

Gwent-wide Workforce Development Team

Proposed Operating Principles and Next Steps

The three elements of the model work together as follows:

- **Social Work Careers** focuses on attraction, qualification, development, leadership, practice improvement and statutory responsibilities of registered social workers, supporting high-quality, strengths-based practice across the region.
- **Social Care Skills Development** supports the wider social care sector workforce, including induction, qualifications, training pathways, registration, compliance, and career progression across regulated and unregulated roles.
- **Business Strategy** will provide the enabling infrastructure, including business partnership arrangements with each local authority, budgeting, planning, data and performance intelligence, event management, quality assurance, evaluation, and continuous improvement to ensure impact and value for money.

A Service Manager will need to be appointed.

It is proposed that the Service Manager will report to the Director of Children's Services. It is further proposed that the Service Manager will be supported by Lead Managers for the three elements of the model outlined above.

The Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 (TUPE) arrangements will apply to the current workforce development staff employed by Monmouthshire and the other 2 local authorities, through consultation, all staff will be aligned to appropriate roles within the service based on skills and experience.

While the service will operate as a regional model, it will remain responsive to local priorities and delivery needs. This balance ensures consistency and equity of an essential core offer across the region, while retaining the flexibility to respond to local workforce needs, service models, and any additional local authority investment over and above the grant allocations.

The proposed main base for the new regional service is Foxes Lane in Oakdale where the existing Blaenau Gwent and Caerphilly Team is already based. There is room to expand to accommodate the needs of a regional service. This will effectively be the hub for the region, but the model relies on local connections and local delivery across the region as required. The funding for the accommodation will need to be met through local authority contributions.

The regional service will:

- Respond to the ongoing workforce development requirements for children's and adult social care
- Support both the registered and unregistered workforces
- Work across statutory services and commissioned providers
- Support local authority workforce planning where appropriate
- Engage with national bodies ie ADSS Cymru and Social Care Wales

- Support regional marketing initiatives to improve social care recruitment
- Develop consistent social care workforce induction, training and continuous professional development across the region – which is in addition to existing corporate provision
- Support sector wide leadership and management development eg the National Team Manager Development Programme (TMDP) and Middle Manager Development Programme (MMDP)
- Support consistent practice education and career pathways to meet Social Care Wales registration requirements
- Supporting local authorities to promote social care workforce wellbeing and resilience

Whilst hosted by Caerphilly, the new service will be established on a formal partnership agreement and in line with other regional partnership arrangements, it is proposed that a Management Board will be established consisting of strategic leads for each local authority in order to:

- Set regional priorities and direction
- Approve annual plans and budgets
- Monitor performance, risk and impact
- Ensure equitable benefit for all participating authorities

Subject to approval, the next steps will be to:

- Establish an internal working group including key officers from HR, Legal, IT and Finance to develop an implementation plan
- Engage with the other Local Authorities to ensure the necessary approval processes are followed to support the development
- Establish the Gwent Social Care Workforce Management Board
- Progress recruitment to the regional leadership structure ie the Service Manager and 3 Lead Managers
- Develop a detailed implementation and communications plan

As stated above, a formal legal partnership agreement will need to be developed to underpin the hosted regional service and subject to approval to proceed, appropriate advice will be sought. This may be through a Section 113 agreement or formal Memorandum of Understanding across the five Gwent local authorities. Caerphilly are currently looking at the legal/partnership agreement that is in place for the existing Blaenau Gwent and Caerphilly Service because it may be possible to expand that agreement to include the other three local authorities.