

**Children, Families and Skills Scrutiny Committee**  
Meeting to be held on Wednesday, 6 November 2024

Electoral Division affected:  
(All Divisions);

**Corporate Priorities:**  
Caring for the vulnerable;

**Principal Social Workers Report**

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**Brief Summary**

The annual report of the Principal Social Worker set out at Appendix A seeks to set out progress made against the annual plan. It will also demonstrate progress made with regards to developing a highly skilled and stable workforce who can safeguard the children of Lancashire.

**Recommendation**

The Children, Families and Skills Scrutiny Committee is asked to:

- (i) Endorse and comment on the work of the Principal Social Worker (PSW) and continued impact it has on social work practice across Children's Services.
- (ii) Consider ways in which the committee could support the work of the Principal Social Worker

**Detail**

Designated Principal Social Workers (PSW) were first proposed by Professor Eileen Munro in her review of child protection in 2011, which identified the importance of better communication and understanding between social workers and senior management. Munro stated that PSWs should:

- A. Create a clear line of communication between frontline staff and senior management.



- B. Champion best practice.
- C. Encourage a “reflective approach” to social work.
- D. Support social workers to use their core skills and interventions which make a real difference to people.

The Principal Social Worker in Lancashire has responsibility for recruitment and retention, the social work academy, continual professional development and the career pathway.

The report further sets out the role and statutory background to the Principal Social Work role, along with the three primary areas of focus:

**1) Recruitment.**

The detail of the core recruitment impact is demonstrated on pages 5-6 where impact is reported against our centralised recruitment campaign, international recruitment, roadshow campaigns, apprenticeships and ringfencing of student placements.

**2) Retention.**

The detail of the core retention impact is demonstrated on pages 7-8 where impact is reported against our Team Manager development, changing culture, reduced turnover rates, increased celebration events and increased senior leadership viability.

**3) Workforce development.**

The detail of the core training plan and impact against this is set out on page 11. This includes provision of bespoke training plans, plans which support Ofsted excellence, progression against audit and safeguarding review actions, improved culture around prioritisation of training and the development of a career pathway through services.

The role and support of the Practice Development Team can be understood within pages 12 – 17, with the impact of this role at pages 23-25. The focus of future workforce development plans and the social work academy can be seen within pages 18-22.

**Appendices**

Appendix 'A' is attached to this report. For clarification they are summarised below and referenced at relevant points within this report.

Appendix	Title
Appendix A	Principal Social Worker's Report April 2024



## Consultations

N/A

## Implications:

There are no wider implications. However, it is noted that close collaborative working has taken place throughout the year with human resources to enable both the recruitment and retention of children social workers.

## Legal

There are no legal implications arising out of this report

## Financial

There are no direct financial implications arising directly from this report. Any costs arising from action in the workplan, and priorities set by the PWS will be met within existing budgets.

## Risk management

As is evidenced within this report the PSW plays a crucial role in ensuring social workers have the conditions in which their practice can flourish and achieve good outcomes for children and families.

Should this crucial work not be undertaken it is unlikely that Lancashire Council would be able to continue to provide good intervention and support for children at risk of harm.

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

Paper	Date	Contact/Tel
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Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A

