

<b>TITLE</b>	<b>Retention and Recruitment update, Children's Social Care Workforce</b>
<b>FOR CONSIDERATION BY</b>	Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 23 January 2018
<b>WARD</b>	(All Wards);
<b>DIRECTOR</b>	Interim Director of People Services - Paul Senior

## **OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY**

Children's Services and Wokingham Borough Council are required to provide regular oversight and action to improve and maintain staff recruitment and retention. There is also a need to ensure robust workforce development and succession planning.

A permanent workforce provides better quality and more consistent services for children and their families.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

For overview and scrutiny to note the report as an update to the more detailed report on recruitment and retention provided to Overview and Scrutiny in September 2017.

## **SUMMARY OF REPORT**

This report contains the data provided as a statutory return to the Department for Education in November 2017. It reflects the current staffing and turnover rate for Wokingham Borough Council Children's Social Care as per certain statutory formulas.

In considering the data, there is a need to be mindful of both the small size of the authority and the small size of the workforce. These features can distort the statistical data. Overall, the picture has been one of improvement with all senior staff to team manager level now being permanent members of staff.

The recruitment and retention of staff remains an area of constant focus by senior leaders. The changes to the tax system known as IR35 has limited the supply of experienced agency staff, but has not lead to agency staff wishing to become permanent social work employees.

Further social work employment campaigns took place in December 2017 and interviews for vacancies across teams are planned in January 2018.

A review of the Retention and Recruitment policy is not currently required, however following changes brought to structures by the 21<sup>st</sup> Century project, Children's Services will look to review the strategy in the Summer of 2018.

## Background

### Overview and Scrutiny: Statutory Return Briefing

<b>Return Name:</b>	Children and Family Social Work Workforce Data Collection
<b>Due Date:</b>	30 <sup>th</sup> November 2017
<b>Government Department:</b>	Department for Education
<b>Compulsory (Yes/No):</b>	Yes
<b>Background Information:</b>	<p>The Children and Family Social Work Workforce Data Collection is a mandatory return focusing on the period 01/10/2016 to 30/09/2017. It collects both aggregated data and worker level data, and is concerned with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• all child and family social workers in the local authority at 30 September 2017;</li> <li>• agency workers working in a child and family role in the local authority who are in post as at 30 September 2017;</li> <li>• Children and family social workers who have left their role during the year ending 30 September 2017, including those that are seconded out of the authority.</li> </ul> <p>For the purposes of this return, the definition of a child and family social worker is as follows:</p> <p><i>“A social worker who is registered with HCPC, working in a local authority in a children’s services department or (if working in an authority where the services are joined up) a social worker that works primarily on children and families work.”</i></p> <p>The Director of Children’s Services is not included in the scope of the return.</p>
<b>Publication Details:</b>	Aggregated, local authority level data is published on the Department for Education website, usually in the February following the submission deadline.
<b>Approved By:</b>	PSLT approval
<b>Appendices:</b>	None

## Points to Note:

1. The number of social workers (excluding agency staff) on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2017 was 62, with a collective full-time equivalent (FTE) rate of 56.70.

Case holders accounted for an FTE of 31.9, with the rest made up of first line managers (6.5 FTE), Middle Managers (3.0 FTE), Senior Practitioners (11.7 FTE) and Senior Managers (3.6 FTE)

2. There were 5 new starters within the period, accounting for an FTE of 4.6. In the same period, there were 11 leavers, accounting for an FTE of 10.4.
3. The turnover rate - based on 11 leavers and a workforce of 62 social workers - is 17.74. In 2016, we reported a turnover rate of 26.5, so this represents a significant improvement against this measure. The published national turnover rate for 2016 was 15.1, so WBC remains slightly higher than average.
4. The FTE of agency staff on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2017 was 16.00 (headcount of 18). This is slightly higher than last year when we reported an FTE for agency staff of 13.7. Two agency staff are not covering vacancies but are assisting with additional workload, given the higher number of recently recruited, newly qualified social work staff. Those newly qualified staff are limited on the range of work they can hold and so additional staff are employed to hold complex work.

This gives us an agency worker rate of 22.5, which again is higher than last year's figure of 19.2. It is also significantly higher than last year's national figure of 16.1.

5. There were 14 FTE vacancies on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2017, 14.0 FTE of which were filled by agency staff.

The calculated vacancy rate based on the above is therefore 18.4, which is significantly lower than last year's figure of 26.0 but slightly higher than the published national figure for last year - 16.7.

6. The number of FTE days missed due to sickness absence in the year up to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2017 was 491.6. This gives us an absence rate of 3.43, which shows a local deterioration in this measure from last year's figure of 2.5, but still compares favourably to last year's published national figure of 3.5. The rate is impacted by some staff having serious and longer-term illness as is not indicative of workplace issues.
7. Frontline social workers and agency staff held 517 cases on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2017. This gives us an average caseload of 10.8, which is below last year's figure of 13.7, and significantly below last year's published national figure of 16.1.

The calculation method for this measure includes all agency staff as potential case holders, so this figure is likely to under-represent the real average

caseload where agency staff do not hold cases and are instead working in management roles.

The average caseload does not represent team variations according to the work that each team does. Senior managers monitor caseload data on a regular basis and benchmark against other local authorities and guidance from the Department for Education and Ofsted. A guideline of 18-22 cases/ children per social worker is thought to be appropriate. There can of course be variations on this range for specific reasons.

## 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)			
Next Financial Year (Year 2)			
Following Financial Year (Year 3)			

<b>Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision</b>

<b>Cross-Council Implications</b> (how does this decision impact on other Council services, including properties and priorities?)

<b>Reasons for considering the report in Part 2</b>

<b>List of Background Papers</b>

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