

# Principal Social Worker Annual Report 2024

**April 2024**

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## **Foreword**



The Principal Social Worker role was borne from the Munro Review of Child Protection, 2011, which recommended: *'Local Authorities should designate a Principal Child and Family Social Worker, who is a senior manager with lead responsibility for practice in the local authority and who is still actively involved in frontline practice and can report the views and experience of the front line to all levels of management.'*

The PSW role differs across Local Authorities however in Lancashire the PSW:

- Leads on recruitment, retention and workforce development
- Oversees and leads the Practice Development Manager team
- Leads on practice improvement alongside the learning and development team
- Has a direct link with social workers in frontline teams
- Has a direct link with senior leaders by being part of the senior leadership team in Children's Social Care
- Creates a clear line of communication between frontline staff and senior management
- Leads on sharing good practice and ensuring the Local Authority implement changes in the law or as identified in research, championing best practice at all times
- Is an active member of the Principal Social Worker network, representing the Local Authority calls with the DfE
- Encourages a reflective approach to social work
- Encourages a learning culture within the organisation

The PSW role links to several of Lancashire's priority areas including Caring for the Vulnerable, Delivering Better Services and ensuring that Lancashire's vision that *'children, young people and their families are safe, healthy and achieve their full potential'* is realised.

## Purpose

This annual report sets out what has been achieved in the last 12 months around recruitment, retention, workforce development and improving the quality of social work practice. It considers the impact of the Practice Development Managers and sets out the key priorities of the PSW for the next 12 months.

## Values and Principles

This annual report aligns with Lancashire's values of being **Supportive, Respectful, Innovative** and **Collaborative**.

The PSW role is based on the following guiding principles:

- An ambition to develop an organisational culture that is strong and focused on relationships, values and inclusivity



- Commitment to work together to address workforce sufficiency across Children's Services in Lancashire
- Meaningful engagement with the workforce, children and families
- Strategic commitment to what matters most to the workforce which includes feeling valued, manageable caseloads, clear responsibilities and career progression pathways
- Commitment to a supportive working environment including access to reflective supervision, high quality peer support and development opportunities.
- Commitment to a clear focus on retention with the understanding that all leaders play a key role in this

### **Key Priority Areas from the PSW service plan for 2023-2024:**

- Improving practice in line with the Ofsted improvement plan
- Workforce planning – ensuring we have the right people with the right skills, at the right place and time and the right cost
- Reducing our vacancies
- Making Lancashire the preferred choice for staff to work and develop their careers
- Improving staff retention and reducing our turnover rate
- Developing an adaptable, creative, innovative, resourceful, knowledgeable and highly skilled workforce who are provided with the opportunities, training and support to practice at the highest standards.

An update on how these have been achieved will be provided throughout this report

### **Recruitment**

In 2023 recruitment was a key priority. Our aim was, and continues to be to reduce our overall numbers of vacancies and continue to promote Lancashire as a preferred choice for staff to work and develop their careers. There is a clear link between successful recruitment and overall workforce retention as our workforce will have manageable workloads and have the opportunity for continuous professional development.

To achieve this the following was proposed by the Principal Social Worker from 2023-2024:

- Review our recruitment process and alongside HR and the recruitment team establish a dynamic process that is quick, effective and responsive to applicants
- Creation of a 'new starter pack' to send to employees before they join us, in both CFW and CSC
- Implementing a confident marketing recruitment strategy



- Created targeted content for the younger generation from 15/16 onwards
- Create a strategy to attract over 50's re-entering the workforce in line with national targets
- Build on the success of the recruitment events in the Children and Family Wellbeing Service and consider holding these events across all of Children's Services
- Streamlined applications – consideration of on the day interviews, assessment days and offering posts during the interview to those who clearly meet the role requirements
- Continuous improvement of our recruitment webpage, highlighting the benefits of working for Lancashire
- Virtual open days led by our key workers in each service
- Promoting all of our roles in Children's Service's with clear messaging around how all of the workforce contribute to making a difference to children and families
- Continuing our positive engagement with local education partners and local universities, including as a core partner of the Greater Lancashire Teaching Partnership.
- Offering ringfenced interviews for students on their final placement
- Continuous offer of the Step Up to Social Work pathway
- Interviews for social workers will take place on a weekly basis through our revised centralised recruitment process that will see an interview offered within a week of their application.
- Continue to explore innovative approaches to recruitment including international recruitment, internal and external Social Work apprenticeship routes and internal career progression pathways for routes other than Social Work.
- Creative use of our apprenticeship routes and first year Social Work students to cover priority vacancies
- Continue to offer the 'Refer a Friend' scheme
- Explore the use of recruitment incentives for social workers and harder to recruit to posts across Children's Services, including: ASYE at the point of progression, hard to recruit to areas and social workers with over 2 years' experience
- Exploring the potential of procuring an external recruitment agency to fill defined permanent roles
- Develop a pathway for converting agency workers to permanent staff members
- Linking with the Greater Lancashire Teaching Partnership to advertise the 'Return to Social Work Programme' to attract those that have left the sector
- In line with the workforce recommendations from the Independent Review of Children's Social Care, implement recommended price caps on what local authorities pay an agency social worker
- Clear policy around agency staff working for Lancashire where they have been a previous permanent employee
- Develop our induction process to ensure consistency across children's services so that all new starters experience the same standard of induction



## What has been achieved

Significant progress continues to be made with our recruitment plan and as of April 2024 there are now only 12 permanent Social Worker vacancies to recruit to compared to 71 in April 2023 and 158 in April 2022, of which 96 were permanent and 62 were temporary.

