



Review of Recruitment and Retention of Social Workers – Recommendations from the C&E Select Committee Rapid Review Group

Chairman – Cllr Mark Dormer

Response from Cabinet

Recommendation(s) for Child Assessment and Child Protection Teams - Part a) <u>Relating to Recruitment</u>	Cabinet's Response – Y/N & comments	Lead Member/Officer & Timelines
1. Overhaul of the approach, understanding and procedures of HR for recruitment	Yes - our HR Service is currently subject to a Service Review as part of our delivering of Better Buckinghamshire Programme. All of the findings and recommendations from the 'Review of Recruitment and Retention of Social Workers' relating to HR functions will be considered as part of the whole service review.	John Chilver/Sarah Murphy-Brookman Service Review will complete by March 2023
2. Introduction of new strategy to promote the benefits and advantages of working at Buckinghamshire	Yes – this work is in progress. We are developing an Employee Value Proposition that will set out the benefits we offer employees in the broadest sense.	John Chilver/Sarah Murphy-Brookman September 2022
3. Consideration of the introduction of an additional payment for permanent staff to be paid 1/3 rd after Year 1 and 2/3 rd after Year 2, with costs offset by fewer agency staff	In part– we have benchmarked our salary packages with other local authorities and it is clear that Buckinghamshire Council currently has a competitive financial package for social workers. In addition, there is little evidence, through our exit interview process, to suggest that people are leaving the organisation due to their salary. Further exploration will be given to both the financial and non-financial commitments we can make to our social workers as part of ongoing monitoring of external market and cost of living pressures. If the service considers this necessary, a business case for specific roles/teams	Anita Cranmer/Richard Nash December 2022

	will be developed for consideration which will take into account budget availability, other benefits and pressures.	
4. Improvements to career development opportunities and progression within Buckinghamshire Council	Yes - Buckinghamshire is in the process of developing a career development proposal through the creation of a Talent Academy. In May 2022, the service launched its new career progression scheme as we acknowledge and recognise the increased capability of social workers as they develop and learn.	John Chilver/Sarah Murphy-Brookman September 2022
Recommendation(s) for Child Assessment and Child Protection Teams - Part b) <u>Relating to Retention</u>	Cabinet's Response – Y/N & comments	Lead Member/Officer & Timelines
5. Dedicated HR resource integrated into these two teams and sitting alongside them	In part – key components of HR resource are already aligned to Children's Services such as Resourcing, Employee Relations and Business Partnering providing bespoke support. This will be reviewed as part of the HR Service Review to explore the best value approach and affordability and where and as appropriate strengthened.	John Chilver/Sarah Murphy-Brookman Service Review will complete by March 2023
6. Improve and upgrade technology (hardware and software) to increase efficiency	In part. During the last 2 years, significant improvements have been made to our case management system and these changes have been made in consultation with front line workers across the service. We recognise there is more to do on this, and plans are in place to improve this further. In relation to the introduction of new hardware, the service with colleagues from ICT and Finance will consider this recommendation further and explore the opportunities available.	Anita Cranmer/Richard Nash March 2023 Anita Cranmer/Richard Nash October 2022
7. Investigate the Introduction of an additional payment for permanent staff to be paid 1/3 rd after Year 1 and 2/3 rd after Year 2, with costs offset by fewer agency staff	Please see response to recommendation 3.	Please see response to recommendation 3.

8. Introduction of core skills training for line managers immediately on appointment, potentially through an extension of the AYSE Academy	Yes – the new corporate induction programme and ‘Being a Buckinghamshire Manager’ programme has recently launched and ensures that new staff are aware of their corporate and management responsibilities. In addition, the service has recently introduced a specific induction programme for staff which includes mandatory training for managers within Children’s Services. As part of the ongoing improvement activity, there will also be a review of our Workforce Development Strategy. We also have a diverse range of e-learning courses and our Mindtools system contains webinars and articles for employees and managers. These are available to support skills development for managers in a timely and effective manner. The HR team provide one to one coaching and advice for managers, where necessary.	Anita Cranmer/Richard Nash December 2022
9. Improved career development path both within and outside of current roles	Please see response to recommendation 4.	Please see response to recommendation 4.
10. Further investigation into pastoral care and support, including supervision sessions and the introduction of a buddy/mentor scheme	In part - this recommendation has already been completed. Building resilience and supporting staff wellbeing continues to be a high priority. Staff have access to a great wealth of health and well-being support. The range of support caters for mental health, physical health, financial health and supports those with specific support requirements such as caring responsibilities. We offer all employees easy access to an Employee Assistance Programme, 24-hour telephone line and individual counselling. There is coaching support, well-being webinars, tea break talks, staff welfare groups and wellness action plans. Employee Reps and Trade Union Reps are also available to support our staff, where required. We also have health and well-being champions,	Complete but ongoing

