

| | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| SUBJECT: | Children's Service |
| | Social Workers First Years in Practice Framework. |
| MEETING: | Single Member |
| DATE: | July 2018 |
| DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: | All |

1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1 To seek approval to establish a social work post specifically to support the first years in practice programme, and to support the 'grow our own' concept within our workforce strategy.
- 1.2 To provide information about the development and implementation of the programme of support for Social Workers during their first years in practice in line with the guidance issued by CIW and Social Care Wales, as well as the Social Care Wales CEPEL framework and consolidation programme (Continuing Professional Education and Learning: a framework for social workers in wales).
- 1.3 This proposal is designed to achieve maximum delivery against the aims of the Delivering Excellence Programme in Children's Services and Whole Authority Safeguarding and to contribute to Monmouthshire's delivery of the Social Services and Well-being Wales Act (2014) (SSW-bWA).

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 The following recommendations are made to:
 - To approve the recruitment of a newly qualified Social Worker into the service as part of the workforce planning strategy and in order to 'grow our own' Social Workers).
 - To consider and endorse the development and delivery of a 'First Years in Practice' Programme / framework for social workers within Children's Services.

3. KEY ISSUES:

- 3.1 In January 2016 Council approved the reconfiguration in the way in which we deliver our services within Children's Services. As outlined in previous reports these changes were part of the overarching transformation programme for Children's Services 'Delivering Excellence'. The programme was designed to deliver the cultural and practice change necessary to realise the benefits from the legislative framework in the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act (2015).
- 3.2 This proposal supports the delivery of the transformation programme from a workforce planning perspective. The establishment of a post specifically implemented to support the development of a newly qualified social worker as a key part of i) helping us plan and manage the workforce moving forward and further reduce our reliance on agency workers ii) helping us provide a good 'offer' to newly qualified social workers within the system who could be 'grown'.
- 3.3 Over recent years we have relied heavily on agency staff which has had an impact on resources as well as creating instability within the workforce (see the costs below). One of the key aims of the Delivering Excellence programme was the establishment of a permanent workforce and a reduction in the reliance on agency workers. Whilst we anticipate achieving this goal by the end of September, workforce planning has to be an on-going feature of the service both to ensure sufficiency and the best use of council resources, and to promote confidence and competence across the workforce.
- 3.4 To plan and support our workforce effectively we need to respond to a number of challenges as set out in 'Continuing Professional Education and Learning: a framework for social workers in wales'.
- **Recruitment:** We need a clear pathway offering support in those difficult first years post qualifying. This needs to be part of the offer to attract candidates. (Social Care wales report the latest vacancy rates are 10% across all Local Authorities in Wales). This trend continues to increase year on year. The use of agency workers to fill vacant posts continues to increase across Wales as well as the use of agency workers that are not part of the funded establishment that are used to supplement the funded social worker workforce. This is in order to meet the demand within the service across wales.
 - **Retention:** This will demonstrate the value we place on professional development.
 - **Value based:** This supports the need to ensures our workforce is safe, skilled and at the forefront of good practice (by embedding research into practice) for children and families in need of our services. Training and post qualifying development is crucial to this.

- **Future Proofing:** Recent SCW (Social Care Wales) statistics show the majority of Social Workers are aged 45 or over and 22% are aged 55 or over. (this is the same compared to the previous year). In Monmouthshire the age profiling is similar with 62% of our workforce being over 40 years of age and 30% in the 50 to 59 age bracket. This report supports workforce planning methods that guard against 'retirement bubbles'.

3.5 In our experience of recruitment there are more newly qualified practitioners seeking social work posts than experienced workers (this in keeping with the turnover rate within the profession more widely). Team managers need to feel confident that newly qualified workers will be supported by the service to develop their skills and competence. Accordingly case-loads need to reflect the skills, knowledge and experience of each individual worker at each stage in their career. This post will help us to build in sufficiency within the establishment to support our pathway planning for newly qualified workers, whilst continuing to respond to service demands.

3.6 Newly qualified social workers are a precious resource for people in need of care and support and for Monmouthshire as an employer, so it is crucial that the first period of professional practice is planned for and well managed.

3.7 In recognition of how important it is that newly qualified social workers make a smooth transition from student to confident and competent practitioners the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) and Social Care Wales have issued joint guidance to social work for employers to develop a model of support for the first three years of social workers' professional practice.

3.8 Employers and social workers each have responsibilities for professional development. The *Code of Professional Practice* places a specific responsibility on those managing or leading social care staff:

This includes:

“Ensuring induction, training, learning and development opportunities support staff to maintain and develop their knowledge, skills and understanding.