This success has been largely due to the changes made to centralised recruitment, where for a 6-month period interview panels took place on a weekly basis supported by Team Managers from every function with the support of the recruitment team. This process is now being replicated in Residential Services who are starting to see the success of this approach.

We also undertook a second international recruitment campaign in March 2023 which saw 23 Social Workers offered posts in Lancashire. 12 of these have been relocated with the last 11 due to be relocated in summer 2024. There has been a delay with their relocation due to Social Work England adding a new requirement that all International Social Workers pass an IELTS test as part of the registration process.

The children's services website has been updated to reflect the benefits of working for Lancashire and this is also reflected within the job adverts which have been reworded to reflect the different teams and functions.

Recruitment events have taken place in Residential Services with the first roadshow event being held in February 2024 and a second planned to take place in May 2024. These events were supported by recruitment videos shared across social media, with one of the video making 40,074 impressions. It is recommended that this approach is replicated for vacancies and teams that are harder to recruit to, including the North Family Safeguarding teams and the Children with Disabilities teams.

All student Social Worker's on their final placement in Lancashire are now offered a ringfenced interview at the mid-point of their final placement. To support with planning a visual timeline of final placements has been developed and contact is made with the student by the recruitment team to ascertain whether they would like to express their interest in a role and they are then required to submit a short expression of interest that outlines their suitability for the role. An example of the success of this is demonstrated by us appointing 29 students between January and April 2024 who have planned start dates in May and June 2024. This will support us to achieve a continued reduction in the number of agency Social Workers that we employ.

We have streamlined the recruitment process and introduced a warm welcome approach where frequent contact is made with the candidate by their Team Manager prior to them joining the team so they know what to expect and have the opportunity to ask any questions. The Practice Development Team Manager has oversight of the academy start dates and aligns these as far as possible with ASYE start dates. In September 2023 we had our largest ASYE academy to date with 31 attendees.

Bespoke induction plans have now been developed for each function with the expectation that each new starter follows the induction plan. Further development of this approach will be prioritised in 2024 to include shadowing opportunities in other teams and to ensure there is a consistent approach to inductions.

There is a focus on multiple routes into the profession, with the Step up to Social Work programme still being offered. I attended the induction day for the most recent cohort



in January 2024 and shared a presentation about the different teams and functions in children's services, the support they can expect to receive and benefits of working for Lancashire.

In January 2024 we have had 2 cohorts of Social Work apprentices, 10 internally and 8 externally who will all qualify in December 2026 and will be offered posts in Lancashire. We have changed the programme for the external apprentices, with year 1 taking place in Residential Services, Year 2 in CFW and Outreach teams and Year 3 in a Social Work team which has enabled us to fill posts in our children's homes. Feedback to date has been that they have settled in well and are enjoying their role.

We continue to attend recruitment events at local universities and maintain a presence across the Greater Lancashire Teaching Partnership.

Lancashire is now part of the Greater Manchester agency pledge which has introduced price caps on the rates of pay available to agency Social Workers and sets out a policy around recruiting staff who have previously left permanent employment in the area.

We have reduced our total numbers of agency Social Workers with only 32 workers currently employed covering a range of permanent and temporary vacancies with Heads of Services reviewing them in their functions and implementing plans to reduce them further in line with ASYE's starting in May/June.

## **Retention**

Retaining our workforce and developing skilled practitioners is key to successful service delivery. Within the workforce strategy clear targets have been set to support the retention of our workforce.

The main focus in 2023 was around upskilling and continuing to develop our Team Managers who play a key role in building teams that are resilient, feel supported and wish to remain in Lancashire. We are fortunate to have many experienced Team Managers and their knowledge and skills will be drawn upon to support the development of newer managers.

This will be achieved through a series of workshops, learning circles and commissioned training that is targeted at Team managers.

The targets below around retention will be driven by the Children's Services Workforce Group and reviewed bi-monthly.

- Our staff will feel valued within their role, with opportunities to develop in their role and opportunities to progress
- Our turnover rate for Social Workers will reduce by 2% within the next 12 months
- Our overall turnover rate in Children's Services will remain stable
- Our workforce survey will tell us that our staff satisfaction rates are increasing and our workforce are happy and supported in their roles
- We will strengthen our positive working culture and embed a learning environment
- Our workforce will report that they have a good work life balance



- Our workforce will be proud to work for Lancashire and will be confident that they are doing an excellent job
- We will strengthen our inclusive working environment which values difference and builds on the diversity of our workforce in a positive way
- Our workforce will feel that they have a voice to influence the direction of service development
- There will be visibility from senior leadership across children's services
- Our workforce will all receive regular, reflective supervision and will feel supported in their role
- Our workforce will have a manageable workload

### **What has been achieved**

There has been a focus on visibility of the leadership team, with Coffee and Conversation with the Director established and well attended across Lancashire. These have been opportunities for teams to share what's important to them and share suggestions to improve retention.

