



Cabinet Member (Children and Young People)

Time and Date

3.30 pm on Monday, 16th April, 2018

Place

Diamond Room 1 - Council House

Public Business

1. **Apologies**
2. **Declarations of Interests**
3. **Minutes** (Pages 3 - 4)
 - (a) To agree the minutes of the meeting held on 9 October 2017.
 - (b) Matters Arising
4. **Recommendations from the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2) Task and Finish Group on the Retention of Social Workers**
(Pages 5 - 26)
Report of the Director of Children's Services
5. **Outstanding Issues Report**
There are no outstanding issues
6. **Any other items of public business which the Cabinet Member decides to take as a matter of urgency because of the special circumstances involved**

Private Business

Nil

Martin Yardley, Executive Director (Place), Council House Coventry

Friday, 6 April 2018

Note: The person to contact about the agenda and documents for this meeting is Usha Patel, Governance Services Tel: 024 7683 3198

Membership: Councillors B Kaur (Deputy Cabinet Member) and E Ruane (Cabinet Member)

By invitation: Councillor J Lepoidevin (Shadow Cabinet Member)

Please note: a hearing loop is available in the committee rooms

If you require a British Sign Language interpreter for this meeting
OR if you would like this information in another format or
language please contact us.

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Coventry City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of Cabinet Member for Children and Young People held at 3.30 pm on Monday, 9 October 2017

Present:

Members: Councillor E Ruane (Cabinet Member)
Councillor J Lepoidevin (Shadow Cabinet Member)

Employees (by Directorate):

People: S Chun Lam, N MacDonald

Place: L Knight

Apologies: Councillor B Kaur

Public Business

18. Declarations of Interests

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests.

19. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on the 28th February 2017 were agreed and signed as a true record.

20. Children's Social Care Comments, Compliments and Complaints Annual Report 2016/17

The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive (People) which set out details of the comments, compliments and complaints across Coventry's children's social care services during 2016/17.

The report indicated that there was a statutory duty for the Council to have a system for receiving representations by, or on behalf of, children who use the social care services they provide or commission; and for the Council to produce an annual report about the operations of the complaints procedure.

Between 1st April 2016 and 31st March 2017, there was a total of 173 complaints (147 statutory and 26 informal complaints) received about children's social care. This was an increase from 133 statutory complaints in 2015/16. 15 of the complaints were from children and young people themselves or from an advocate, compared to 17 the previous year. There were two main theme identified as arising from the complaints which were issues regarding poor communication with users and concerns about the standards of service provided.

There were also 91 compliments received during the year compared to 68 in 2015/16. These were predominantly around the good standard of practice received from individual social workers and the overall standard of service received from teams.

The annual report for 2016/17 was set out at Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 detailed the internal guidance for handling People Directorate and social care complaints.

Having noted the significant increase in the number of compliments received, the Cabinet Member sought clarification on how the good work of staff is recognised.

RESOLVED that, the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People:-

- 1. Notes the Council's performance in relation to complaints and representations in children social care in 2016/17.**
- 2. Requests that investigations be made in to how the Council recognises the good work of staff and that this information be provided to the Cabinet Member.**

21. Outstanding Issues Report

There were no outstanding issues.

22. Any Other Business

There were no items of other business.

(Meeting closed at 3.45 pm)



Cabinet Member Children and Young People

16 April 2018

Name of Cabinet Member:

Children and Young People – Councillor E Ruane

Director Approving Submission of the report:

Director of Children's Services

Ward(s) affected:

None

Title:

Recommendations from the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2) Task and Finish Group on the Retention of Social Workers

Is this a key decision?

No

Executive Summary:

At their meeting on 29th June 2017 the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2) agreed to establish a task and finish group to consider the issues and details around the retention of social workers arising from an item on the Ofsted report. The Members met 4 times, as well as holding two focus groups with social workers.

