



Report to Health & Adult Social Care Select Committee

Date: Thursday 9th February 2023

Title: **Adult Social Care Workforce Briefing**

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1. Introduction

This report provides an overview of the current workforce position within adult social care, with a particular focus with registered Social Workers, current capacity, and areas of challenge.

This report highlights how we use agency staff alongside our permanent workforce to deliver a safe, high quality service within the existing staffing envelope.

The report explains the efforts of the service in its recruitment and retention approach as well as highlighting how adult social care, despite the workforce challenges it faces, is still performing well in the support it offers to Buckinghamshire residents.

2. An overview of the Qualified Social Work Workforce across Early Resolution and Safeguarding and the Long-Term and Review Teams, including Oxford Health

The adult social care qualified workforce comprises of Social Workers registered with Social Work England. These posts commence from Range 5 for newly qualified workers, through into the main grade Range 6 role and rising up to Range 7 for Advanced Practitioners.

The tables below provide an overview of the three qualified role levels, the establishment from the structure, the number of permanent staff in post to that role, the subsequent vacancies, and the capacity of that particular team. The hospital team overview is separate.

Table 1: Adult Social Work Workforce breakdown – Social Worker R5 (NQS)

Team/Service	Establishment from Structure	Permanent Staff in post	Vacancies	% Capacity
Early Resolution & Safeguarding	3	2	1	66%
North	3	1	2	33%
East	3	1	2	33%
South	3	0	3	0%
Central	3	1 (+1 in April)	1	66%
18-25 team	1	1	0	100%

Range 5 Social Workers are the newly qualified staff within the practitioner workforce. These remain working under an assessed and supported year in employment, following their formal professional training.

Table 2: Adult Social Care Workforce breakdown – Social Worker R6

Team/Service	Establishment from Structure	Permanent Staff in post	Vacancies	% Capacity
Early Resolution & Safeguarding	24	3	21	12.5%
North	10	6.8	3.2	68%
East	10	7.5	2.5	75%
South	10	2.5	7.5	25%
Central	10	6.5	3.5	65%
18-25 team	2	0	2	0%
Total	66	26.3	39.7	40.3%

The above table shows the Early Resolution and Safeguarding team is operating at 12.5% permanent capacity with 24 in the establishment and only 3 posts filled. Reasons cited for the team operating at lower capacity include well versed perceptions across the social care profession that safeguarding work is less attractive to staff, who by the nature of the role are more likely to be carrying out high risk and complex functions on a day-to-day basis. Other reasons include perceptions that the high turnover of work and pressure is very high compared to longer term case work that may operate within a named worker model. To mitigate this, you will see there is a higher level of agency staff in these areas to ensure the service is delivered safely and effectively

In table 2, the South Long Term and Review team is operating at 25% permanent capacity with only 2.5 Social Worker roles filled and a vacancy factor of 7.5 within the team. It is widely understood that the South of the County experiences a higher level of vacancy, due to the numbers of staff living in those areas and working across many of the north London boroughs, who are more likely to pay a London weighting salary enhancement. The team have recruited staff previously from other parts of Bucks, and feedback gained from staff leaving the service has indicated that the journey times and the challenges and costs of getting to an office 30 or more miles away has been seen as too far to travel.

Table 3: Adult Social Care Workforce breakdown – Advanced Practitioner R7

Team/Service	Establishment from Structure	Permanent Staff in post	Vacancies	% Capacity
Early Resolution & Safeguarding	4.8	3.8	1	79%
North	8	7.1	0.9	88.7%
East	8	3.6	4.4	45%
South	8	1	7	12.5%
Central	8	1.5	6.5	18.7%
18-25 team	2	2	0	100%
Total				

In table 3 above, Advanced Practitioners working to greater levels of complexity are established across the whole of adult social care and as can be seen in the table below, there are a total of 46.8 posts in the Early Resolution & Safeguarding and Long Term and Review team's establishment. Currently, there are 22.6 permanent posts recruited to, with South and Central teams experiencing shortfalls in this role with 2.5 roles occupied out of a total of 16. Whilst the statutory functions remain the same, working at an advanced level of practice requires a greater level of depth and breadth of practice as well as demonstrable levels of expertise and leadership, making these roles a vital resource within team structures.

