



# **WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL**

## **Appendix A**

Title:	Children's Social Care Workforce Recruitment & Retention Strategy 2014-19
Ofsted Annex A Number:	1.05a – Appendix A
Date:	18 July 2014
Version:	V1
Author:	Brian Grady Head of Strategic Commissioning
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Summary:	This strategy describes the national and local challenges in recruiting and retaining the best workforce for Childrens Social Care and sets out the priorities and actions designed to address them.

## **1. National challenge**

The national challenge of recruiting and retaining a children's social workforce is well documented. Loughborough University's Centre for Child and Family Research (CCFR) has highlighted the challenges and pressures faced by local authorities due to the increasingly complex and demanding nature of child protection work in a time of austerity, where finances and budgets are tight, and due to the profession's public image and portrayal by the media. They identified recruitment and retention of staff as a key challenge (Holmes, Munro and Soper, 2011). The Institute of Public Policy Research in their research briefing for the Government's 2014 Frontline initiative identify rising demand, high vacancy rates and reliance on agency staff and low status of the profession as key challenges (MacAlister, Crehan and Olsen, 2013).

There is a broad consensus within the national and international literature about what makes for effective recruitment and retention practices in social care. These combine a mix of personal and organisational factors. Personal factors typically include professional commitment to children and families, previous work experience, education, job satisfaction, efficacy, emotional exhaustion and role overload. Organisational factors routinely involve better salary, supervisory support, reasonable workloads, co-worker and supervisory support, opportunities for advancement including professional resources and organisational commitment and valuing employees (DePanfilis \* Zlotnik 2008).

The literature concerned with promotion of retention indicates that workers first of all need to feel committed to the agency, value face-to-face contact with service users, have formed an attachment to their supervisors and have a positive perception about job conditions in order to promote their retention. The overwhelming finding from these studies is that supervisory and peer supports are key to improved stability. Conversely, inadequate pay, difficult working conditions, lack of recognition, chronic stress, overwork and other negative job characteristics will all contribute to continuing difficulties in child welfare worker retention. While low turnover is not always indicative of a healthy organisation the underlying assumption of much research is that high levels of turnover are related to poorer outcomes for families and children. Research points to a lack of stability and loss of trust in situations of turnover and that in general users have negative perceptions of losing a case- or key worker. There is also some local evidence to suggest that turnover is a contributory factor to drift and delay in permanency planning for children in the Looked after system.

Recent research by TMP Worldwide for Community Care (2014) indicates that Local Authorities need to develop more flexible pay and reward packages for social workers in order to compete for staff in the current job market. The report recommends that employers should be more creative in the way they design their rewards packages.

## **2. Local Challenge**

The national challenge is felt keenly at a local level. Despite a relatively attractive starting salary for newly qualified and main grade staff, with local factors affecting recruitment and retention including

- High house prices and high cost of living in the South East
- Changing demands on the workplace including greater choice and flexibility in working arrangements.
- An oversupply of newly qualified social workers combined with a national reduction in experienced qualified social workers
- A highly competitive regional labour market

- The impact of London salaries on local recruitment

The recruitment and retention of more experienced children's social workers has been challenging for some years and is now at a critical stage. Here the Wokingham offer appears to be significantly below the average for our regional comparators

Table 1 Comparator group salary range.

	Social Worker		Senior SW		Assistant TM	
	Min	Max	Min	Max	Min	Max
Wokingham	28167	34894	30311	37578	34894	39351
Comparator	27281	34910	33738	38866	39198	42601
+/-	<b>886</b>	<b>(16)</b>	<b>(3427)</b>	<b>(1288)</b>	<b>(4304)</b>	<b>(3250)</b>

Source: WBC Benchmarking

Table 2 outlines the current position by overall establishment and the proportion of this for each primary category. It identifies a continued number of agency staff covering roles and a reduced but still high vacancy rate

Table 2 Vacancy rates

<b>CS establishment by category</b>	Number	FTE
Establishment CS Social Workers	61	54.6
Permanent CS Social Workers	36	32.6
Vacant posts	25	20.0
Vacant posts covered by agency staff	16	15.0
Vacancy rate <sup>1</sup>	41%	37%

Source: WBC WISE 2/6/14

This data confirms a continuing and high reliance upon agency social work staff and represents a critical financial pressure and risk to the Council. Table 3 sets out the yearly and average salary cost (so excluding expenditure incurred on induction and training for example) of agency staff for Children's Social Care for the last three years.