Recommendations:

The Cabinet Member is requested to:

- 1) Consider the recommendations agreed by the Education and Children's Scrutiny Board (2) at their meeting on 27th March 2018. The agreed recommendations were as follows:

The Education and Children's Scrutiny Board are recommended to:

- a. Write to the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People in support of the proposed career progressions scheme for social workers and the removal of the market supplement for specific social workers
- b. Receive a report on implementation of the progression scheme in September 2018, including details of numbers of staff leaving due to the removal of the market supplement and any associated agency costs.
- c. Receive an annual report on exit interview data and Member focus groups with social workers.
- d. Request that:
 - i. The Director of Children's Services ensure that members of the Children's Senior Leadership Team communicate with front line staff face to face on a regular basis.

- ii. The Director of Project Management and Property Services, through the planned refurbishment of Broadgate House, ensure that Social Workers have sufficient equipment, desk space and private meeting space to carry out their roles effectively.
 - iii. The Director of Customer Service and Transformation give consideration to the provision of specialist administrative support to Social Work teams.
- e. Formally thank officers for the progress they have recently made on the improvement journey

List of Appendices included:

Appendix 1: Scoping Document

Appendix 2: Social Work Research by the Teaching Partnership at Birmingham University

Appendix 3: Financial information

Appendix 4: Workforce Strategy and exit interview information

Background papers:

None

Other useful documents

Briefing note which went to the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2) on 29th March 2018

<http://moderngov.coventry.gov.uk/documents/s37635/BN%20Recommendations%20Social%20Worker%20TF%20final.pdf>

Has it been or will it be considered by Scrutiny?

No – but a briefing note with recommendations from the task and finish group went to the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2) – 29 March 2018

Has it been or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?

No

Will this report go to Council?

No

Report title: Recommendations from the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2)
Task and Finish Group on the Retention of Social Workers

1 Context (or background)

- 1.1 At their meeting on 29th June 2017 the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2) agreed to establish a task and finish group to consider the issues and details around the retention of social workers arising from an item on the Ofsted report.
- 1.2 The members of the task and finish group were agreed to be:
 - Councillor Lepoidevin
 - Councillor Lucas
 - Councillor Male
 - Councillor Miks
 - Councillor Mal Mutton (Chair)
 - Councillor Seaman
- 1.3 The Members met 4 times, as well as holding two focus groups with social workers.

2 Options considered and recommended proposal

Scope and context

- 2.1 Members agreed and amended the scope attached at Appendix 1. Members discussed the Workforce Strategy, what works in other areas and information about the proposed progression scheme for social workers.
- 2.2 The Children's Workforce Strategy is seen as a driving force for improvement led by the principal social worker and the director of children's services. Officers had identified that career progression for social workers was lacking in Coventry, so, as a response have developed the social work academy, progression scheme and are creating the conditions for good social work to flourish such as good supervision, the right culture, pay, and manageable caseloads, on which there have been challenges.
- 2.3 They have had successes in terms of newly qualified social workers but their main issue is the recruitment and retention of experienced social workers. They are developing a post qualifying pathway with Coventry University, and creating manageable caseloads which the redesign of children's services will support.
- 2.4 Members heard that the senior management team is now stable but changes that have been made over the last three years will not yet be having an impact on the outcomes for children. This will take time, maybe five years. Ofsted have judged that Children's Services require improvement but could recognise that there is the capacity at a senior management and political level to make this happen.
- 2.5 Members were given an overview of the draft progression scheme currently being developed. The proposal is to introduce an advanced social worker grade, which enables progression, without moving into management and keeping good experienced social workers in front-line practice.
- 2.6 Members requested further financial information on the costs of the advanced social worker grade alongside the market supplement that was offered to some social workers and the effect of withdrawing the supplement.

3 What works to retain social workers in practice

- 3.1 Members discussed the implications of the £5,000 market supplement and the proposed removal in detail.

- 3.2 Members heard that 43 existing social workers were receiving the supplement out of a work force of 303. The supplement was only available to specialist child protection social workers and had, in effect, created a two-tier workforce as not all social workers were eligible for the top-up.
- 3.3 These social workers would be encouraged to apply for the advanced social worker roles which will be open to all staff. The pay grade for successfully achieving the advanced social worker role will be comparable to the market supplement.
- 3.4 Members raised concerns about informing those social workers who would be losing the supplement and also about those social worker who don't meet the requirements for the advanced social worker role.
- 3.5 Members were assured that any competency issues would be addressed. Senior officers and unions had been briefed on the proposed changes, however the 43 affected hadn't directly been informed at this time.
- 3.6 Members were broadly in favour of the changes as they address disparities in salary and also provide career progression for social work practitioners.
- 3.7 Members also considered the findings from a study by the social work research teaching partnership at Birmingham University into retention of social workers (Appendix 2). The key findings were that money is not the primary factor for social workers staying with a local authority. Other more important factors are being valued by the organisation, case load level and career progression.

