

# Agenda Item 33.

<b>TITLE</b>	<b>Recruitment &amp; Retention of Social Workers</b>
<b>FOR CONSIDERATION BY</b>	Personnel Board on 1 February 2017
<b>WARD</b>	None Specific
<b>DIRECTOR</b>	Judith Ramsden, Director of People Services

**OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY**

Building a stable children’s social care workforce that enables better outcomes for the children and families that they work with.

**RECOMMENDATION**

That Personnel Board

- 1) note the ongoing work with regard to the development of an enhanced reward package for children’s Social Workers.
- 2) note how the Council is taking forward the Children’s Social Work Recruitment and Retention Strategy as set out in the Part 2 sheet of the report.

**SUMMARY OF REPORT**

The Children’s Social Care Recruitment & Retention Strategy and Plan 2014-2019 (See Appendix 1) laid out the vision of creating a culture & 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

Phase 1 of this Recruitment & Retention Strategy commenced in October 2014 and included a pilot bonus & leave scheme (See Appendix 2). These had been in place a year when we received an Ofsted inspection that recognised that “A robust workforce strategy has begun to reduce a previously heavy reliance on agency workers”.

Table 1 shows the target make-up of the workforce as described in the Recruitment & Retention Strategy and compares it to what has been achieved.

**Table 1 – Make up of Social Care Workforce**

	Actual 30 Sept 2014	Target 30 Sept 2015	Actual 30 Sept 2015	Target 30 Sept 2016	Actual 30 Sept 2016	Target 30 Sept 2017
<b>Staff turnover</b>	20%	18%	14.34%	17%	22.64%	16%

<b>*Employed staff</b>	69%	71%	68%	73%	73.5%	75%
<b>Agency staff</b>	22%	19%	17%	17%	7%	15%
<b>Vacant roles</b>	9%	10%	15%	10%	15%	10%

In summary, our vacancy rate has remained higher than the target while we have been more successful than anticipated in securing permanent employees, keeping turnover roughly within target and reducing our reliance on Agency staff.

For a number of years, there has been a national shortage of experienced social workers which means that WBC, like a number of authorities, struggles to recruit this level of permanent social workers. This is exacerbated by the geography of Wokingham competing within the South East and being situated amongst a number of other boroughs meaning that staff can move between authorities with relative ease.

*a) Pilot Bonus Scheme - to increase retention of skilled staff*

As can be evidenced from our percentage of permanent staff and generally meeting our turnover targets, this pilot scheme has been well received.

*b) 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*

Further conversations with our existing workforce are being undertaken to identify which is more attractive, additional leave or flexible working. The outcome of these conversations may result in a proposal to make changes.

Proposals on how we take this forward are going to be subject to further consultation and are set out in Part 2.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION**

***The Council faces severe financial challenges over the coming years as a result of the austerity measures implemented by the Government and subsequent reductions to public sector funding. It is estimated that Wokingham Borough Council will be required to make budget reductions in excess of £20m over the next three years and all Executive decisions should be made in this context.***

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	Nil	Yes	
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	Nil	Yes	
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	£11,250	Yes	Revenue

### **Reasons for considering the report in Part 2**

Confidential information that has not yet been made available to employees is included

as a Part 2 sheet to the report

**List of Background Papers**

Appendix 1: Children's Social Care Recruitment & Retention Strategy and Plan  
Appendix 2: Pilot Bonus & Leave Scheme

<b>Contact</b> Sarah Swindley	<b>Service</b> Finance and Resources
<b>Telephone No</b> 0118 961 9743	<b>Email</b> <a href="mailto:sarah.swindley@wokingham.gov.uk">sarah.swindley@wokingham.gov.uk</a>
<b>Date</b> 13 January 2017	<b>Version No.</b> 1

This page is intentionally left blank