Table 3 Agency spend

	£ 000's
11-12	1,267
12-13	1,839
13-14	1,481
Average	1,529

Source: WBC May 2014

Wokingham, along with many other local authorities have continued to experience a significant turnover of frontline staff, directly employed and agency frontline staff. Figures for the past two years, set out in Table 4 indicate that despite some variability, rates of staff turnover have remained high.

Table 4 Turnover rates

2012/13	%	No. of employee leavers in	Average no. of employees

<sup>1</sup> Calculated as the % number of vacant posts/fte of total establishment posts/fte

		rolling 12 month period	
Q1	33%	14	43
Q2	32%	13	41
Q3	33%	14	42
Q4	34%	13	38
<b>2013/14</b>			
Q1	27%	12	44
Q2	24%	8	33
Q3	27%	9	33
Q4	30%	14	46

Source: WISE / CSC Quarterly Staffing Reports WBC May 2014

Table 5 shows that of the 90 Children's Services staff who have attended the Induction Programme since May 2012, only 43 are still employed.

Table 5 Number of leavers

Detail	6/2012 – 5/2013	6/2013 – 5/2014	TOTAL
Numbers of Children's Services Staff who had fully attended an induction classroom event	46	44	90
Numbers of <b>current</b> Social Care & Intervention Staff included in above figures	12	22	43

Source: WBC May 2014

Children's Social Care have taken a number of steps to anticipate and mitigate wherever possible the continuing challenge from recruitment and retention activity. These include:

- ensuring caseloads are not higher than neighbouring authorities
- reviewed how we support social workers in their work
- promoting a strong leadership culture where senior leadership is visible through team visits, reviewing cases and staff forums
- improved processes supporting staff feedback and responded in practical terms to staff concerns
- reviewed and increased where necessary market supplements to respond to acute market pressures

Whilst these measures have contained turnover and the reliance on expensive agency staff they have not substantially improved the position relative to our neighbouring authorities and specific and significant actions are now required.

### 3. Recommendations for change

As set out above, we have established a number of actions within policy and financial constraints already to address recruitment and retention in line with national best practice and research recommendations.

Further actions set out our ambition for Wokingham Borough Council to look and feel as the most positive social work environment to come to and to stay in:

- **A new model of social work career progression**
- **Improved salary and retention incentives**
- **A refreshed Business Support for Social Workers**
- **Additional Flexible Working Arrangements**
- **Annual Leave and Additional Payments**
- **Development of ground-breaking service delivery models**

### **3.1 A new model for Social Work career progression**

The Career Progression Scheme will provide clarity for social workers to support their progression from Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) on the Professional Capability Framework (PCF) to Advanced Practitioner.

Capability profiles have been developed by The College of Social Work for each social work role which will be used in conjunction with the Continuous Professional Development (CPD) portfolios that all members of staff registered with the Health and Care Professionals Council (HCPC) need to submit for renewal of their registration. Professional development is evidence based and rigorously tested of capability against clear standards.

### **3.2 Improved salary and retention incentives**

In accordance with the national research cited, it is proposed that we tie in salary and a retention bonus scheme with the new progression pathway.

Table 6 sets out the proposed salary and retention bonuses for each of the social work roles incorporated within the capability framework

Table 6

	Role and capability	Salary	Incentives
Proposed	Social Worker ASYE (1)	£32, 072	Inclusive Market Supplement
	Social Worker (2)	£34, 894	Plus Retention Bonus £1, 000 + 1 days A/L
	Social Worker (3)	£37, 578	Plus Retention Bonus £2, 000 + 2 days A/L
	Senior Social Worker (3)	£37, 578	Plus Retention Bonus £3, 000 + 4 days A/L
	Advanced Practitioner/ Consultant Practitioner (4)	£42, 934	Plus Retention Bonus £3, 000 + 5 days A/L

costings of the retention bonus scheme reflect the progression of staff through the scheme. Progression has been based on a tapered scale reflecting the indicative profile of successful achievement of bonus criteria. The profile of successful candidates reflects a sliding scale from 90% of staff achieving level 1 after the first year. Not all staff, however, will progress further with success rates reducing as they progress through the scales. At the same time, the likelihood of staff moving diminishes as they become more established within a longer-term role. Retained staff attract no further retention bonus

