

Children's Services

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY



Report subject	Children's Social Care Workforce Report
Meeting date	26 November 2019
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	This report provides an update on the progress to implementing the Children's Social Care restructure and a snapshot of the current workforce profile for Children's social Care
Recommendations	Elected members are asked to note the report and be assured about the current workforce position and recruitment and retention activity.
Reason for recommendations	Elected members need to have sight on the capacity of the children's social care workforce to meet their statutory duties and support the recruitment and retention of staff.
Portfolio Holder(s):	Cllr Sandra Moore: Portfolio Holder for Children and Families
Corporate Director:	Judith Ramsden: Corporate Director for Children's Services
Contributors:	Sharon Buckby, Interim Service Director Jane White, Service Director Children's Social Care Services Sally Sandcraft, YOS
Wards:	All BCP wards
Classification for Decision	For information

1. Background

- 1.1. As noted in the September 2019 Committee paper, the context within which a workforce is operating is key. BCP children's social work services are working to create a simpler model which enables more effective relationships with families to be supported. The model will enable effective and impactful work with children and families, we consulted with staff on the model in June 2019.

- 1.2. After a period of consultation, we moved forward with the new structure, with recruitment commencing on 27th August and going live on 1 November. (Appendix 1)
- 1.3. The MASH and Assessment Service Manager moved into post immediately on his appointment, on the 13th September, with the full management team in post by 14th October 2019.
- 1.4. During October 2019 we instigated a phased implementation moving staff into the new structure enabling teams to settle, thereby ensuring the needs of children are effectively managed.
- 1.5. The new structure is now operational.

2. Details

- 2.1. Recruiting and retaining good social workers and an early help workforce is the bedrock of a good authority. More importantly the consistency in those workers is the main factor that families point to in being able to build relationships and supporting families to change.
- 2.2. There are currently 152 FTE SW posts and a vacancy rate of 23.2 FTE (15.2%). Off-setting this vacancy rate we currently employ 25.5 FTE agency SW. This is an agency rate of 13%, which is slightly above Good/Outstanding authorities at 12% (but below national and regional rate), and a vacancy rate of 13.5%, which is lower than the national and regional average.
- 2.3. Our current pressure points in staffing includes maternity leave or about to go on maternity leave, and some long-term sickness. Additionally, there are higher number of agency workers due to the creation of a new team for Christchurch as no Social Workers TUPE across from Dorset Council.

Summary of Social Worker Workforce Profile: New Structure 30.10.19

CSC /CHAD	% Rate
Permanent Vacancies (SW)	13.5%
Agency Workers (SW)	13%
Sickness Absence - lost working days (of total permanent staff in post) 01.10.18 to 30.09.19	4.5%
Turnover Rate	16%
Current Maternity Absence of qualified staff	9%

- 2.4. There is a monthly cycle of recruitment, involving both national advertising and national agencies support in searching for high calibre candidates. Selection panels meet every month, including a panel of young people in Care. Candidates are tested, interviewed and qualification checked at the monthly recruitment event, and final offers made, once verification of qualifications, security clearance and references has been undertaken. Currently we have 25 vacancies, the next recruitment event is

happening over two half days on 26 & 29 November. We have 3 candidates looking for full time social work roles, who have applied through the agencies, these candidates have already been to the next recruitment event, we also anticipate, from registered interest, another 2 – 4 suitable candidates from the live national advert that closes mid-November. On average we are securing between 3 and 4 strong candidates per month through this new campaign.

- 2.5. Now that the restructure is complete we will be developing a stronger image and brand in the market place.
- 2.6. As noted in the September committee report the factors affecting recruitment and retention are:
 - a) salary
 - b) support to progress and develop
 - c) the number of children that an individual social worker is asked to work with at any given time
 - d) the effectiveness and ease of case work recording management systems
 - e) how the wider system operates and supports children, as well as how supported they are by the line managers and senior leaders
- 2.7. In line with the key factors identified above, we have launched the new Workforce Development Strategy and the new training and development programme is underway.
- 2.8. In October he delivered one of the workstreams from his programme. We have recruited new consultant social workers to support our newly qualified social workers, thereby implementing our new three-year development programme.
- 2.9. The range of individual children allocated to Social Workers ranges from 7 – 25, with higher caseloads experienced in the Assessment teams. The assessment teams are a current priority area of focus.

Summary of financial implications

3. None at this stage in the development. We aim to refocus resources to support our ASYE cohort. There will be financial considerations regarding the procurement of the care management system for BCP in the future.

Summary of legal implications

4. None.

Summary of human resources implications

5. None.

Summary of environmental impact

6. None.

Summary of public health implications

7. None.

Summary of equality implications

8. Equality and diversity are key areas of training and development in the children's social care and early help workforce. Of consideration is how we deliver a collaborative approach with families. This is to ensure that we gain a thorough understanding of the lived experience of children; to understand that good is not defined by a narrow perception of family life; and to support families to build on their strengths and understand why we have identified risks to children's safety.

Summary of risk assessment

9. Risk assessments have been undertaken in respect of the management of two social care management recording systems. This is reviewed as part of the Systems Board. Actions have been taken to ensure that managers have clear line of sight and can approve decisions.

10. The caseloads of social workers are kept in view of the senior team to ensure the right balance – work needs to occur in the Assessment teams to address the high caseloads.

Background papers

None

Appendices

Appendix 1: Children's Social Care Structure Chart

Children's Social Care Services October 2019