3.9 In addition *The Social Worker*, Practice Guidance for Social Workers Registered with Social Care Wales describes what is expected of social workers and their employers:

“In order to practise safely and professionally, social workers must continually equip themselves with a body of knowledge and evidence that draws on academic literature, research, legislation, and local understanding. Social work also makes demands on personal capacities and social workers need to plan best use of time, energy and expertise, as well as how to best stay safe in situations where there is risk. Employers have a responsibility to support social workers in these areas.”

- 3.10 The CIW will expect therefore that as an employer we put in place arrangements to invest in the support and development of our newly qualified social workers and that newly qualified social workers will take responsibility for seeking out and taking up development opportunities.
- 3.11 *The First Three Years in Practice Framework* guides Monmouthshire and social workers in how we can effectively build resilience and capability. It provides a model of support and investment for well-being, participation and the 'good work' principles. These have been defined in terms of: Excellence, Engagement and Ethics.
- 3.12 The first part of the programme is the induction of a Social Worker who is in their first year in practice. This initial induction period allows for the development of the social worker's understanding of their role in the organisation and wider context of Welsh legislation, policy, culture and language. Induction should also set out and confirm Monmouthshire's investment and responsibilities towards the social worker and establish the social worker's professional identity and contribution.
- 3.13 Key areas for induction learning of newly qualified social workers include:
- Learning about being an employee within the organisation;
 - Learning about Monmouthshire including structure, function, policy, procedures, administration processes, connections with other organisations and individuals using the services, families and carers;
 - Learning about the community including demography, culture, languages and resources.
- 3.14 An individually tailored induction programme based on Monmouthshire's individual needs is required and can take into account relevant prior experiences and knowledge of the social worker. Newly qualifying social workers in Wales should have a Personal Development Plan (or equivalent) from their professional social work qualification indicating their achievements and future learning needs. Successful completion of this aspect of the Framework is also linked to our probationary arrangements and is a first step in confirming a social worker's readiness to progress.
- 3.15 The Consolidation Programme underpins the *First Three Years in Practice Framework* and is intended for social workers in their first period of registration as a social worker after qualifying. These social workers are likely to be in their first social work role after qualifying, embedding their core professional knowledge and skills in practice and taking on increasing levels of complex work in a specialist area. The focus of the Consolidation Programme is therefore on supporting this transition and building on learning undertaken in the social work degree. It should provide the opportunities to practise key skills, including those where there will have been limited opportunity or appropriateness in a practice learning setting. This is mandatory and failure to comply can result in de-registration.

4. OPTIONS APPRAISAL

| Option | Advantages | Disadvantages |
|--|--|--|
| <p>Option 1 – Do nothing Social workers not having an individual PDP to support them in their first 3 years of practice.</p> | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It's the duty of the Local authority in line with the <i>Code of Practice</i>. • If NQSW only received a generic plan this would not meet their own specific learning needs. • NQSW will leave the authority if not supported, trained, given the opportunity to grow into their roles. • As the SW recruitment market has limited quality of Social Worker applicants this could result in a high vacancy rate. • Increase in agency as vacancies will be filled with agency resource. • Instability of the workforce undermines the service and practice improvement. • Children and families would have inconsistent social workers. • We will be unable to attract Social Workers in their first years in practice without a flexible, robust and supportive programme. • We will have longer term attraction and retention issues with the Social Worker workforce. |
| <p>Uphold the recommendations</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service would be able to 'grow our own'. • NQSW would have the right level of complexity of cases in line with their stage of development. • Monmouthshire would be the employer of choice for NQSW's. • Reduced sickness absence for NQSW. | |

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less reliance on agency longer term. • As NQSW confidence grows as well as knowledge and experience more complex cases can be introduced. | |
|--|--|--|

5. EVALUATION CRITERIA

An evaluation assessment has been included at Appendix A for future evaluation of whether the decision has been successfully implemented. The decision will come back to this committee in 12 months for review. ***A TEMPLATE FORM IS AVAILABLE AT THE END OF THIS DOC.***

6. REASONS:

6.1 Notwithstanding the investment to date, the service will be challenged to sustain the improvement already made and continue with the increase pace. There continues to be a reduction in agency workers and the workforce stability continues to grow. We now need to further develop our workforce planning model and look where possible to 'grow our own' and for full acknowledgement that we need to be able to implement a framework where a Social Workers caseload reflects the skills, knowledge and experience of each individual worker at each stage in their career.

7. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

| Finance | |
|--|---------|
| One Social Work Post (37 hours) SCP 37 Ring fenced, only utilised to support the development of newly qualified social worker (over the establishment, within first 3 years of practice) | £43,905 |

7.1 This new post should be cost neutral to the Authority from the point of view that it will help to reduce reliance on more expensive agency staff. Currently the Children Services staffing budget reflects social worker vacancies at the top of the band which provides us with some flexibility within the workforce budget to support this programme as newly qualified social workers are ordinarily appointed to the bottom of the band. This recommendation will hopefully result in a positive impact on the Children Services over spend

position although on times it will represent an addition to the staffing budget of when there is a newly qualify worker in the post. (this post will be utilised in a flexible manner and it is unlikely that the post will be occupied for the whole year)

- 7.2 We will continue to ensure that the allocation of workforce resource is optimised and monitored using our caseload weighting.
- 7.3 The proposed post will only be used **when required** and **when there is a suitable candidate**. The newly qualified worker will only be put into this post for a limited period of time before being appointed into an established vacancy in the service.
- 7.4 The post will be discussed within our weekly workforce planning meetings and will be aligned to where a vacancy is likely to arise (potentially requiring an agency response). The NQSW will be appointed into an establishment post once a vacancy matches the skills, knowledge, competence and behaviour of the NQSW.
- 7.5 The potential cost savings to the service of employing a worker on our terms and conditions as opposed to an agency worker ranges between £15,600 and £20,800 per year.
- 7.6 The actual agency costs within the service over recent years are as below. The reduction of agency workers out of the system therefore represents a potential savings as below. You will see we are tracking towards a significant reduction in agency costs as compared to previous years.

| <u>Year</u> | <u>Social Worker Agency Spend (£)</u> | <u>Equated to WTE posts (Approx)</u> | <u>Potential saving if these posts on MCC T & C (£ Approx)</u> |
|--------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|
| 2013/14 | 495,689 | 8.0 | 120,000 |
| 2014/15 | 556,230 | 9.0 | 135,000 |
| 2015/16 | 694,964 | 11.0 | 165,000 |
| 2016/17 | 690,333 | 11.0 | 165,000 |
| 2017/18 | 619,895 | 10.0 | 150,000 |
| Current year | Currently Tracking under £200,000 | 3.0 | 45,000 |

N.B. The above figures are approximate depending on the hourly rate of the individual agency worker with an assignment, based on skills, knowledge and experience.

8. WELLBEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS IMPLICATIONS (INCORPORATING EQUALITIES, SUSTAINABILITY, SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING):

The proposal in this report looks to align people's skills and competencies to increase organisational efficiency and effectiveness in line with the Social Services and Well Being Act.

9. CONSULTEES:

Workforce Development Manager
Workforce Development Officer
HR
Service Managers
Social Care and Health DMT
Children's Services - via CSLT
Finance

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Supporting documentation from Social Care Wales:-

https://socialcare.wales/cms_assets/file-uploads/The-First-3-Years-in-Practice-1.pdf

<https://socialcare.wales/learning-and-development/post-qualifying-training>

<https://socialcare.wales/resources/social-worker---workforce-planning-2016--17>

11. AUTHOR: Jane Rodgers

12. CONTACT DETAILS:

E-mail: janerodgers@monmouthshire.gov.uk

Evaluation Criteria – Cabinet, Individual Cabinet Member Decisions & Council

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Title of Report: | Social Workers First Years in Practice Framework. |
| Date decision was made: | |
| Report Author: | Jane Rodgers |

What will happen as a result of this decision being approved by Cabinet or Council?

What is the desired outcome of the decision?

What effect will the decision have on the public/officers?

Align people's skills and competencies to increase organisational efficiency and effectiveness in line with the Social Services and Well Being Act.

Was the desired outcome achieved? What has changed as a result of the decision? Have things improved overall as a result of the decision being taken?

What benchmarks and/or criteria will you use to determine whether the decision has been successfully implemented?

Think about what you will use to assess whether the decision has had a positive or negative effect:

Has there been an increase/decrease in the number of users

Has the level of service to the customer changed and how will you know

If decision is to restructure departments, has there been any effect on the team (e.g increase in sick leave)

- Reduction of agency workers used to cover vacancies. Service would be able to 'grow our own'.
- NQSW would have the right level of complexity of cases in line with their stage of development.
- We would be the employer of choice for NQSW's.
- Reduced sickness absence for NQSW.
- As NQSW confidence grows as well as knowledge and experience more complex cases can be introduced.

Paint a picture of what has happened since the decision was implemented. Give an overview of how you fared against the criteria. What worked well, what didn't work well. The reasons why you might not have achieved the desired level of outcome. Detail the positive outcomes as a direct result of the decision. If something didn't work, why didn't it work and how has that effected implementation.

What is the estimate cost of implementing this decision or, if the decision is designed to save money, what is the proposed saving that the decision will achieve?

Give an overview of the planned costs associated with the project, which should already be included in the report, so that once the evaluation is completed there is a quick overview of whether it was delivered on budget or if the desired level of savings was achieved.

12 month appraisal

Give an overview of whether the decision was implemented within the budget set out in the report or whether the desired amount of savings was realised. If not, give a brief overview of the reasons why and what the actual costs/savings were.

Any other comments