### 3.3 A refreshed Business Support for Social Workers

- **Additional Flexible Working Arrangements**
- **Annual Leave and Additional Payments**
- **Development of ground-breaking service delivery models**

## 4. Business Case for Change

The business case for change lies predominantly with the national evidence indicating the changes recommended. There is also a strong financial business case for the changes as set out below

Whilst savings delivered in the first full year of implementation (2015-16) are relatively low £25k (1%); savings grow to £388k (15%) by year 4 2018/19. Such significant savings are delivered through the new model with considerably less reliance upon high cost agency staff, alongside a more efficient & experienced service. By 2018/19 these improvements enable FTE numbers to reduce by 9 posts, which equates to a cost reduction of £423k.

Significant savings will be achieved through a reduction in routine and widespread use of agency staff. Agency staff incurs an average cost premium of 40% compared to permanent staffing.

The proposed changes will also see an increase in the quality of the Social Care Workforce. It is envisaged that as the quality and skills of the workforce increase, we will be able to reduce the number of Social worker posts

Table 7 sets out the financial implications of each element of the implementation

	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19
<b>Current costs</b>	<b>1,508</b>	<b>-3,016</b>	<b>-3,016</b>	<b>3,016</b>	<b>-3,016</b>
New Pay scales	22	43	43	43	43
Recruitment Relocation Packages	20	40	0	0	0
Buy back of annual leave & overtime payments	22	45	90	90	90
Cars	5	10	10	10	10
Job sharing 10 x job shares	24	47	47	47	47
University Trainer Opportunity	0	0	0	0	0
Baseline staffing	1,365	2,731	2,731	2,731	2,731
Transition to Senior SW weighting 40:60 ratio	0	55	55	55	55
Retention payments	0	19	56	56	19

Agency Workers during transition	71	143	57	57	57
Workforce Reduction	-24	-141	-235	-329	-423
	1,504	2,991	2,853	2,759	2,628
<b>Net Cash reduction £k</b>	<b>-4</b>	<b>-25</b>	<b>-163</b>	<b>-257</b>	<b>-388</b>
<b>% Savings</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>15%</b>
<b>Cumulative FTE Reduction</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>9</b>

## 5. Benefits and Risks

The proposed policy changes are based on a clear business case for change which will achieve savings long term for the Council. However there are non-cashable and qualitative benefits to support the recommendations as well as risks if we do not proceed as recommended.

Non-cashable “soft” savings that the new strategy will deliver include:

- Improved service continuity to the most vulnerable groups of children
- Better outcomes for children
- Increased staff morale & goodwill
- Reduced duplication of effort
- Reduced costs in servicing recruitment activity
- Reduced financial processing costs e.g. fewer new starter forms, updating WISE.
- Reduced induction programme costs
- Reduced new starter on the job training including Fwi
- Reduced staffing set-up costs including IT, security passes, employee monitoring
- Reduced loss of investment in CSC training & workshops
- Reduced loss of service knowledge and functioning
- Reduced rates of sickness absence

Risks of not undertaking the proposed changes have been identified as follows:

1. **Reputational risk to the Council.** The Ofsted inspection of children’s services in 2012 made specific reference to the difficulties in recruiting and retaining staff in Wokingham. The overall position has not substantially improved since then. There is also evidence that poor inspection results simply augment recruitment problems and lead directly to increasing use of interim staff and enhanced costs.

2. The **current spend** committed to agency and non-permanent staff at around 20% of total establishment does not represent good value for money. As indicated above at insert the average annual commitment of £1.5m represents a continuing financial pressure and risk to the Council. These costs exclude the induction, training and recruitment activity associated with high levels of turnover.