Oxford Health – Social Care teams

There has been some active and successful recruitment within the Oxford Health Social Care Teams following the staff consultation process that was held between 4th July – 17th August 2022. This includes supporting career development opportunities within the existing staff group.

The vast majority of staff were able to transfer into their existing job roles within the new structure. 3 Oxford Health staff were transferred into new Social Work Assistant roles who were existing Band 4 staff. 3 Oxford Health staff were successful at ring-fenced interviews for promotion from Band 3 to Band 4 Social Work Assistant roles (one in an Apprenticeship). Buckinghamshire Council also transferred staff into the new structure including the AMHP Team Manager, AMHPs and Social Work Assistants. Whilst there were a significant number of vacancies carried into the new structure, the new team managers in post have been able to look creatively at recruiting staff by promoting their service at workplace events and conferences that has helped to appoint qualified staff from Health and Social Care settings countrywide.

Oxford Health	Establishment from Structure	Permanent Staff in post	Vacancies	% Capacity
Band 5 Social Worker	4	3	1	75%
Band 6 Social Worker	16	10	6	62.5%
Advanced Practitioner	3	1	2	33.3%
AMHP – Approved Mental Health Professional	6	4	2	66.6%

3. An overview of the Qualified Social Work Workforce across Hospital Discharge Teams

The following table illustrates an overview of the hospital social work teams

Table 4: Hospital Social Worker - R5

Team/Service	Establishment from Structure	Permanent Staff in post	Vacancies	% Capacity
North/East	3	2	1	66%
South/Central	2	1	1	50%

Table 5: Hospital Social Worker - R6

Team/Service	Establishment from Structure	Permanent Staff in post	Vacancies	% Capacity
North/East	3	3	0	100%
South/Central	3	3	0	100%

Table 6: Hospital Advanced Practitioner - R7

Team/Service	Establishment from Structure	Permanent Staff in post	Vacancies	% Capacity
North/East	4	3	1	75%
South/Central	4	3	1	75%

Within the North & East and South & Central Discharge Teams, there are currently no set posts available in the structure for agency workers, as 19 posts are funded by the NHS. Currently, 3 permanent posts are available for each Discharge Team on the post structure. The table below identifies a provide a breakdown of the number of G6 and G7 permanent staff, in each discharge team and overall capacity as of January 2023.

The Discharge Service has a total of 19 agency staff across both North, East, South and Central, all of whom are currently allocated to the Discharge to Assess (D2A) function. Although this brings the capacity higher than the staffing establishment, there is significant demand for the service and as such additional agency social workers are being sourced to manage the ever-increasing level of pressure across the system. It should be noted that that this service covers all Buckinghamshire residents in hospitals regardless of where they are, which includes all out of county hospitals e.g. Watford, Oxford, Milton Keynes and Wexham.

Whilst these agency staff are funded by the NHS, it is acknowledged a number have been in post prior to the restructure of Adult Social Care in June 2021.

There has been a recent government announcement on Monday 9th January regarding £200m funding for discharging patients from hospital beds into care homes to improve patient care and system flow. Buckinghamshire Council and partners are currently in the process of working with local care home providers to organise up to 30 additional Discharge to Assess beds. We are also stepping up additional social work and therapy support to ensure that patients get the care and assessments they require as soon as possible.

Care is being taken to develop options that align with our evidence-base on demand and longer-term plans for integration (i.e., to set-up one or two blocks of D2A bedded provision that can be sustained as part of our transition model, which outlines a future requirement for approximately 20 D2A beds)

System capacity has been diverted to develop these plans (along with a range of other measures to manage current Winter pressures) which has slowed the development of our new model for hospital discharge. It was agreed at the January ICP Executive Board that the pace on this would be slower across the Winter period, and that we would explore how to accelerate following Winter, with external support.

Buckinghamshire system partners have been working hard to improve our collaboration, integration and processes this year to enhance our discharge processes.