4 Social Worker Focus Groups

- 4.1 14 social workers were able to feed in their views and comments on the issue of what would make their jobs more manageable, what would make them stay with Coventry, what would make them consider leaving.
- 4.2 Social workers from across various different service areas were represented, as well as different number of years in service. There were some social workers who were still within their post-qualifying period and some who had been with the Coventry for more than 10 years. There were also some experienced social workers who were new to Coventry.
- 4.3 Members started by asking the social workers how they had been recruited to Coventry and the induction that was offered. They were also asked about how Coventry compares to other organisations they have worked for.
- 4.4 Other areas of questioning included:
 - The impact of the redesign of children services
 - The quality of the training offer
 - Support from managers
 - Communication within the service
 - Flexible working and work/life balance
 - What is the one thing that needs to be improved
 - The requirements to become a "good" authority
 - Where they see themselves in 2,5 and 10 years' time
- 4.5 The key issues raised by staff were:
 - 4.5.1 What was working well
 - Training has improved, especially mix of in house and external training - Signs of Safety was specifically mentioned as good training
 - Induction period for newer recruits has improved compared to people in post for longer - possibility of a mentor or buddy for new staff to build confidence
 - Interview process involving children and young people

- Friendly place to work
- Respectful relationships - need time to rebuild these after the restructure
- Teams with stable managers seem to be where the restructure is settling in
- Expectations in practice, especially timeliness and record keeping are higher
- Flexi working enables work/life balance
- All staff were aware of the requirements for a journey to get to good
- The training and opportunities seem promising but those promises need to be kept.
- Signs of Safety was supported as an approach to child protection casework

4.5.2 Areas for improvement

- Caseloads need to be manageable – this was the one thing that would improve their working life
- Middle management needs to be stable and consistent
- Communication with front line staff about rationale behind required changes in practice from management
- Market supplement is divisive and seen as unequal, that some jobs are valued more than others
- Those currently receiving the market supplement may leave with a drop in income - mortgages and families etc.
- Knock on effects of the restructure that staff are unhappy with
- Learning from case file audits needs to be shared more widely than just with the specific member of staff whose file it is.
- Senior managers aren't always aware of what is happening on the ground.
- More permanent workers
- Sufficient handover periods for changing roles
- Consistency across the service - some areas are more settled than others.
- Specialist and service knowledgeable admin to free up social worker time and ensure more efficient signposting to correct team within the service

4.5.3 Specific messages from the restructure

- The speed of implementation of the restructure has meant cases have been reallocated several times affecting the children and families
- Changes to RAS were not managed well and are still having repercussions in terms of delays to allocation and changes in practice for some social workers
- Service area preferences seem to have been ignored
- The impact of the restructure has been staff leaving, low morale, feeling undervalued and poorly communicated with by senior managers and the work load has "trebled"
- There was also an impact in terms of scaling down cases to CAF level 2/3 - but this is now settling down too in the Family Hubs
- Will need significant time to bed down - 18 months.

4.6 Key message - staff are willing to put up with some bumpy bits through the changes, but they need to:

- Have consistent and constant communication - a "bear with us" message rather than "deal with it" approach
- See the benefits of the changes
- Feel valued and listened to
- Reduction in caseloads would be the one thing they would change to improve their working environment.

5 Meeting with the Children's Services Senior Leadership Team

5.1 Members discussed the findings from the social worker focus groups with the children's services senior leadership team.