	mental health first aiders as well as physical first. Ensuring that our staff have access to timely and high-quality supervision and support is a priority. In addition, the HR team have also undertaken pastoral calls with social work staff as additional support.	
11. Introduction of 360° reviews across all levels and teams including HR support	In part. Performance reviews are already embedded as part of the Buckinghamshire Coaching for Performance Framework. This is part of the corporate process and applies to all employees. There is a range of training and support for Managers and Employees and free access to our e-learning hub and mindtools which contains a diverse range of articles and webinars to support the development of our employees.	Complete but ongoing
12. Introduction of administrative support staff to assist with time consuming administrative functions and non-core responsibilities	In part - as part of our improvement work, we have reviewed the role and function of business support and as a result, administrative support is now tailored to the individual needs of each team. In addition, work has commenced to streamline systems and process in order to reduce any unnecessary administrative burdens. Increasing the administrative support available would require an ongoing financial commitment and if the service considers this necessary, a business case for specific roles/teams will be developed for consideration.	Anita Cranmer/Richard Nash February 2023
13. Corporate Director to gather feedback, views and experience of IT from frontline staff to identify areas for improvement of existing software and the introduction of new technology hardware	Please see response to recommendation 6.	Please see response to recommendation 6.
14. Improved communication and cascading of information of benefits and support available	In part – as part of the launch of the new Employee Value Proposition (see recommendation 2), we will be reviewing how we communicate with staff in order to identify areas that can be strengthened and improved.	Please see response to recommendation 2.

Recommendation(s) for Child Assessment and Child Protection Teams - Part c) <u>Additional key recommendations</u>	Cabinet's Response – Y/N & comments	Lead Member/Officer & Timelines
15. Consider a review to investigate the effectiveness of HR support across services	Yes – this will be considered as part of the HR service review described above.	John Chilver/Sarah Murphy-Brookman Service review will complete by March 2023
16. Expansion of the ASYE Academy	Yes - this recommendation has been completed. Since 2019, the Grow our Own approach has been a key part of our Recruitment Strategy and the AYSE Academy has been successful in attracting newly qualified staff into the Service. Between 2019 and June 2022, 42 of the 60 newly qualified social workers that have been through the Academy remain working within the Service. Given the success and in order to alleviate some of the significant challenges in recruiting high quality social workers, in February 2022, Cabinet agreed the extension of the ASYE Academy with a further 60 newly qualified staff set to join between now and April 2023.	Complete
17. Continue to examine other counties with 'Good' and 'Excellent' OFSTED ratings to see what can be learned and which procedures and approaches could be adopted	Yes - this action is already in place and has been an ongoing feature as part of our improvement activity. On our journey out of Inadequate, the service was an active member of the South East Sector Led Improvement Programme (SESLIP) made up of all single/upper-tier local authorities in the South East, including some that are judged to be 'Outstanding'.	Complete but ongoing
18. Weekly report to the Cabinet Member and Corporate Director detailing average caseload per social worker (including highest and lowest level), changes in total team numbers together with historic data for comparison and direction of movement to	Yes - this action is already in place. Average caseloads are circulated on a weekly basis. Given the significant demand pressures experienced, this is something which is monitored very carefully by Senior Managers and where necessary, workers that have a higher caseload than we would like are supported to prioritise work.	Complete but ongoing

identify trend with the trend trailing two weeks to
smooth intra-day movement>(*unless this report
already exists)

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