Olympic Lodge has been open to support Winter Pressures in Buckinghamshire for 14 weeks. As at the week ending 15th January, (week 14)

- *Olympic Lodge has admitted 219 patients this is compared to 150 in week 14 in 2022*
- *Olympic Lodge admits a weekly average of 15 patients and discharges 11. This compares to 10 admissions and 8 discharge in week 14 2022*
- *The average length of stay is 9 days - compared to 10 days in week 14 2022*

Discharge to Assess Beds continues to be utilised by Hospitals for those with highly complex needs whilst some Adult Social Care Assessments now take place across Community Hospitals. There were 31 D2A Bed Discharges in December 2022 up to 15th January 2023 whereas there were 106 between December 2021 up to the 16th January 2022

Home First supports patients to be discharged home where they receive therapeutic and adult social care assessments. There have been 230 Home First Discharges since December 2022 up to 15th January 2023 whereas there were 209 between December 2021 up to the 16th January 2022.

4. Agency spend across Adult Social Care

The following table represents the current agency backfill to ensure critical functions are undertaken across Adult Social Care in order to remain safe and legal. Please note that all agency spend that the council commits is in line with the Adult Social Care budget setting process which even with agency spend has an underspend of £0.95m on staffing.

Currently, Adult Social Care have **50** agency staff in total, **19** of which are secured through external funding (CCG, COMF, BHT), with **31** funded by Buckinghamshire Council. **31** of the **50** agency staff are working in the Early Resolution and Safeguarding, Locality, and Occupational Therapy Teams, and **19** are working in the Discharge teams. There is a clear exit plan in place agency staff when the permanent capacity reaches 60% of the combined and filled Grade 6 and 7 roles across Social Work and Occupational Therapy roles.

Table 7: Distribution of agency staff across Adult Social Care

Team/Service	Agency Backfill	Funded by:
Early Resolution & Safeguarding	13	Buckinghamshire Council within budget
North	3	Buckinghamshire Council within budget
East	4	Buckinghamshire Council within budget
South	5	Buckinghamshire Council within budget
Central	1	Buckinghamshire Council within budget
18-25 team	0	Buckinghamshire Council within budget
Occupational Therapy	5	Buckinghamshire Council within budget
Total	31	

Cost Comparison: Grade 7 Advanced Practitioner

The following table is an illustration of the cost comparison for a permanent R7 Advanced Practitioner compared to an agency Social Worker. Taking into account salary, retention payments, and on-costs, a permanent Grade 7 Social Worker on BC Terms and Conditions at pay scale .3 costs **£59,575.06** per annum. The average annual cost per agency staff currently in post is £65,022.36, **£5,447.30** higher per year than a permanent staff member.

Salary (Pay Point 3)	£ 39,659.00
Market Premium	£ 2,000.00
Golden Hello	£ 2,500.00
Car Allowance	£ 300.00
Permanent Staff Annual Base Cost	£ 44,459.00
<i>Plus On-Costs @ 34%</i>	<i>34%</i>
Total Annual Cost Permanent Staff @ Grade 7 (Pay Point 3)	£ 59,575.06
Average Yearly Agency Staff Cost	£ 65,022.36
Annual Cost Difference	£ 5,447.30

5. Recruitment strategy

A lot of time is invested in the service in recruitment because we know the importance not only for residents but also on the existing workforce in being able to respond to the level of demand. Since February 2021, the service has received a total of **1122** applications, **386** of which have been interviewed, with **136** appointments confirmed. The table below breaks down the number of applications received, interviews arranged, and appointments made February 2021 – November 2022 for social work / OT qualified staff:

Table 8: Numbers of applications, interviews and appointments

Feb 2021 – Nov 2022	Applications	Interviews	Confirmed Appointments
Permanent Social Workers	353 *(343)	96 (91)	48 (46)
Qualified Agency Social Workers	720 (701)	254 (245)	72 (71)

NB *Percentages in brackets relate to previous update at end of Oct 2022.

The service is experiencing significant difficulty in converting applications into appointments, especially for agency posts. Reasons for this include candidates poor preparation/ interview; candidates requiring more flexibility and wanting to work more from home; terms and conditions being more preferential working as an agency worker; candidates being offered another permanent post elsewhere. The table below breaks down the application conversion rates for social workers

Table 9 – Interview conversion rates

Conversion Rates	% of Applicants Shortlisted for Interview	% of Interviewees Appointed	% of Applicants Appointed
Permanent Social Workers	27% *(27%)	50% (51%)	14% (13%)
Qualified Agency Social Workers	35% (35%)	28% (29%)	10% (10%)

NB *Percentages in brackets relate to previous update at end of Oct 2022.