- 5.2 There was a recognition from the senior leadership team that the service redesign had been a difficult process and that staff had found it hard. However they questioned whether there was a viable alternative to implementing the changes. To try and manage the transition the Senior Leadership Team had delivered several staff workshops in the run up to the changes.
- 5.3 A significant number of staff had got their preference for areas of work but it was not possible to do this for all staff. Staff are able to request internal transfers if they are unhappy with the area in which they are working and it was reported that some staff who had originally expressed a desire to move were happy with their new team.
- 5.4 Members were informed that social workers kept their caseloads during the transition to the new service to provide continuity for staff and families.
- 5.5 It was recognised by the senior leadership team that there was still more work to be done on managing caseloads and this was an area for improvement.
- 5.6 With relation to sharing the learning from case file audit information, currently there is a practice improvement forum for all case audits in the form of open sessions to all staff; slides from those sessions are then shared across the service. Audit reports are shared with all managers.
- 5.7 Audits are considered to be important drivers to upskill staff. Some staff obviously aren't clicking into that and there needs to be a way of reminding staff that the information is available and how to access it.
- 5.8 There was recognition that despite improvements in recruitment this had to be matched by improvements in retention to address the issue of turnover of staff, reliance on agency work and in turn the quality of the work force.
- 5.9 The Senior Leadership Team referred to the progressions scheme as a way of encouraging good social workers to stay in Coventry. By creating a career pathway, this will contribute to retention.
- 5.10 **Market Supplement and Advanced Practitioners**
- 5.11 Members were concerned that the removal of the market supplement may lead to some social workers leaving the authority and as a result increase reliance on agency staff. The cost of an agency social worker is an additional £30,000 pa.
- 5.12 All social workers currently receiving the market supplement will be entitled to apply to become advanced practitioners. However it was recognised that there would be some loss of social workers.
- 5.13 Members were assured that the process for becoming an advanced practitioner will be robust and those who don't quite make standard will be supported to do so. Members were assured that there would be no automatic transfer of social workers with supplement to the advanced practitioner role.
- 5.14 Members were also assured that social workers with very poor or dangerous practice would be exited from their jobs, if improvement could not be demonstrated.
- 5.15 Advanced practitioners will be expected to have 3 years post qualifying experience, then there will be a young people's panel and a panel of middle and senior managers to ensure that candidates meet the criteria for the role.
- 5.16 It was agreed that the Trade Unions need to be able to see the fairness and openness of the process.

6 Finance and HR issues

- 6.1 Members were provided with financial information on the current funded posts within Children's Services Social care, implemented as part of the workforce redesign. (Appendix 3)
- 6.2 There are a number of assumptions underpinning the staffing model including:
 - Caseloads: built in at 14 per social worker for Looked after children and child protection, and 20 per social worker for children in need, and 25 per personal advisor for former relevant children (leaving care) In addition to this, reductions to caseload have been made for certain posts (e.g. Senior Practitioners, newly qualified social workers NQSW)
 - Advanced Social Worker Posts (Grade 8): the structure includes resource to convert 50 FTE grade 7 Social Worker posts into Grade 8 Advanced social worker posts.
- 6.3 Members were informed that the introduction of the advanced social worker posts were cost neutral as a result of the removal of the market supplement.
- 6.4 Members welcomed the introduction of the advanced social worker and wanted to see a clear progression route for social workers, possibly in a flow chart that showed the different routes including different roles of senior practitioner and advanced social worker.
- 6.5 Members asked questions about the reduction in salary for those social workers who lose the market supplement but do not take the offered route to advanced social worker. Members also requested that officers were mindful of any extra costs of agency staff to cover vacancies caused by staff previously on the supplement leaving their posts.
- 6.6 Members also considered information gathered from exit interview of staff who had left the organisation (Appendix 4).
- 6.7 Members asked whether all that could be done to address the issues had been raised as reasons for leaving the organisation. Officers explained the current arrangements for job share and part time working. Social Workers worked within the same terms and conditions as other Council staff, including TOIL and flexi-time.
- 6.8 Members requested that information from exit interviews was collated and assessed on a regular basis, which should also include a breakdown of length of service of those staff who are leaving to monitor whether the turnover is in newer staff or longer established members of staff.
- 6.9 Members also discussed the working environment of social workers and whether hot-desking was appropriate. They also considered whether social workers had appropriate space to meet to discuss issues and share information, and whether social workers required different working environments to other Council staff.
- 6.10 Parking and appropriate electronic devices to enable social workers to do their jobs effectively were also discussed.