3. The **turnover rates continue to exceed and remain well above Council targets.** They are likely to have a negative impact on outcomes for children and families for a number of reasons. Risk associated with turnover and the ‘Start Again Syndrome’ is well established particularly for those children who experience chronic neglect. Recent audit findings have established that some children have experienced more than ten changes of social worker in a year and in one case fourteen changes. As indicated above at insert excessive turnover

has been a feature in contributing to drift and delay in permanency planning for the most vulnerable cohort of all i.e. looked after children. Any of these scenarios could form the basis to future litigation by a child, young person or their carer.

4. The continuing level of vacancies is likely to act as a **constraint on Children's Social Care realising its ambitions for Early Intervention** as a key component to its business strategy. This is not primarily because main-grade social work staff will be significantly involved in early intervention work. Rather, significantly reduced vacancy levels will allow the Directorate to signal, model and manage a change in emphasis and behaviour to its key partners.



# WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

Title:	Wokingham Borough Council Children's Social Care Recruitment & Retention PLAN 2014-17
Ofsted Annex A Number:	1.05a – Appendix B
Date:	3 October 2014
Version:	1.1
Author:	Sarah Swindley & Geoff Munday HR Business Partners
Review date:	The impact of the strategy will be reviewed quarterly.
Summary:	This describes the measures that will be introduced to stimulate interest from social workers and retain those working directly for WBC.

## Introduction.

WBC's Children's Social Care are committed to recruiting , developing and retaining a professionally qualified, highly skilled, motivated, diverse, stable and integrated workforce, directly employed as far as possible, in order to provide high quality and consistent services to children and families in need.

This plan is based on careful consideration of:

- feedback from young people and families with whom we work
- feedback from staff
- comparison with competitors in the market
- the need now to be distinctive and innovative
- best practice guidance from reputable publications

The aim of the plan is to generate an innovative offer to stimulate interest from social workers and retain those working directly for WBC, helping to retain vital skills and experience.

We want to create a culture and environment where:

- Potential applicants choose to apply to work for us, attracted by our innovative pay and reward offer and reputation for staff development, staff engagement, inspiring leadership including timely praise and recognition and “high challenge, high support”
- Staff want to remain and grow with us because they are engaged in service delivery and service development and are led and developed , with clear career pathways, to adapt well to changing service needs, service innovation and continuous improvement

## Where we are and where we want to be.

### Social Work staffing

	30 Sept 2014	30 Sept 2015	30 Sept 2016	30 Sept 2017
<b>Staff turnover</b>	20%	18%	17%	16%
<b>Employed staff</b>	69%	71%	73%	75%
<b>Agency staff</b>	22%	19%	17%	15%
<b>Vacant roles</b>	9%	10%	10%	10%

## How we will get there.

### Phase 1 (September 2014 - August 2016)

- a) We will build upon the Professional Capability Framework model devised by the College of Social Work and from this we will build career framework competencies for each role from ASYE to Team Leader/Advanced Practitioner.
- b) Improved pay rates from 01.11.14 with competence thresholds for progression within Social Worker levels linked to panel assessment against the Professional Capabilities Framework (the PCF).
- c) Pilot Bonus Scheme - to increase retention of skilled staff
- d) Pilot scheme to replace flexi-time with additional leave - to more straightforwardly compensate for the vital flexibility to work longer hours to meet service needs, thereby improving life/work balance
- e) Pilot employee referral scheme- to increase the number of quality external applicants by encouraging staff to refer people to apply to work for us
- f) Improved recruitment marketing : new job descriptions, improved website, microsite

- g) Growing our own social workers more effectively : maximise use of Student Practice Placements, ASYE programme, Step Up to Social Work Programme - see Training Strategy
- h) Enhance staff development opportunities, including management and leadership development, mentoring and coaching - see Training Strategy
- i) Increase time spent with clients by introducing business support capacity to free up social worker time
- j) Raise profile of WBC Children's Social Care e.g. via Innovations Project

**Phase 2 (September 2016 - August 2017)**

- a) Extend / adapt pilot schemes (in light of analysis of impact)
- b) Review need for enhanced support for car use (e.g. pool cars, car loans)
- c) Consider case for community interest company to supply agency workers more cost effectively

**How we will know whether we're getting there.**

We will review the impact on recruitment and retention quarterly via existing Staffing Analysis reports and fine tune / adapt interventions as necessary in the light of experience and the ever changing external market place. The analysis includes why people leave.

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