In addition to this and in collaboration with our internal recruitment team a range of initiatives have been undertaken in the past year.

Meet The Expert

A number of these sessions have been run to support recruitment. These sessions showcase the experts and talent we have at the council. These sessions are promoted both internally and externally including promotion to schools, colleges, and Universities. We are seeking volunteer from the service for further sessions to be arranged.

Virtual Try Before You Apply session

These sessions are taking place every 6 weeks to attract passive candidates to attend these sessions to enable them to meet the teams, find out more about the work environment and teams.

Agency conversion – Top 11 reasons to convert to permanent contract

A document has been developed by resourcing as attraction tool which includes the corporate rewards and benefits and highlight the benefits of converting to a permanent contract. This document provides managers a starting point for discussions with their agency staff.

Agency Conversion Sessions

The approach to Agency Conversions in order to reduce agency spend and stabilise the workforce. HR developed and held a conversion session with a number of key colleagues from the service. These sessions are held to showcase the career development

External Job Fairs

A further number of events have and are being attended such as the Bucks Skills Show, MK Jobs show, Universities and Job Centre events. Jointly with the service, HR attended Compass Jobs Fair on Monday 21st November in order to raise awareness and attract Social Workers to Buckinghamshire Council as an employer and to allow us to network with potential Social Worker jobseekers. A Head of Service also ran a seminar on the day to assist with the promotion of Social Work with Adults & Health at Buckinghamshire Council. are doing to support the wellbeing of staff, inclusive of the Wellness Weeks, etc which was very well received, and HR are following up on all conversations we had at the event.

Advertising

All adverts have been refreshed and include our D&I policy, rewards and benefits, career progression framework and quotes from the staff. These are all place on our careers site, NHS jobs site and the DHSC sites. Certain hard to fill roles are placed on LinkedIn and Indeed. Further advertising across other sites can be provided if budget is allocated.

Promoting access to continuing professional development for all social work staff is a key perquisite to building and retaining high quality staff as well as fostering the career opportunities for future employees as part of recruitment initiatives. Currently a national picture depicts that most English Councils are struggling to recruit and retain social workers. Recognising the national and local challenges a joint Adults and Children's taskforce workgroup has been established lead by the Service Director, Corporate Human Services to strengthen and widen our recruitment approach to include:

- Return to Social Work Initiative - develop a programme and training plan for candidates returning to social work
- Oversees Recruitment - plan a joint overseas recruitment approach
- Combined Recruitment - plan a programme of shared social media campaigns and job fairs

Social media presence

Ensuring we reach wider audience visibility and presence on social media is an important factor in attracting new social workers to Buckinghamshire and making Buckinghamshire a destination people want to come to develop and enhance their careers. Advertising roles, pen portraits of key messages such as inclusion and diversity; career progression and social activities have been mentioned by candidates who have applied for roles.

6. Retention – Building a resilient social care workforce

Building a resilient social workforce is supported through a combination of approaches, for example, having clear and accessible career pathways, providing a flexible range of development and progression opportunities, recognising, and celebrating the efforts of our workforce, investing in staff training and development and well-being, effective leadership, and open culture of learning. As part of our 'Grow your own talent' approach, a number of initiatives have been launched:

Social Work Apprenticeship

During 2020 we launched our first 3-year social work apprenticeship scheme, and it is anticipated by 2023, eleven members of staff will have completed the scheme to be awarded a social work qualification and proceed onto the ASYE Programme (Assessed and supported year in employment) that gives newly qualified social workers extra support during their first year of employment. The programme has now become established as an ongoing annual offer to Adult Social Care staff and a key element of our workforce development approach. It is anticipated during 2024 three members of staff and 2025 two will have successfully completed their social work apprenticeship.