County Managers meetings take place bi-monthly and alternate between Senior Managers only and then Team Managers across Children's Services. These have been excellent networking opportunities and have allowed work to take place around creating a strength based learning culture, supporting managers to develop their teams and services. Health and wellbeing activities have taken place at these events and key messages have been shared to establish a clear line of communication between the Senior Leadership team and the workforce. These forums are also an opportunity for managers to feedback on areas that are working well and areas that could be strengthened around retention, enabling a collaborative approach across Children's Services.

Functions have led on their own development days, with opportunities for teams to come together and share good practice.

Training for Team Managers has been commissioned called 'Leading and Supervising to Strengthen Practice' through the Strengthening Practice programme. This will work towards fulfilling the ambition of developing a cohort of Team Managers who are focused on developing excellent practitioners and improving outcomes for children and families.

One of the key issues affecting the workforce has been around access to buildings and there is an ongoing task and finish group with the Director, Heads of Service and facilities management to respond to this. Social Workers have expressed that they want to be together in their teams and it is recognised that being in the office regularly supports health and wellbeing and enables less experienced staff to learn from others. A dedicated space for teams has been provided at County Hall which is well used. It





is recommended that further opportunities to access CFW buildings are also explored to enable collaborative working between teams.

Social Workers report that they receive regular supervision, although there is still variation in the quality of this with a small proportion identifying that it can be too focused on workload with limited space for reflection.

ASYE's overwhelmingly report that supervision meets their needs and supports them to fulfil their role.

***I feel like I've had a supported and protected first year as a Social Worker – SW Duty and Assessment North***

***I have loved my first year in Family Safeguarding, there is a busy feel to the team but I feel supported – SW, Family Safeguarding***

***Time to complete my portfolio and attend training has been supported by my manager – SW, Children in Our Care***

We continue to hold celebration events for our ASYE's once they complete the programme, with attendance from the PSW, HOS and the Director.

The RISE awards took place in March 2024 to recognise the good practice of practitioners across Children's Services. In 2024 Senior Managers will also be invited to attend this event to continue the progress made with having a visible leadership team.

In 2024 Heads of Services are encouraged to nominate their teams and workforce for the CYP Now Awards.

We have achieved our target of reducing the turnover rate in Children's Social Care by 2%, as demonstrated below:



## Annual Turnover rates by Function

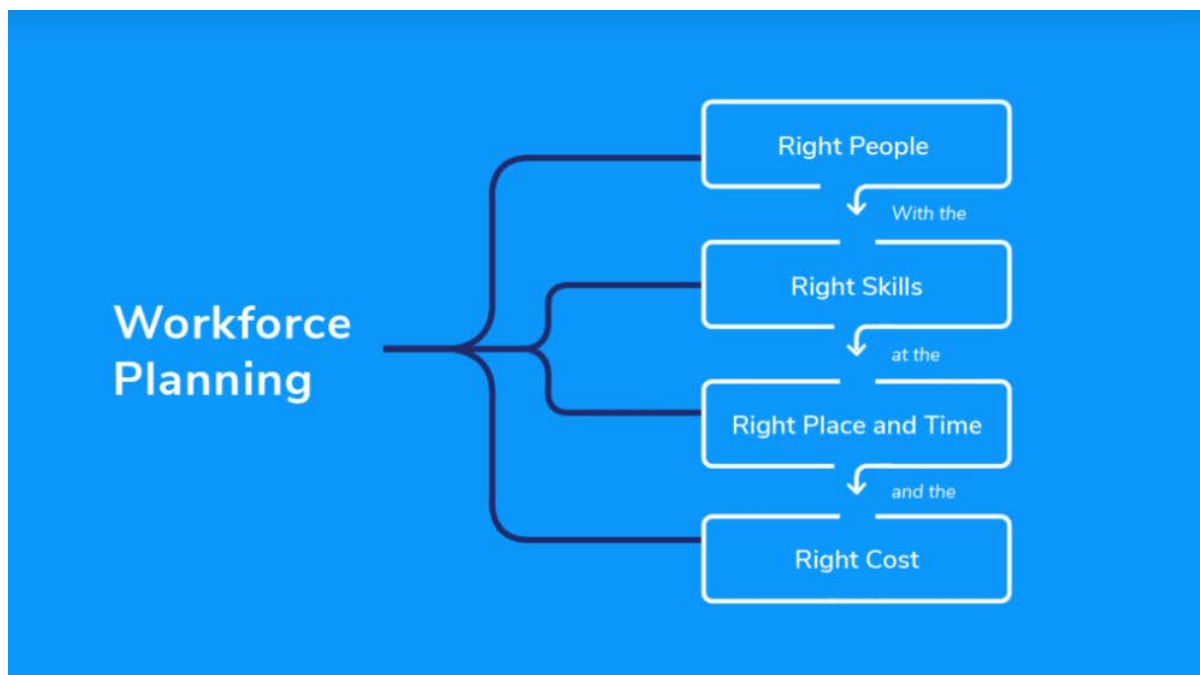


We have also achieved our ambition of the workforce having a manageable workload, however it is acknowledged that workloads will vary in complexity and there will be Social Workers who currently have higher than average workloads in teams with higher demand, turnover rates and vacancies. Plans to overcome this are set out in the Workforce Development section of this report.