7 Results of consultation undertaken

- 7.1 Members of the task and finish group consulted with social workers employed by the city. The Social Workers were asked questions about their experiences with Coventry, what has worked and what would make them stay. They were also asked about what could be improved and also about the market supplement. The comments from social workers have been summarised in section 4 above.

8 Timetable for implementing this decision

- 8.1 The recommendations from the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2) can be implemented immediately.

9 Comments from Director of Finance and Corporate Services

9.1 Financial implications

The Children's Services structure has been funded as per the staffing model set out in paragraph 6.2. This position was built into the budget setting report taken to Cabinet in February. The administrative support for the service will need to be delivered within the overall budget for Admin and Business Services in 2018/19 and beyond. The refurbishment costs for Broadgate have also been budgeted for as part of the capital programme.

9.2 Legal implications

There are no specific legal implications in this report.

9.3 Other implications

None

9.4 How will this contribute to the Council Plan (www.coventry.gov.uk/councilplan/)?

The recommendations will contribute to the Council Plan, by supporting the "Protecting our most vulnerable citizens" and supporting the Children Services Transformation Programme contributing to the Workforce Transformation aspect.

10 How is risk being managed?

There is a risk that by removing the market supplement there will be a short term loss of staff, meaning an increase in agency staff. This risk is being mitigated by the opportunity for those staff to become advanced practitioners and the ongoing recruitment programme to recruit permanent staff to vacancies.

11 What is the impact on the organisation?

The impact on the organisation will be a stable social work workforce, which in turn will improve the quality and practice of the workforce. This will in turn improve outcomes for children and families and also reduce the financial cost of reliance on agency staff.

12 Equalities / EIA

There are no direct equality or EIA impacts of the recommendations.

13 Implications for (or impact on) the environment

None

14 Implications for partner organisations?

There are no implications for partner organisations

Report author(s):**Name and job title:**

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Place

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Contributors:				
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Lee Pardy-McLaughlin	Principal Social Worker	People	6/4/18	
Rachael Sugars	Finance Manager – Financial Management	Place	4/4/18	4/4/18
Other members				
Cllr Mal Mutton	Chair of Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2)		4/4/18	
Names of approvers for submission: (officers and members)				
Finance: Rachael Sugars	Finance Manager – Financial Management	Place	4/4/18	4/4/18
Legal: Carol Bradford	Corporate Governance Lawyer	Place	4/4/18	4/4/18
Director: John Gregg	Director of Children's Services	People	4/4/18	4/4/18
Deputy Chief Executive: Gail Quinton	Deputy Chief Executive - People	People		
Members: Cllr Ruane	Cabinet Member for Children and Young People		4/4/18	

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Scrutiny Scoping Document

Title of Review	
Retention of Social Workers	
Objectives	
What does the Board/Task and Finish Group hope to achieve by considering the topic?	Identify recommendations for the Cabinet Member to improve the retention of Social Workers
What will be the indicators of success?	In the long term an improvement in the retention of social workers.
When will the review be evaluated?	12 months from the agreement of the recommendations, however recruitment and retention rates are currently monitored as part of the Children's Improvement Board
Scope	
What will be included in the scope of the review?	The recruitment and retention of Social Workers in their jobs
What will be excluded from the scope?	Specific details of social worker qualification Use of agency staff
Does the review link with any existing strategies or policies? Is this currently being reviewed/refreshed?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children's Service Workforce Strategy action plan. • Progression Scheme (April 2018) • Workforce Board
Methodology	
How will the review be carried out? e.g. surveys, site visits, select committees etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings with senior managers • Focus group with existing social workers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ NQSW ○ Established SW ○ Team managers • Review of other local authorities policies/strategies • Review of exit interviews • Meeting with support services such as HR, Finance, Workforce development etc.
Barriers and Risks	
What are the barriers and risks to the review?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time and capacity of officers for the T&F group • Potential financial implications of any incentive schemes considered
How can these be managed/ overcome?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Realistic expectation on affordability – robust financial assessment of any proposals • Support provided by Scrutiny Team
Equality and Diversity	
Does the review have any potential implications for Equality and Diversity? (race, gender (including transgender), disability, sexual orientation, age, religion or belief, poverty, looked after children)	Equality and Diversity issues should be considered as part of this review, ensuring that no groups of employees experience discrimination and that this is not a factor in the non-retention of social workers.
Timescales and reporting procedure	
List any key dates/events which might impact on the timescales of the review	Recommendations to be considered by the Board March 1 st 2018, Cabinet Member 16 th April 2018
Anticipated number of meetings	4, plus focus groups
Scrutiny Board portfolio	SB2
Cabinet Member portfolio	Children and Young People
Anticipated reporting date to Scrutiny Board	1 st March 2018
Anticipated reporting route – Cabinet Member/Cabinet	Cabinet Member – 16 th April 2018
Report of.....	Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board
Comms involvement	Dependant on recommendations identified

