

Children's Services Scrutiny Committee

Meeting to be held on Wednesday, 6 December 2017

Electoral Division affected: All

Recruitment and Retention Strategy – Children's Social Care

(Appendices 'A' and 'B' refer)

Contact for further information:

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Executive Summary

The Recruitment and Retention Strategy within children's social care has been implemented to proactively recruit within this field motivated, and where possible experienced social workers to work across the areas of childcare social work in Lancashire. There have been a number of improvements made in the way Lancashire now recruit by means of recruitment events across the county outside of ordinary working hours to enable those in employment to attend and learn about the positive opportunities available.

To ensure that social work staff are adequately supported as part of their induction the service has now developed a social work academy which supports new staff in gaining all of the pertinent training, equipment and knowledge of policies, procedures and structure to help them in their transition into this role.

Recommendation

The Children's Services Scrutiny Committee is requested to:

- i. Note and comment on the report
- ii. Consider Appendix A which outlines the Recruitment and Retention Strategy of social workers in Lancashire.
- iii. Consider Appendix B which relates to the social work academy and forms part of the retention strategy.

Background and Advice

The Recruitment and Retention Strategy has been implemented to meet the demands of the service within children's social care. The recruitment events have helped to improve this process by enabling access and advice regarding careers in Lancashire to be readily available outside of ordinary working hours for those employed elsewhere. The promotion of Lancashire by means of these events

enables the County Council to showcase career opportunities within social care. The recruitment of experienced social workers and managers remains an issue for all local authorities due to the nature of the roles and the subsequent impact that this can have upon social work staff.

The social work academy offers new starters, both experienced and newly qualified, the opportunity to begin their careers in Lancashire with an excellent induction package of introductions, training and the provision of vital equipment enabling them to be work ready when they join their teams. Equally in respect of newly qualified social workers the ASYE package supports them through that crucial first twelve months in practice enabling them to learn and grow in their profession which is not dis-similar to their professional counterparts in education and health.

There is an advanced practitioner team who work across the county offering practice support, guidance and development linking in with practice/team managers enabling the continued professional development and confidence.

These approaches are helping in respect of improving the retention of staff across the authority both newly qualified and experienced.

Consultations

Consultations in relation to the recruitment and retention of staff have taken place to inform approach to improve both areas. Analysis from exit interviews has helped to inform and improve the working environment for social workers, support workers and managers within social care.

Implications:

This item has the following implications, as indicated:

Risk management

The need to retain experienced staff has been mirrored within all recent Ofsted monitoring visits and the previous inspection as a risk that needs to be managed by means of support and career development across the service. Experienced social workers need every opportunity to remain in Lancashire and by increasing the pathways as outlined this will enable the service to develop an experienced work force on the front line, working with the most vulnerable members of society.

Financial

As this is a progress update there are no financial implications.

**Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985
List of Background Papers**

Paper	Date	Contact/Tel
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NA

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

NA