Team/Function	Average Caseload
Duty and Assessment	12
Contextual Safeguarding	7.5
Family Safeguarding	15.5
Children in Our Care	16.1
Leaving Care	17.2
Children with Disabilities	23.4
Children's Social Care average	15.45

We do not currently have an agreed process for Social Workers to transfer between teams. By establishing this we would have opportunities to retain experienced practitioners in Lancashire by allowing them to move to new functions or areas without the need for a further interview. It is recommended that a task and finish group of Senior Managers develops this policy to enable solutions to be identified to any barriers that currently prevent practitioners transferring between teams.

## Workforce Development



The overall aim is for there to be a skilled and stable workforce who are provided with the opportunities, training and support to practice at the highest standards.

As well as the offer from the PDM's there is a robust learning and development plan which can be accessed [HERE](#). This plan outlines the mandatory training as well as proposed training to support career development and progression.

Key priority areas have been identified in line with the Ofsted getting to outstanding plan as well as function specific needs. The aim is that children and families in Lancashire receive consistent approaches from Social Workers and other Children's Services staff to ensure they are provided with the right support at the right time.

In order to achieve this the following actions will be undertaken in addition to those identified within the Workforce Strategy:

- PSW to meet with each HOS and identify teams that may require additional or increased support to strengthen and develop practice
- BI data to be used to develop a clear understanding of our workforce including areas with higher rates of sickness and turnover rates to identify potential causes and ensure intervention is provided within those teams
- PSW to meet with each HOS and identify the average caseloads in that function should they be fully staffed to consider future resource planning
- A bi-annual report will be produced identifying key themes from exit interviews and factored into workforce planning
- Learning from CSPR's, complaints and compliments will form part of the overall quality assurance framework and will inform training and development plans

## What has been achieved?

Teams that require enhanced support have been identified by the Heads of Service. These teams were ones that had a higher vacancy rate, a high turnover rate and where areas of practice improvement had been identified following Quality Assurance activity. To support practice a development plan has been created for these teams by their Senior Manager and the Practice Development Team Manager that is frequently reviewed. There has been a greater Practice Development Manager presence in those teams, with workshops around plans, assessments, analysis and direct work delivered to the teams on a 1:1 basis. PDM's have been available to QA work, complete joint visits, attend complex meetings and lead on reflective supervision.

The exit interview process has been revised and shared with Team Managers, Senior Managers and Heads of Service to encourage the uptake of exit interviews to support us to understand why practitioners are leaving the organisation. It is positive to report that the majority of practitioners have left for promotion or progression opportunities, however a small number of Social Workers have left due to not feeling supported by their managers. Despite the process being revised and shared there is still a low return rate of exit interviews and this will remain a priority area in 2024-2025.

A monthly meeting now takes place between the PDM Team Manager and the Quality Assurance Senior Manager to identify themes from the QA report to ensure workshops are updated to reflect learning from CSPR's and audits. A greater focus on learning from complaints and compliments is required in 2024-2025.

There has been a drive to improve attendance at training and an attendance policy has been developed to ensure practitioners are supported to attend training and that it remains a priority area of their role.

A process has been established to measure the impact of training and evidence training transfer. Motivational Interviewing training and Graded Care Profile 2 training have been identified as pilot areas with a review planned in June 2024.

A conference was held for World Social Work Day in March 2024 that was co-produced by Adults and Children's Services, centred around the theme of 'Buen Vier'. Feedback from this event was positive with practitioners feeling they would benefit from more events attended by both Adults and Children's Services to develop relationships and share good practice.

A career progression framework has been developed that outlines opportunities available to all workers in Children's Services to progress and to develop their careers within Lancashire. A staff briefing was held in February 2024 by the Senior Leadership team to share the plans around upskilling our workforce and ensuring we develop practice in line with the recommendations in the National Framework borne from Stable Homes Built on Love.

The Senior Social Worker process has been revised to reflect the skills and experience required to progress to a Senior Social Worker role in line with the PCF our ambition to develop excellent practitioners. This process was briefed in February 2024 with panels recommencing. Practitioners were given the opportunity to ask questions about the process and a shared QA response was provided from the Senior Leadership team.



We continue to have a large cohort of Practice Educators, with 304 being trained in total. There are currently 186 active Practice Educators which enables Lancashire to take the largest cohort of students each year. Due to Practice Educators also being required for our Social Work Apprentices when they complete their placements, a careful balance does need to be achieved to ensure both routes into the profession can continue.