Newly Qualified Programme

A key area for improvement is the experience of newly qualified social workers joining the Adults and Health Directorate. A revised Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) programme was initiated during July 2020 with a key focus on combined quality learning and support throughout the year. The ASYE programme continues to closely support this key group of staff in their crucial stage in their social work employment journey, benefitting from effective induction and co-ordinated work across services to support and manage their transition into operational teams for the first time. A cohort of six joined the programme in 2021 and succeeded, with four remaining within the council and a further nine cohort joined the programme in 2022 and will complete during 2023.

The ASYE programme continues to evolve and improve through a cycle of feedback and learning from all who participate in this programme. For example, a new buddy system has been implemented, in which peer support is provided from those with the most recent experience of the ASYE Programme and learning and support sessions are face to face moving away from remote working to ensure ASYE feel better supported.

During 2023 we are planning to expand this programme to recruit up to 25 newly qualified social workers through increased practice assessing capability and comprehensive ASYE training programme.

Social Work Degree programme

A Post-Graduate Diploma in Social Work programme has also been procured for staff to access who meet the entry requirements. This is traditionally an 18-month programme and one member of staff qualified during 2021 and two members of staff due to complete during 2023 and another scheduled for completion for 2024.

Learning Opportunities

Our aim to develop a high performing and competent workforce is also supported through our extensive learning and training programme offer. To ensure learning and development opportunities reflect the

diversity of roles, a carer progression tool has been developed to ensure staff are provided with the best opportunities to develop, grow, and enhance their skills and knowledge as they progress their career with us. (See appendix 1)

In addition to this we have also launched in January 2023 our Specialist Training Programme to support career progression towards specialist areas and advanced practitioner. (See appendix 2)

Health and Social Care academy

The aim of the Buckinghamshire Health & Social Care Academy is to deliver innovative and creative approaches in developing a workforce planning market for health and Social Care. The Academy works to achieve this through our goal of being a Centre of Excellence for integrated educational training and career development across Buckinghamshire. Examples of programmes the Academy has contributed to in the past year include:

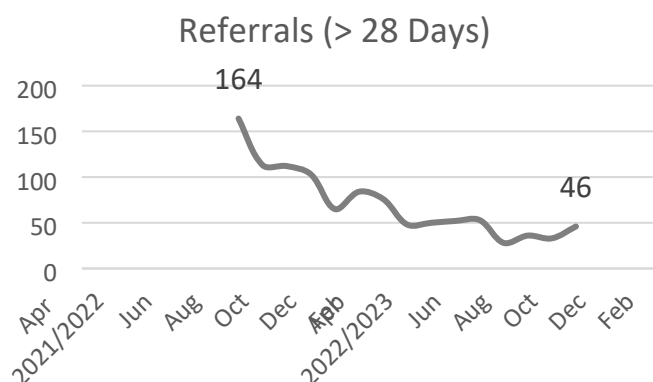
- We have worked with Bucks New University to further develop of our Assessed and Support Year Employment (ASYE) offer to newly qualified social work by provide a bespoke programme to enhance their knowledge in the first year.
- Supported in the development and accreditation of Buckinghamshire Councils first Approved Mental Health Practitioner (AMHP) programme, which is the first in the country to be approved by Social Work England. Links have been made to the Research and Knowledge faculty in evaluating the AMHP programme which will provide independent feedback on how we continue to shape our future programmes. This programme will commence in January 2023.
- Work has started with Bucks New University to develop an Occupational Therapy programme bespoke to the needs of Buckinghamshire with multiple partners across the Health and Social Care Academy.

7. Impact of workforce on performance

Despite the challenges Adult Social Care are facing performance within the service is good and has indeed improved over the last 2 years. Below is a summary of some key indicators.

Care Needs – Referrals waiting longer than 28 days

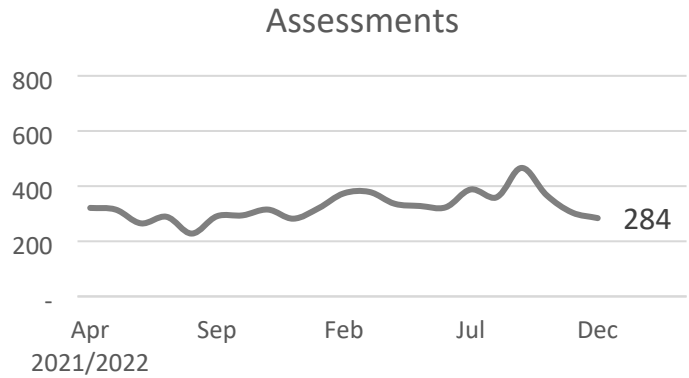
The service continues to touch base with clients that are waiting for an assessment following their referral, where clients are also offered community café appointments where appropriate.



