



## Review of Recruitment and Retention of Social Workers – Progress Update

<b>Recommendation(s) for Child Assessment and Child Protection Teams - Part a) <u>Relating to Recruitment</u></b>	<b>Original Response <b>and further update</b></b>	<b>Lead Member/Officer &amp; Timelines</b>
<p><b>1.Overhaul of the approach, understanding and procedures of HR for recruitment</b></p>	<p>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.</p> <p><b>The Resources AURA programme is a key driver for the HR Service Review. AURA is a large-scale programme focused on improving our current systems and processes with key aims to enhance customer experiences and generate efficiencies. The hire to retire processes, with recruitment as one of the core processes, is being managed under the Resources AURA programme. The timeframes for delivering improved processes and systems is Autumn 2023. The HR Service Review will be fully delivered by March 2024 (at the very latest).</b></p>	<p>John Chilver/Sarah Murphy-Brookman</p> <p><b>Recruitment system and process improvements will be delivered by Autumn 2023.</b></p> <p><b>Service Review changes approved for implementation though the AURA programme by March 2024</b></p>

<p><b>2.</b>Introduction of new strategy to promote the benefits and advantages of working at Buckinghamshire</p>	<p>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.</p> <p><b>The Employer Brand (Employer Value Proposition) was formally launched on 9 January 2023. There is a robust communications plan that supports the new Employer Brand to help continually promote the benefits of working for the Council of which will be issued internally and externally.</b></p> <p><b>The Resourcing team have a schedule of recruitment and career events running into 2023 which are used to help promote Buckinghamshire Council as an employer of choice. In addition, all of our adverts promote our reward and benefits.</b></p>	<p>John Chilver/Sarah Murphy-Brookman</p> <p><b>Complete – yet ongoing</b></p>
<p><b>3.</b> Consideration of the introduction of an additional payment for permanent staff to be paid 1/3<sup>rd</sup> after Year 1 and 2/3<sup>rd</sup> after Year 2, with costs offset by fewer agency staff</p>	<p>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 will be developed for consideration which will take into account budget availability, other benefits and pressures.</p> <p><b>Given the financial pressures that both the service and the council is facing, it is not viable to progress this action currently.</b></p>	<p>Anita Cranmer/Richard Nash</p> <p><b>This action will be reviewed again in the new financial year.</b></p>
<p><b>4.</b> Improvements to career development opportunities and progression within Buckinghamshire Council</p>	<p>Yes - Buckinghamshire has developed a corporate 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.</p> <p><b>Please see below a list of the corporate learning and development opportunities in 2023:</b></p>	<p>John Chilver/Sarah Murphy-Brookman</p> <p><b>Complete but ongoing</b></p>

<b>1. Promoting Careers and Attracting Talent</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Employer Branding and Attraction Strategies</b> will showcase diverse careers in the council for recruitment and internal colleagues as part of career development</li> <li>• <b>Work experience</b> and non-paid training opportunities including internships will continue to grow</li> </ul>
<b>2. Entry level and Early Careers Support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Buckinghamshire Horizons programme</b> – we will launch our own version of kickstart supporting inclusive routes into employment with coaching support and development.</li> <li>• <b>Early Careers Networks</b>– for new joiners to support social engagement and provide peer support to help people collaborate and connect across all workstyles in the council</li> <li>• <b>Entry level and upskilling apprenticeships</b> – will continue to operate and adapt to help early entrants grow and develop skills and qualifications</li> <li>• <b>Graduate entry programmes &amp; development</b> – we are planning wider development opportunities for all our recent graduate recruits to create a more inclusive distinct internal cohort with a more ambitious personal development offer</li> </ul>
<b>3. Career Planning and Personal Development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Personal Development planning and workshops for all staff</b> – building on existing face to face induction by holding career planning and career development workshops to help support personal development planning for colleagues at all levels and regardless of length of service – will help to boost confidence for those who feel overlooked</li> <li>• <b>Soft skills and face to face training</b> – more workshops to complement on line training on cross organisational topics such as customer, digital, interpersonal skills training</li> <li>• <b>Workforce and Succession Planning</b> – supporting managers in services to develop plans and understand internal talent, diversity and capability for internal moves and roles within and across services</li> <li>• <b>Coaching and Mentoring</b> – we are training more people for the Coaching Pool and piloting more mentors for reverse and reciprocal mentoring to support diversity and inclusion</li> </ul>
<b>4. Management and Careers and Management Development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Aspiring Manager programmes</b> – we will be rolling out management development workshops and piloting team leader apprenticeships to support aspiring managers and help boost more under represented groups into management roles</li> <li>• <b>BABM framework and workshops</b> – we now have a full range of workshops and these will continue to develop managers with a range of specialist skills workshops face to face and on line. Includes EDI training</li> <li>• <b>Leadership Development</b> – more will emerge in the next year as a focus for senior and future senior leaders</li> </ul>
<b>5. Professional Development and Professional Careers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Service led professional development programmes and careers</b> – ASYE, Legal, Planning etc will continue to operate and we will encourage more services to develop these especially in hard to fill areas</li> <li>• <b>Specialist apprenticeships</b> – will continue to run for specialist roles</li> </ul>

In addition, the service has a strong focus on career opportunities and progression. The career progression panel is active and makes evidenced based decisions on an individual 'progressing'. The ASYE Academy actively promotes career progression with all new recruits and the service has a number of examples of staff moving to different posts across the service. This is business as usual activity and will be further enhanced by the service re-design work.