The numbers of final placements is reflected in our ASYE data with the numbers for each financial year set out below.

- 2020-2021 - 56
- 2021-2022 - 65
- 2022-2023 - 65
- 2023-current date – 79

Lancashire have submitted an application to take part in the development of the Early Career Framework for Social Workers which looks at the support and development for Social Workers from their ASYE and beyond. If successful this will require capacity from the PSW and PDM Team Manager to facilitate our involvement and develop the framework and will be a key priority in 2024.

Lancashire are also part of the Review, Testing and Implementation Network (RTIN) which aims to influence social work workload and practice conditions, enabling high quality direct practice to effect positive change in children's lives. The aim of the RTIN is to enhance safe and effective practice and promote the value and diversity of the social work role. The findings from this will influence the National Framework and changes to practice overseen by the Department for Education.



## Practice Development Managers

### Team:

There are 12 Practice Development Manager posts and one Practice Development Team Manager.

Principal Social Worker

**E-259-0001**

Hayley Kinowski

Team Manager

X1fte

**E-307-0001**

Annemarie Walker

Practice Development  
Manager

X12fte

**E-307-0002**

Louise Earl

**E-307-0003**

Aisha Cheeseman (0.5)

**E-307-0004**

Thomas Saunders

**E-307-0005**

Rebecca Evans

**E-307-0006**

Nickie Waddilove

*Suzanne Coyne (sub)*

**E-307-0007**

Katie Regan

**E-307-0008**

Rachel Culverwell

**E-307-0009**

Lisa Edden

**E-307-0010**

Kara Rigby

**E-307-0011**

Steffi Scott-Miller

**E-307-0012**

Lisa McGuinness

**E-307-0013**

Amanda Roberts



**Role:**

The team are overseen by the Principal Social Worker and their aim is to support teams to drive and improve the quality of Social Work practice in Lancashire in line with the Ofsted improvement plan, learning from audit, the needs of each service, changes to the law and best practice guidance.

As well as providing support to each function the PDM's deliver training to workforce linked directly to strategies for improving outcomes for children, young people and families. Examples of these include thresholds training, GCP2 training and safeguarding training to partner agencies.

The PDM's produce practice guidance documents, direct work resources and practice tools for Social Workers to support interventions with children, young people and families.

The team lead on the development and delivery of the Social Work Academy for ASYE's as well as international social workers.

They attend PACT meetings within each function to identify areas of development and practice improvement.

**Service offer:**

The below list is not exhaustive but provides an idea of some of the things PDMs offer to teams.



### 1. Interactive Workshops (for all front line staff)

These are for all staff and based on the specifics of their service's assessment type and the indicators of "good" and "outstanding" agreed by managers in the service.

PDM Role	To plan and create content, facilitate sessions and review impact.
TM role	To comment on suggested content, share responsibility with other TMs to attend and support in sessions and ensure attendance of team.
HOS/SM	Agree content of sessions. Message to all that sessions must be attended

### 2. Live Learning (for all front line staff)

These are smaller sessions (10 staff maximum), but available to all, where the foundation learning above is applied to practice. Staff use the practice tools to benchmark their own work and identify areas for development

PDM Role	To plan and create content, facilitate sessions and review impact.
TM role	To ensure attendance of team.
HOS/SM	Message to all that sessions must be attended

### 3. Practice Support

These are small sessions (maximum 4) which are only available to staff identified as needing more focused support. They may be ASYE staff, those identified through Live Learning by the PDMS or those identified by TMs who are outcoming work.

PDM Role	To plan and create content, facilitate sessions and review impact. To identify staff through Live Learning who need additional support.
TM role	To identify staff, through supervision and monitoring quality of work, who need additional support and to ensure they are booked on to these sessions and attend.
HOS/SM	Message that all identified staff must attend

### 4. Development and Use of Supporting Resources

These are practice tools to support development in each practice area. It will include a guidance document for the specific assessment type, a practice tool explaining the elements of "good" and





"outstanding" assessments and a separate one for the elements of "good and "outstanding" plans. Other practice tools will be developed or drawn from Research in Practice to support practice.

PDM Role	To create and share practice tools specific to the area of practice.
TM role	To comment on suggested content of practice tools. To encourage staff to use the tools in their own reflection and in supervision. To use the practice tools as a guide when quality assuring work.
HOS/SM	Ratify the practice tools and support the use of these as widely as possible so they become embedded into practice and supervision.

## 5. Manager Consultation and Support

Managers will be consulted about the content of interactive workshops (foundation learning) and feedback on impact will be collected after the events.

Reflective Discussion Groups will be facilitated for **all** managers by the PDMS. These will involve managers reviewing the last assessment or plan they authorised against the elements of "good" and "outstanding" they set for the interactive workshop sessions. This allows managers to share their understanding of the elements and to give examples to illustrate this. A by-product of these reflective discussions could be that managers increase confidence in using reflection in supervisions around the quality of assessments and plans.

Sessions can evolve and become themed by focusing on specific elements of assessments and plans and through managers conducting peer audits or each other's last authorised assessments and plans.

