaboratively with the directorate EDI group.
- We will engage with staff on the work undertaken by the RRC with the support of Communications.
- We need to support staff to ensure they feel safe to raise any non inclusive behaviours.

Recruitment, Retention & Culture - Short to Long Term Tasks & Impact

Programme Overview

	Short-Term (0-2 months)		Medium-Term (3-9 months)		Long-Term (10 months+)	
	Activity	**Impact**	**Activity**	**Impact**	**Activity**	**Impact**
Explore	• Analyse past three months of exit interviews - present findings to CFLL managers. • Issue more targeted exit interview communications. • Monitor completion rate.	• Increased awareness of exit interview process. Managers provided with exit survey data and recommendations. • Clear and deliverable action plans arising from exit survey data and recommendations.	• Agency/locum to perm session – inc follow-up activities by managers. • Begin planning of employee opinion survey.	• Raised awareness of benefits of moving to SCC terms and conditions. • Improved Exit Interview survey completion rates. • Reduced number of agency staff and increase in perm.	• Launch of employee opinion survey for social care staff – potentially to expand to all CFLL staff.	• Good understanding of employee's opinions about working for Surrey (strengths and weaknesses).
Attract	• Hold recruitment events including: CFLL/ASC Hiring Day, Temp-to-Perm Session, Open Evening, CC 'Live'. • Connect2Surrey Agency contract arrangements. • Video campaign for CWD/FST • Launch Total Reward stmts	• Increase profile on social media – targeted campaigns. • Higher agency submissions via Connect 2 Surrey. • Team workforce planning. • Increased applications to SCC. • Strengthened interview process	• Develop social media recruitment framework. • Improve understanding of push/pull factors for locums. • Review performance of the Community Care contract	• Consistency across our social media and comms channels – in line with our new branding • Retain locums and improve out reputational status for these employees. • Increase number of locum CV submissions.	• Increase diversity to all roles – understand reasons for leaving, promotion opportunities.etc • Review performance of the Connect2Surrey contract. • Locum to perm conversions	• A more diverse social care workforce. • Reduce locum numbers (with more permanent staff) improving consistency of practice and reducing spend.
Engage & Retain	• Workshops and analysis of strong retention 'pull' factors for social work staff. • Gain further insight into workplace culture. • Analyse Stay Interview findings.	• SW's feel trusted, valued, belonging and hopeful when working for SCC • Surrey's children are cared for by passionate and happy social workers.	• All teams develop culture & wellbeing statements/plans. • Review Advanced Social Worker role and remit. • Paid sabbatical proposal. • Annual leave proposal. • Wellbeing days proposal.	• Teams have a mindful, kind culture / approach– which can be shared with families • Clearly defined ASW role. • SCC is more competitive in the recruitment market. • Staff feel supported & valued.	• 2nd round of Stay Interviews and analysis. • Staff induction review. • Revise approach to social worker performance conversations. • Support for office working.	• Greater understanding of the positives of working in SCC and ideas to improve retention. • More purposeful and valued performance convos • Clear guidance for staff.
Develop	• Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) Programme intake. • Launch newly developed Social Work Mentoring Scheme. • Review and launch SW Apprenticeship scheme.	• Fill large proportion of vacancies in teams with permanent staff. • Better equip workers for progression and development. • Opportunities for non-qualified practitioners.	• Onboarding App, Induction sessions and manager guidance. • Create Social Work/ TM Journey Training Brochure. • Service specific induction pack.	• New starters will experience a consistent and comprehensive onboarding and induction process which will play a key part in improving long term staff retention.	• Review Performance Conversations and how Motivational Interviewing could be incorporated to improve effectiveness. • Review Social Work Progression Pathway	• Performance Conversations support development and highly valued. • Improved retention supported by providing opportunities for staff to progress into new roles.
Succeed	• Workforce Strategy for social workers – review 5 lenses. • Develop insight & intelligence and EDI data. • Succession Planning / Personal Growth	• Strategic approach to workforce and the delivery of services to children, young people and families. • Effectively reporting on workforce data. • Maximise opportunities for staff to grow their careers.	• Create a Succession plan template and process – test and engage through WS4. • Ensure dashboards for SW workforce adjusted to reflect service req'ts. • Agree service data leads.	• Support strategic readiness through early identification and development of future capabilities, skills, quals needed in key roles • Enable a pipelines for future social work needs. • Data used to identify retention and diversity issues.	• Update & communicate Workforce Plan. • Review and refine workforce strategy. • Embed succession planning • Leadership & management development.	• Vision and strategy start to embed • Turnover starting to decrease. • Locums start to reduce and convert to permanent roles • Level of internal progression starting to increase. • Data used to drive decisions.