Appendix 1

Meeting planner (dates to be agreed according to availability)

Meeting	Subject	Officers
1	<p>Introduction, agreement of scope, background and context to the issue.</p> <p>Information required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft scope (GH) • Current recruitment and retention data (LP-M) • Evidence available on what works (LP-M) • Children's Workforce Strategy • Progression Scheme 	JG, LP-M, GH
2	<p>Planning for focus groups and identification of questions – which include pastoral care for social workers and financial incentives</p> <p>Information required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exit interview information (JG/LP-M) • Information from other local authorities 	JG/LP-M GH
3	Focus groups with different groups of Social Workers	GH
4	Support services – HR, Workforce Development, Finance. To cover financial incentives as well as other potential incentives.	Reps from depts. JG/LP-M GH
5	<p>Final meeting to identify recommendations.</p> <p>Information required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summary of key points discussed and any areas for recommendations identified (GH) 	Children's Services Leadership Team GH

Retaining Social Workers – Messages from Research

In order for high quality services to be provided to children and their families, there is a need for a workforce that is well-trained, motivated and supported. However, there is evidence in the UK of a shortage of experienced child and family social workers (Research in Practice, 2015). Social workers on average remain in the profession for less than eight years (Curtis, et al. 2010).

When experienced social workers leave, there is an impact on the quality of the service that can be provided. Baginsky (2013) explored what is meant by the term ‘experienced’ social worker. ‘Experienced’ does not just refer to the number of years that a social worker has spent in practice, but also the depth and breadth of their experience. Experienced social workers should have an excellent understanding of social work theory and its application, and a knowledge of social work research.

Newly qualified social workers learn through peer support and interaction with more experienced workers, and a shortage of experienced social workers reduces the ‘community of practice’ for those beginning their careers. When there is a lack of skilled workers, confidence in the profession is reduced from both service users and other agencies (Buckley, 2008).

High staff turn-over leads to added pressure on those who remain, and a lack of continuity for children and families. Social work by its very nature relies upon relationships between the social worker and the children and families that they work with (Research in Practice, 2015).

Why do Social Workers Leave?

There are several reasons identified in research for social workers leaving their current role, Local Authority, or indeed the profession as a whole. These are known as ‘push factors’ (Research in Practice, 2015).

Culture of Blame

Children and families social work continues to receive negative media representation which increases anxiety among social workers who are dealing with complexity and risk. If social workers fear being blamed within their Local Authorities then they feel vulnerable and will lack trust in their managers (Healy et al, 2009; Baginsky, 2013).

In order to counteract this, organisation need to support ‘collective accountability’, with a shared commitment to supervision and continued learning and development (Research in Practice, 2015).

Lack of clarity about roles

Risk-averse culture within social care often results in decision making being done by management, rather than the social worker. This can lead to social workers feeling disempowered and unable to use their own professional judgement. When social workers are micro-managed in this way it can lead to low job satisfaction (Searle and Patent, 2013), which then can increase the likelihood of social workers leaving.

In order for social workers to make decisions, and for managers to have the confidence that they can do this, they need to be provided with continued professional development in order to improve their knowledge, confidence and skills (Ward, 2014).

High levels of stress and burnout

Higher levels of stress tend to be reported within social work than in other professions (Collins, 2008). When there is high staff turnover and vacancies within a team or organisation, the remaining social workers caseloads increase, and newly qualified social workers can be expected to take on too much responsibility from an early stage in their career. If this continues, over time the risk of emotional burnout increases (Gibbs, 2009). Stress can impact on social workers judgements and their ability to perform tasks (Baginsky, 2013).