SMs can dip sample assessments and plans for discussion with their TMs in supervision – again the practice tools for "good" and "outstanding" assessments and plans can be utilised for this.

PDM Role	Consult managers about content and impact of front-line sessions and use this to inform future events. Facilitate managers Reflective Discussion Groups
TM role	Contribute to consultations. Attend and participate in Reflective Discussion Groups and prepare by reviewing the last assessment or plan they authorised against the "good" and "outstanding" practice tools.
HOS/SM	SMs dip sample assessments and plans authorised by their TMs to ensure they have understood and are applying the "good" and "outstanding" practice tool. Also to dip-sample supervision records to ensure there is evidence of these tools being used in supervision with staff.

## 6. Review of Impact

Impact will be measured in a variety of ways:

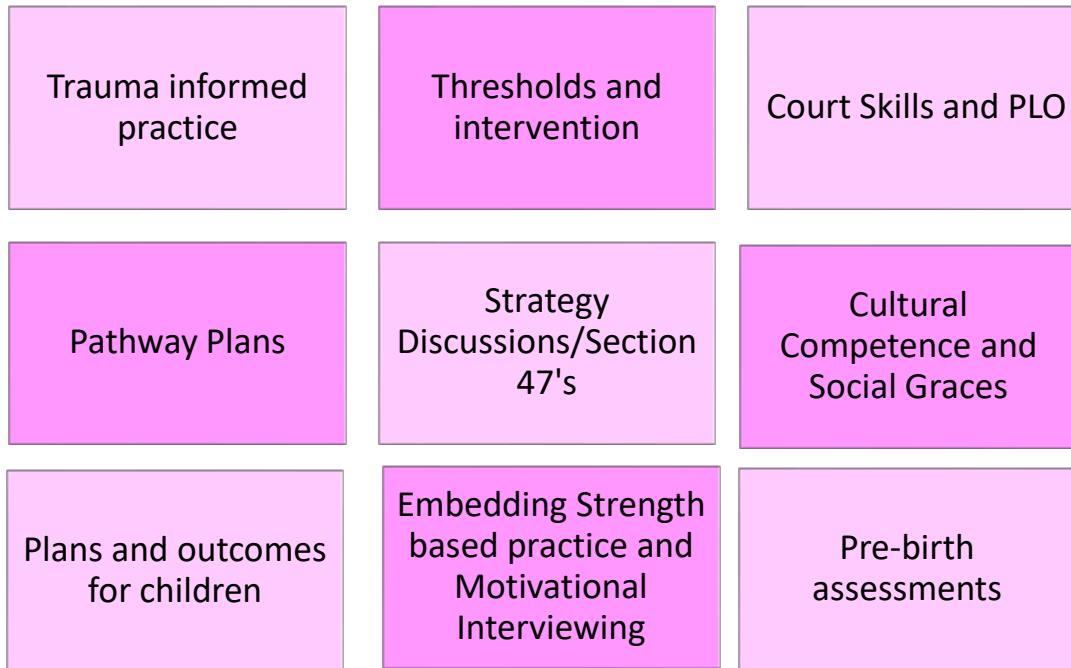
- feedback from staff and managers about the content of interactive workshops and practice tools provided.
- Assessments, plans and direct work dip sample audits will be conducted to measure the impact of development work on practice.
- Managers will need to monitor progress and that staff are applying the learning in their practice through supervision and when authorising work.
- SM / HOS will have an indication of impact on front-line and TM development through their own dip sampling and data reports.

PDM Role	<p>Evaluate impact of front-line support and practice tools through consultation with managers and staff.</p> <p>Dip-sample / themed audits to evaluate impact on practice. Audit tools to be developed alongside the audit team.</p> <p>Use the audit data around good and inadequate assessments and plans to inform which cases to dip sample – for example a SW or TM who appears multiple times on the inadequate list could be subject to a dip sample to measure progress.</p>
TM role	<p>Use checkpoints effectively to monitor practice development. Only authorise assessments and plans that meet the expected standards. Compare assessments and plans produced by each staff member to identify progress.</p> <p>Share examples of clear progress with the PDMs so that these can be used in progress reporting.</p>
HOS/SM	<p>Identify through dip-sampling any TM that requires additional focused support and provide this. Monitor team progress through supervision with TMs and through dip-sampling.</p>



## **Priority areas for 2023-2025**

The areas of priority below have been identified in line with the Ofsted getting to outstanding plan and feedback from the Workforce Group



## **Function specific areas of priority and function plans**

Each function will meet on a quarterly basis with the PDM TM, Senior Managers and PSW to review the areas of priority and progress made

### **Front Door and Adolescent Services**

- Assessments
- Plans
- Analysis
- Direct work
- Missing from home return interviews
- Understanding and recording consent
- Development needs identified as a result of the contextual safeguarding team restructure – 1 PDM will work exclusively with contextual safeguarding for a 12 month period
- Professional curiosity and safe uncertainty
- Thresholds
- Strategy discussions and section 47 enquiries