<b>Recommendation(s) for Child Assessment and Child Protection Teams - Part b) <u>Relating to Retention</u></b>	<b>Cabinet's Response – Y/N &amp; comments</b>	<b>Lead Member/Officer &amp; Timelines</b>
<p>5. Dedicated HR resource integrated into these two teams and sitting alongside them</p>	<p>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.</p> <p><b>Position remains unchanged.</b></p>	<p>John Chilver/Sarah Murphy-Brookman</p> <p><b>Service Review changes approved for implementation though the AURA programme by March 2024</b></p>
<p>6. Improve and upgrade technology (hardware and software) to increase efficiency</p>	<p>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.</p> <p><b>In relation to the introduction of new software/hardware, this action now forms part of the service's business as usual via the LCS project team which continually looks at ways in which we can improve the software/hardware we have available.</b></p>	<p>Anita Cranmer/Richard Nash</p> <p><b>Ongoing business as usual task</b></p>
<p>7. Investigate the Introduction of an additional payment for permanent staff to be paid 1/3<sup>rd</sup> after Year 1 and 2/3<sup>rd</sup> after Year 2, with costs offset by fewer agency staff</p>	<p>Please see response to recommendation 3.</p>	<p>Please see response to recommendation 3.</p>

<p><b>8.</b> Introduction of core skills training for line managers immediately on appointment, potentially through an extension of the AYSE Academy</p>	<p>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.</p> <p><b>The ASYE Academy staff can and do provide bespoke support for managers when required. The QA processes including audit, dip sampling, check and challenge and HOS led improvement work provides active, practical support for managers. This includes practice guidance, updated templates and user guides.</b></p>	<p>Anita Cranmer/Richard Nash</p> <p><b>Complete but ongoing</b></p>
<p><b>9.</b> Improved career development path both within and outside of current roles</p>	<p>Please see response to recommendation 4.</p>	<p>Please see response to recommendation 4.</p>
<p><b>10.</b> Further investigation into pastoral care and support, including supervision sessions and the introduction of a buddy/mentor scheme</p>	<p>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, mental health first aiders as well as physical first. Ensuring that our staff have access to timely and high-quality supervision</p>	<p><b>Complete but ongoing</b></p>

	<p>and support is a priority. In addition, the HR team have also undertaken pastoral calls with social work staff as additional support.</p> <p><b>The development of the wellbeing offer across the service has continued. It is recognised and valued by staff across the service and has received external recognition too.</b></p>	
<p><b>11.</b> Introduction of 360° reviews across all levels and teams including HR support</p>	<p>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.</p> <p><b>Complete – see original response.</b></p>	<p><b>Complete but ongoing</b></p>
<p><b>12.</b> Introduction of administrative support staff to assist with time consuming administrative functions and non-core responsibilities</p>	<p>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.</p> <p><b>This has been and continues to be an option that is considered for teams and now forms part of business as usual conversations. There are examples of this happening in a number of the teams.</b></p>	<p>Anita Cranmer/Richard Nash</p> <p><b>Ongoing business as usual task</b></p>
<p><b>13.</b> 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</p>	<p>Please see response to recommendation 1 and 6.</p>	<p>Please see response to recommendation 1 and 6.</p>

<p><b>14.</b> Improved communication and cascading of information of benefits and support available</p>	<p>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.</p> <p><b>The Employer Brand was formally launched on 9 January (see recommendation 2) and will in part improve building awareness and engagement with our staff in terms of the benefits and support available. The Council’s internal bulletins are also used as another method to promote support available to our staff.</b></p>	<p>Please see response to recommendation 2.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation(s) for Child Assessment and Child Protection Teams - Part c) <u>Additional key recommendations</u></b></p>	<p><b>Cabinet’s Response – Y/N &amp; comments</b></p>	<p><b>Lead Member/Officer &amp; Timelines</b></p>
<p><b>15.</b> Consider a review to investigate the effectiveness of HR support across services</p>	<p>Yes – this will be considered as part of the HR service review described above.</p>	<p>John Chilver/Sarah Murphy-Brookman</p> <p>Service review will complete by March 2023</p> <p><b>Service Review changes approved for implementation though the AURA programme by March 2024</b></p>
<p><b>16.</b> Expansion of the ASYE Academy</p>	<p>Yes - this recommendation has been completed.</p> <p>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</p>	<p>Complete</p>

	<p>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.</p>	
<p><b>17.</b> 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</p>	<p>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 <a href="#">South East Sector Led Improvement Programme</a> (SESLIP) made up of all single/upper-tier local authorities in the South East, including some that are judged to be 'Outstanding'.</p> <p><b>Our 2023 Peer Review is due to take place on 10 February 2023.</b></p>	Complete but ongoing
<p><b>18.</b> 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 identify trend with the trend trailing two weeks to smooth intra-day movement*(*unless this report already exists)</p>	<p>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.</p>	Complete but ongoing