

Education and Children's Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Date of meeting:	15 February 2023
Title of Report:	Recruitment and Retention Update
Lead Member:	Councillor Charlotte Carlyle (Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Children and Young People)
Lead Strategic Director:	Sharon Muldoon (Director for Childrens Services)
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Your Reference:	Click here to enter text.
Key Decision:	No
Confidentiality:	Part I - Official

Purpose of Report

This report provides an update following the report for the E & CSC Overview and Scrutiny Committee in September 2022 on the recruitment and retention position for CYPFS

Background

Qualified social workers remain hard to attract and retain in the continued context of national shortage. In CYPFS this pressure is predominantly seen in the Children's Social Work service.

In September 2022, the committee heard the headline findings of the national Independent Review of Children's Social Care (2022) with regard to 'Realising the potential of the workforce' and the local findings of our recruitment and retention review, undertaken in collaboration with staff.

The presentation outlined the local, regional, national and professional context and pressures and described the 5 priorities set out in the draft Recruitment and Retention Strategy; which will be agreed by 1 March 2023

- Priority 1 Create the right climate and conditions for a thriving workforce (IRCSC3)
- Priority 2 Realise an inclusive culture (IRCSC3)
- Priority 3 Create an enhanced career pathway and development offer that remains attractive to staff as their careers and lives develop (IRCSC1 and 4, 5, 6)
- Priority 4 Establish a competitive and intentional approach to recruitment and Retention (IRCSC2)
- Priority 5 Ensure sustained focus, investment and accountability

Update against Priorities

Priority 1 Create the right climate and conditions for a thriving workforce (IRCSC3)

In order to ensure our workforce operate within the right climate and conditions for practice to thrive, we have a whole-system focus on ensuring we provide the right services for families at the right time. Since September, we have strengthened our Front Door responses including the establishment of an Early Help pre-book line. We have invested in the training and development of our team managers and created an additional team management post and an improvement manager post to support consistent and high quality decision-making. These measures will support progress towards manageable workloads.

In addition, we are working to ensure that the right roles and resources are in place to enable qualified social workers to focus on work with families. A new role of Assistant social worker is being explored and will ensure that this is affordable and aligned with the target operating model. This will potentially create a new pathway to 'grow your own' approach to recruitment of social workers through an expanded in-house traineeship.

Like other local authorities – the council is experiencing challenges recruiting to social worker and team manager roles. We are developing a retention incentive in response to regional and market pressures. The system will have to be fair and equitable with set criteria. We will have to ensure that this affordable and costed and demonstrates return on investment in the longer term.

Our overseas recruitment drive has successfully recruited 16 qualified and experienced social workers, nine of whom will join us in March. We will have a robust induction and on boarding process to support the new recruits. We will review the campaign to ensure the deliverables/outcomes have been achieved,

Priority 2 Realise an inclusive culture (IRCSC3)

As a modern and progressive service, we understand the importance of continuing to build an inclusive culture through increased engagement, involvement and recognition of the skills, knowledge, talent and contributions of the workforce.

We have taken a collaborative approach to improving our services through the establishment of 'Leaders in Practice' groups, the first of which took place in January 2023. At this session there was representation from across the service to be part of the improvement journey. There were several elements considered such as best practice, how to contribute to change, and leading innovation. The group meets with the Senior Management Team on a monthly basis beginning with the review of the Improvement Plan and Ofsted outcomes.

Priority 3 Create an enhanced career pathway and development offer that remains attractive to staff as their careers and lives develop (IRCSC1 and 4, 5, 6)

We are building on the strong foundations of the Professional Development service to ensure that everyone is able to pursue the right career opportunities for them.

In particular we are:

- Expanding the scope and role of the existing Academy beyond social work students and those on their assessed and supported year in employment to create a wider system offer; enhance training and career development pathways and opportunities at all levels.
- Reviewing and re-setting our curricula to ensure it responds to the key messages from quality assurance and inspection, links more closely to career progression, and the establishment of new recruitment pipelines.
- Implementing an early career framework. Early career retention is one of the biggest challenges that we face and it is where we can have the greatest strategic impact by allocating resource, effort to improve current retention levels.

Priority 4 Establish a competitive and intentional approach to recruitment and retention (IRCSC2)

We are currently reviewing our recruitment resource as part of our Target Operating Model (TOM) work to ensure we have the right people with right skills to meet the wider contextual and complex challenges in the sector. We will be developing a modern digital approach to recruitment including social media campaigns and activities and interactive microsite.

We will consider other incentives such as:

- The payment of the social work professional registration fee
- The establishment of a 'refer a friend' scheme and a returnee scheme

Priority 5 Ensure sustained focus, investment and accountability

We have begun to make tangible progress in our work in this space but recognise that more is needed and that the approach and impact must result in change.

The impact of this will be evident through progress against key performance measures within a new retention scorecard, including;

- Reduction in vacancy rate in CSW
- Reduction in agency spend in CSW
- Improvement in single assessment timeliness
- Average caseload reductions
- Percentage of audits meeting good
- Improving staff satisfaction levels.

Recommendations and Reasons.

The Committee is asked to note the contents of this report.

Alternative options considered and rejected

The changes contained in this briefing need to take place in order to improve services to children, young people and families.

Relevance to the Corporate Plan and/or the Plymouth Plan

Caring for people and communities and our work to support Children and Families to feel safe in the city

Implications for the Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications:

Covered within budget provision.

Financial Risks

N/A

Carbon Footprint (Environmental) Implications:

It is the responsibility of all senior officers to ensure we develop and deliver our plans for both ensuring the Council is carbon neutral by 2030 and leading the City in carbon reduction. Digital will be a significant contributor to enable the Council and City to work, connect and behave differently in the future. Minimum use of printing and paper as emails, virtual meetings and other media will be utilised where possible in the delivery of services.

Other Implications: e.g. Health and Safety, Risk Management, Child Poverty:

** When considering these proposals members have a responsibility to ensure they give due regard to the Council's duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote good relations between people who share protected characteristics under the Equalities Act and those who do not.*

The health safety and wellbeing of the workforce is kept under review using the current governance processes we have in place.

Appendices

**Add rows as required to box below*

Ref.	Title of Appendix	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable) <i>If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.</i>						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Background papers:

**Add rows as required to box below*

Please list all unpublished, background papers relevant to the decision in the table below. Background papers are unpublished works, relied on to a material extent in preparing the report, which disclose facts or matters on which the report or an important part of the work is based.

Title of any background paper(s)	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable) <i>If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.</i>

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Sign off:

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Originating Senior Leadership Team member: Jane Anstis, Service Director for Children, Young People and Families											
Please confirm the Strategic Director(s) has agreed the report? Yes Date agreed: 13/02/2023											
Cabinet Member approval: Councillor Carlyle, Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Children and Young People Date approved: 14/02/2023											