FAAS function plan

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## **Family Safeguarding**

- Assessments
- Plans
- Analysis
- Direct work
- Court work skills and report writing
- PLO
- Thresholds
- Strategy discussions and section 47 enquiries
- Planning for permanence



Family Safeguarding  
Function Plan

## **Children's Permanence Service**

- Pathway Plans – analysis and review
- Trauma informed practice
- Supporting our children with their mental health
- Adoption processes and CPR's

## **Children with Disabilities**

- Assessments
- Plans
- Analysis
- Direct work
- Embedding strength-based practice



Permanence and  
CWD function plan

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## Fostering, Adoption and Residential Services

- Embedding strength-based practice
- Moving on from adoption



FAR function plan

## The Social Work Academy

### 2 week induction

<p><b>Week 1 (All Participants will attend for Week 1)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Introduction to the Social Work Academy and Practice Development Managers</li> <li>- Meet &amp; Greet with Director, Heads of Service and Principal Social Worker</li> <li>- Time Management</li> <li>- Practice Standards</li> <li>- Introduction to Children's Services Website &amp; Research in Practice</li> <li>- Chronologies and genograms</li> <li>- Assessment workshop</li> <li>- Professional curiosity</li> <li>- Contextual Safeguarding</li> <li>- Self-directed learning (in my shoes)</li> <li>- Mind of My Own</li> <li>- Direct Work – How we see and hear our children.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Week 2 (Only ASYE Participants must attend for Week 2)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Team specific workshops day</li> <li>- Team specific self-directed learning</li> <li>- Trauma Informed Practice</li> <li>- Introduction to IRO's</li> <li>- Understanding lived experience</li> <li>- Introduction to Family safeguarding</li> <li>- Introduction to the ASYE programme and portfolios</li> </ul>

### Outline of each recall day:

<u>Recall day</u>	<u>Proposed plan</u>
<u>3 months</u>	- Feedback with Principal social worker



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Employee support Service</li> <li>- Reflective case discussion as a group exercise</li> <li>- Portfolio time</li> </ul>
<b><u>6 month recall</u></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Feedback with Principal social worker</li> <li>- Cultural competence and social GRACES exercise</li> <li>- Portfolio time</li> </ul>
<b><u>9 month recall</u></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Feedback with Principal social worker</li> <li>- Reflective exercise around theory and writing analytically through practice using CSPR's and theory cards</li> <li>- Portfolio time</li> </ul>
<b><u>12 month recall</u></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Feedback with Principal social worker</li> <li>- Reflective exercise on trauma</li> <li>- Greater Lancashire Teaching Partnership</li> <li>- Portfolio time</li> </ul>

### **Social Work Academy Fayre**

An opportunity for staff to meet, talk to and learn about various services and teams they are likely to work with, come across and utilise during their career as a Social Worker in Lancashire. This is to support them in their practice and ensure that the children and families they work with are receiving the support they need. Running at the same time, we have a number of seminars during the day with each Social Worker booking on to 2 seminars. The list of seminars will be reviewed and refreshed each year, this year we had; Adult mental health workers from the Family Safeguarding Teams, Substance misuse workers from the Family Safeguarding Teams, Probation (Domestic Abuse Officer) from the Family Safeguarding Teams, Bernie (a person with lived experience), Suzanne Coyne from the Violence Reduction Network and Research in Practice.

### **ASYE Celebration event**

This will be held twice per year to celebrate our ASYE's completing their ASYE and all of the hard work they have done. We hold a formal ceremony where each Social Worker has words written by their ASYE Assessor/Manager read out and they receive a certificate and a goody bag. We have a lunch with the ASYE's to celebrate with them more informally.



### **How the PDM team review and measure impact**

Once learning needs have been identified and workshops, Live Learning etc have been put into place to support development we will have a clear review mechanism in place.

There will be clear liaison between the PDM team and the function managers to review progress and plan any further support.

Learning and development Lead Team Managers will be identified; 1 for each area/district in each function.



PDMs will meet with L&D Lead TMs to review progress every 3 months. In these meetings, feedback from other TMs, staff and PDMs will be considered as well as any relevant audit findings. A plan will be agreed regarding whether to revisit any topics already covered. Through prior liaison with their colleagues, L&D Lead TMs will identify any other learning needs from their service area. PDMs will share any learning needs they have identified, and an agreement will be made about priority topics to be covered/ work to be undertaken in the next period.

Clear actions will be drawn from these meetings for PDMs and Team Managers and shared with all present following the meeting, to be reviewed at the next meeting.



PDM TM to meet with each functions SM's & HOS twice yearly. In these meetings, updates from PDMs will be provided regarding what has been offered and feedback. HOS and SMs will have the opportunity to consider this, consider any relevant audit findings or wider service need.

Plans will be reviewed to drive forward L&D in the function and HOS will have input into the L&D offer for their service. Clear actions will be drawn from these meetings and shared with all present, to be reviewed at the next meeting.

In addition, where it is felt necessary (e.g ofsted priority, care review response etc) there will be clear review and follow up:

Review of audits considering the area there has been work done. This will consider both T2 audits/findings and dip sample audits completed by the service.