Organisations need to be proactive and not reactive in promoting the well-being of their social workers (Research in Practice, 2015).

Overly bureaucratic systems

Research suggests that the core reason that social workers enter the profession is to complete direct work with children and families, and when social workers are able to do this their job satisfaction increases (Stalker et al., 2007). Overly bureaucratic systems (such as awkward electronic recording systems), reduce the amount of time that social workers can spend with children and their families. There is also a lack of administrative support across social care, and this leads to social workers having to do more administration tasks. Gibson (2016) found that when social work focusses on administrative tasks, the social workers 'capacity for empathy for the parents' is reduced.

Organisations need to simplify and integrate their procedures where this is possible, or provide administrative support in order to give social workers more time to use their expertise with children and their families (Research in Practice, 2015).

Negative Ofsted judgement

Staff turnover can increase following a negative Ofsted judgement, as well as interim appointments in management and leadership roles, increasing the instability within an

organisation (Research in Practice, 2015). A poor Ofsted judgement creates anxiety staff, and can also lead to an increase in their workload, due to staff turnover and attempts to improve services (Kelly, 2005).

Organisations need to acknowledge and challenge where practice has not been adequate, but also need to recognise that staff may feel 'over-criticised' and want to leave, at the time when the organisation needs them most (Research in Practice, 2015).

Why do Social Workers Stay?

There are numerous reasons identified in research as to why social workers stay in their current team, organisation or the profession as a whole. These are known as 'pull factors' (Research in Practice, 2015).

Making a difference

The majority of social workers are very committed to the work that they do. A motivation for social workers is making a difference in the lives of the children and their families with whom they work (Stalker et al., 2007).

Organisations which allow a maximum time to be spent with children and their families, have higher levels of job satisfaction, are more desirable places for social workers to work (Research in Practice, 2015).

Good quality supervision, support and the opportunity for development

If social workers feel supported by their supervisor, and their peers, social workers are more likely to want to remain in this organisation. Where there is good quality supervision and continued professional development is valued, this helps reduce the stress and pressure of social work. The sense of belonging to a team and having support from colleagues increases the well-being of social workers (Research in Practice, 2015).

Opportunities for career progression

Recognising experienced social workers and having pathways for career progression are effective ways of retaining experienced social workers (Burns, 2010). Progression pathways should include, but not be exclusively management positions, with case-holding senior and advanced practitioner roles, and practice educator posts also being recognised (Research in Practice, 2015).

Organisational support for emotional well-being

There are numerous methods for social workers to develop a greater resilience and manage the emotional stresses of their work (i.e. Mindfulness). Organisations as a whole should commit to supporting practitioners well-being, rather than placing the responsibility on the individual (Russ et al, 2009).

Feeling valued

Feeling valued is regularly cited as a reason why social workers stay. Pay is one aspect of valuing staff, but more often referenced is the way that social workers are treated and spoken to by management and the organisation (Research in Practice, 2015).

Good quality management

Social workers are more likely to stay within their team or organisation if they have a good quality manager. A confident team manager is able to protect their team, even within the context of a highly stressed Local Authority, whereas an inexperienced manager can contribute to the stress that the social workers are experiencing (Baginsky, 2013).

What works in Social Work Retention?

Retaining experienced social workers is a challenge across children and families social work, and particularly in child protection teams. In order to retain experienced social workers there needs to be greater stability in organisations and higher levels of job satisfaction. This in turn will lead to more positive outcomes for children and families. Baginsky (2013) found that the factors that are most closely associated with retaining experienced social workers are:

- Workloads, remuneration and working conditions
- Positive workplace cultures
- Supervision that addresses both organisational and professional requirements
- Opportunities for professional and career development

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A Workforce Overview Note (including Market Supplement)Childrens Services Restructure Overview

The table below shows the current funded posts within Children's Services Social care, implemented as part of the workforce redesign.