At the end of December, there were 46 new referrals for clients that had been pending allocation to a social worker for more than 28 days. The longest wait is for a carers assessment that is with our mental health social work team, which is 28th January 2022.

Better Lives Assessments

The Better Lives Independence Model has been resulting in a stable number of clients coming through to receive assessments, where clients are consistently being offered advice, information, and signposting to other support services, rather than directly moving to assessment.

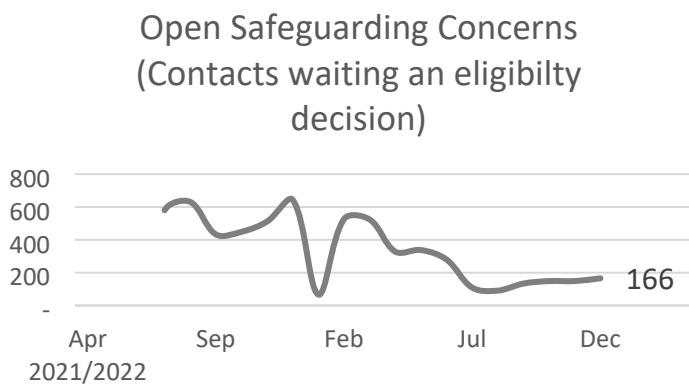


Client Reviews

Annual Review performance is equating to a full year performance of approximately 78%. Whilst we note that the proposed annual review target for the full year is 90%, this performance exceeds that of the previous two years.

Safeguarding Concerns

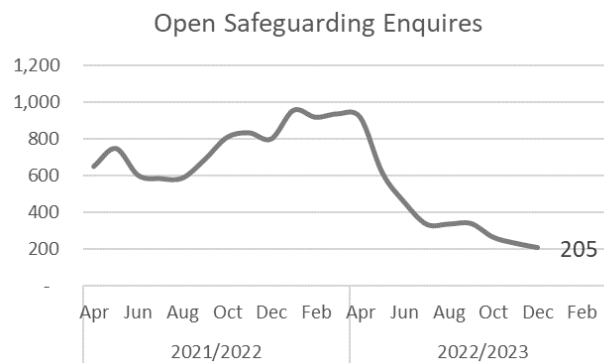
When considering ongoing activity that still needs to take place, the number of open Safeguarding Concerns has remained stable at the end of December at **166** (149 during November), this remains low relative to the level reported at the beginning of this year. As the service receives approximately 50 concerns per day to triage it would be expected to have a minimum of between 50 and 100 concerns to triage at any point in time. The number of Safeguarding Concerns received between April and March last year averaged 953 concerns a month, which compared to 914 a month during 2020/21. There were 829 safeguarding concerns received in December and the monthly average for 2022/23 is 1,010, a 6% increase on the 2021/22 average.



The time that it takes to make an Eligibility Decision relating to Safeguarding Concerns during December was **76% completed within 2 working days** (out of 800 Eligibility Decisions that were made). During quarter 3, 77% of 2,675 Eligibility Decisions were made within 2 working days which is on the Cabinet target of 70%. Daily and weekly monitoring of the time that it takes to make Eligibility Decisions has now been reinstated for the new safeguarding processes. **Performance has significantly improved from the January 2022 position, where 18% were completed in 2 days.**

Safeguarding Enquires

The number of open safeguarding enquiries at the end of December 2022 (**205**) has reduced from November (**229**). This is a 78% reduction from the number reported at the end of April 2022 (**920**).



DoLS

The number of DoLS applications waiting to be assessed reduced to 1,587 cases at the end of December (from 1,599 at the end of November), above the 2021/22 average (1,584). ADASS Local Authorities reported an average of 1,070 DoLS assessments waiting on 30 April 2022.