Short analysis of this written up and plan developed to review impact and inform any future planning.



**Impact of the role:**

The PDM role was first introduced in Lancashire in 2015 following Lancashire's inadequate Ofsted Judgement. The purpose of the role at that time was to target key areas of practice that required improvement and to support Social Work teams to achieve consistency in practice across Lancashire. These priority areas included direct work, plans, assessment and analysis and interventions were delivered through a series of workshops, 1:1 support to Social Workers and support to Practice Managers and Team Managers to develop their teams.

Since 2015 the role has developed significantly and the PDM team have moved to a function model following the restructure of Children's Social Care in January 2021. The PDM's have been instrumental in improving social work practice since 2015 and this can be evidenced through the increasing numbers of 'Good' audits and our recent inspection judgement.

The PDM's support newly qualified staff to gain the knowledge, skills and confidence they need, alongside the support from their managers via the Social Work Academy. This is regularly reviewed and updated based on feedback and up to date practice knowledge/research. This supports staff recruitment and retention, which ultimately impacts positively on children and families.

They have introduced the Social Work Academy Fayre, showcasing and sharing information from various teams and services to support children and families so that Social Workers can utilise the resources available for children and families. During the Fayre there are also guest speakers/seminars to further increase knowledge, skills and confidence in key areas. The service fayre is now being opened up for all of Children's Services to attend due to the success of the first two events.

They PDM's run the ASYE celebration event, further supporting staff retention, celebrating the hard work of ASYE's and those who have supported them. It is also hoped that this will support with ASYE submitting their portfolios on time.

The PDMs have developed, reviewed and implemented changes to the International Social Work Academy to support Social Workers recruited from overseas and offer 1:1 and group "buddy" support to each worker to help them settle into the role in the UK/Lancashire. Some workers required increased support through support plans and the PDM's offered enhanced support to these workers to improve their practice. They also facilitate communities of practice every 3 months, delivered topics identified by TM's to develop practice across the service. They have completed joint visits and modelled best practice with social workers from overseas to provide intensive support following their induction period and have developed a process to recommend whether they are ready for practice. This has had a positive impact following the second recruitment campaign with no support needs being identified for these Social Workers to date.

The PDMs respond to identified needs of the service through audit findings, dip sampling, themes identified from liaising with staff including Social Workers and Managers, and wider identified needs through Ofsted and national reviews and CSPR's. they are heavily involved with Practice Weeks across Children's Service, facilitating learning circles, reflective supervision, workshops and engaging children and families throughout the week. The impact of this can be seen through our audit





findings which have seen noticeable improvement in the quality of Social Work practice in Lancashire which is now being sustained.

Whilst there are some elements of a rolling programme, the PDMs are able to offer support bespoke to service needs, it is important to have this flexibility for each service to have the most impact. For example in FAR, they found that attendance to the rolling programme workshops was poor, so through liaison with identified learning and development leads they were able to adapt the programme and attendance increased significantly. This leads to a wider impact of the support and ultimately, an improved service for the children and families we work with. Another example includes attendance at the Workbook training in Family Safeguarding which was consistently low across the service and therefore the PDM's delivered this in team meetings to increase attendance and ensure consistency in practice across the service.

The PDM's are able to offer 1:1 support to Social Workers at the request of a Team Manager around specific learning needs and will offer observations of practice, reflective supervision and advice, support and guidance around written work, including court work, assessments, analysis, writing to the child, plans, time management skills, chairing meetings and any other identified topics. This has a direct impact on that individual social worker and can support retention.

The PDMs also have an impact on practice through involvement in multi-agency work, for example the PDMs have now lead on a number of multi-agency learning reviews which have been well received and each has identified clear learning which has been shared and have had an impact on practice. In some cases the impact has been direct for example following a learning review involving residential, the manager reported that they felt proud that they could show Ofsted that the review had been done and the impact that it had, although the placement had already broken down the review helped them support the child's transition to the next home and feel that he had better outcomes as a result of the reflection and learning from the review. Another example included a learning review with a child who was regularly assaulting staff and there was conflict between CSC, residential home and police. All agencies were present, and there was lots of learning re communication and expectations of each agency, and there is now going to be a formal working strategy drawn up about what each agency can and cannot do to support multi agency working to support children.

The PDM's work directly with the police, through regular input in their induction and ongoing development programmes, having a direct impact on frontline police staff and how they intervene with children and families.

The team support in the roll out of key changes and messages across the service and are often instrumental in producing the associated practice guidance, for example My Home My Place, GCP2, Trauma Informed Practice, Thresholds training. In addition to this the PDM's play a key role in embedding strength-based practice across the service. This runs through everything they do and they have created guidance and practice documents to support development in this area. The team have received positive feedback around their approach from Social Workers.

Team manager Annemarie Walker measures the impact the team has on practice through audit findings, dip sampling, direct feedback from sessions delivered, informal feedback from workers and managers, good practice examples shared following support from PDM's as well as the attendance on sessions offered. PDM's will also

dip sample work after social workers have attended sessions to see if practice is changing in line with what has been delivered.