Job Description	Grade	Responsive services	Area Team	LAC Team	TroughCare	Fostering	Placements	Total FTE
Service Manager	SM2	1.0	4.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	9.0
Team Manager	9	5.0	16.0	3.0	3.0	4.0	1.0	32.0
Senior Practitioner	8	5.0	17.0	3.0	3.0	4.0	0.0	32.0
Children & Family Social Worker	7	14.0	106.0	19.0	13.0	20.0	1.0	173.0
Newly Qualified Social Worker	6	0.0	16.0	3.0	3.0	4.0	0.0	26.0
Children & Family Worker	5	5.0	16.0	3.0	0.0	4.0	0.0	28.0
Personal Advisor	5	0	0.0	0	11	0.0	0	11.0
Other posts	Various	7	3	5.6	0	1	4	20.6

There are a number of assumptions underpinning the staffing model including

Caseloads: built in at 14 per social worker for Looked after children and child protection, and 20 per social worker for children in need, and 25 per personal advisor for former relevant children (leaving care) In addition to this, reductions to caseload have been made for certain posts (e.g. Senior Practitioners, newly qualified social workers NQSW)

Advanced Social Worker Posts (grade 8): the structure includes resource to convert 50 FTE grade 7 Social Worker posts into Grade 8 Advanced social worker posts.

Current Position

There are currently 45 agency workers covering vacancies, and we continue to look to reduce this number through recruitment and retention.

In addition there are currently 45 NQSW's, which is higher than the original workforce model.

There are currently 48.2 full time equivalent social workers receiving the market supplement. Replacing this with 50 FTE Grade 8 Advanced Social Worker posts in the new structure is cost neutral.

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Children's Social Care Plan for the Retention of Staff

Aim

The plan to improve the recruitment and retention of Social Workers across the Children's Service has been in place for a number of years and takes many forms. This programme will ensure that we have well-trained, a supported and motivated workforce, who feel valued and remain with Coventry City Council.

Our Role

- Organisational Development Team play a crucial role in the retention of Social Workers across the Childrens Service and to ensure their experience here is improved.
- The Children's Workforce Development Adviser supports Childrens Services with the Social Work Experience Programme, by visiting the teams in the Hubs, inducting new Social Workers and carrying out exit interviews.
- The common themes are shared with the Workforce Development Board on a monthly basis.
- Organisational Development also provide a comprehensive Learning and Development portfolio to ensure employees can access high quality courses to improve their skills and knowledge to help support the children, young people and families in our City.

Outcomes

- The Social Work Experience Programme commenced in January 2016 with the Induction of the Strategic Leads – The Children's Workforce Development Adviser now inducts all newly appointed experienced Social Workers across the Service
- Exit Interviews – all Social Workers are interviewed to feedback about their experiences of working for Children's Services (e.g. what worked well, or what improvements we need to consider within the Service)
- Signs of Safety Framework – is the frame work that is currently being embedded across the Service to support Practitioners in their work. 463 employees have been trained along with 62 Practice Leads and 60 Partner services across the City
- A comprehensive Learning and Development Portfolio has been designed for the Service since 2015. Courses are mapped to the Knowledge and Skills Standards, Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF), Workforce Development Strategy, Appraisals and the Improvement Plan

Exit interviews- Key themes

Reasons for Leaving:

- Improved work/life balance
- Better Flexibility
- Closer to home
- Improved progression

Social Worker Feedback

- ASYE Programme is attractive with protected caseload and support

Appendix 4

- Great support from my Service Manager and Team Manager and from Social Workers in my team
- Induction was very informative
- There are lots of opportunities here in Coventry
- My Manager encourages feedback and suggestions
- Colleagues listened and supported me
- Excellent supervision – generally high quality
- Time management is important with level of cases
- Work/life balance is promoted, not always able to practice this
- Lower caseloads for Social Workers required
- Clearer progression pathway needed and expectations shared
- Academic progression would be welcomed
- Following the re-design, workers need reassurance, to feel valued
- Internal communication should be clearer
- Acknowledge good practice more

Statistics

From October 2016:

- 34 Social Work Leavers
- 18 Exit Interviews
- 53% interviewed
- 100% of leavers notified to OD are offered an interview

Process

- Manager completes leaver form
- Report sent to Organisational Development weekly
- Leaver invited for an interview at their convenience in their place of work
- Structured template covering; recruitment, induction, the Coventry experience, role, challenges and improvements, development, leadership and management, support, suggestions, future
- Engagement after leaving from John Gregg; thank you and conversation if they would like to return