

DECISION-MAKER:	CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SCRUTINY PANEL		
SUBJECT:	CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SOCIAL WORK WORKFORCE		
DATE OF DECISION:	21 APRIL 2016		
REPORT OF:	SERVICE DIRECTOR – CHILDREN AND FAMILIES		
<u>CONTACT DETAILS</u>			
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STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY			
None			
BRIEF SUMMARY			
<p>Over the last few years Southampton City Council has faced significant difficulties recruiting and retaining social workers, in particular within Children and Families. Information, to be presented to the Panel at the meeting, will outline the current recruitment and retention issues within Southampton providing comparison to other local authorities, who are in many cases facing similar difficulties. Information presented to the Panel will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staffing numbers including details of vacancies and agency staff • Caseloads • Sickness Rates • A summary of the Social Work health check • Staff feedback • Impact on the provision of services to children and families • Actions taken to date as well as an outline of proposals to address the issue over the longer term. 			
RECOMMENDATIONS:			
	(i)	That, following the presentation, the Panel notes the issues faced in relation to developing a stable permanent workforce.	
	(ii)	That, following the presentation, the Panel notes the actions and the developing plans to address workforce issues.	
REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS			
1.	At the February 2016 meeting of the Children and Families Scrutiny Panel a report was requested on workforce issues within Children and Families. This reflects the issues discussed by the Panel when considering performance information relating to difficulties recruiting and retaining social workers.		
ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED			
2.	None. As identified above this follows a request from the Panel.		
DETAIL (Including consultation carried out)			

3.	Over the last few years Southampton City Council has faced significant difficulties recruiting and retaining social workers in particular within Children and Families.
4.	Traditional and present methods of recruiting and retaining social workers within Southampton have failed to secure a permanent workforce resulting in an over reliance on agency staff perpetuating and even adding to the difficulties in recruiting. The over reliance on agency staff has resulted in the Council incurring significant financial costs and impacting on the quality of provision of services.
5.	The cause cannot be attributed to any one particular factor but is multi-faceted with issues such as salaries, workload, physical environment, nature of the work and training all playing a part. The use of market supplements and retention payments has been used but this has had only a limited impact.
6.	In order to address both the recruitment and retention of social workers within Southampton work has, and is being, undertaken to identify the key factors hindering this objective.
7.	A Health Check has been undertaken and consultation with staff within Children and Families Service was conducted at the end of 2015. Further consultation work is being planned and Unison have also offered to provide feedback from social workers.
8.	As part of the Transformation Programme present arrangements have been reviewed in relation to the provision of agency staff and the recruitment of permanent staff, which is likely to provide opportunities to reduce costs, improve the quality of agency social workers and focus on recruiting a permanent workforce.
9.	An interim Project Manager with skills and knowledge in the Social Care field has been appointed within the Transformation Team to lead on recruitment and retention. This will build upon existing work undertaken and link closely to the restructuring of the Children and Families service, the digitalisation agenda and developing a clear approach to securing a more permanent workforce.
10.	At the meeting the Panel will be provided with workforce statistics enabling comparison with other local authorities and further details of the actions taken to date, as well as an outline of proposals to address the recruitment and retention issue over the longer term.
RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS	
<u>Capital/Revenue</u>	
11.	The cost of agency staff has caused considerable financial issues within Children and Families and has impacted upon the Council. Caps on agency fees have been introduced but the cost of an agency worker is still far in excess (75%-80%) of a permanent member of staff.
<u>Property/Other</u>	
12.	None.
LEGAL IMPLICATIONS	
<u>Statutory power to undertake proposals in the report:</u>	

13.	The duty to undertake overview and scrutiny is set out in Part 1A Section 9 of the Local Government Act 2000.	
Other Legal Implications:		
14.	None	
POLICY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS		
15.	Addressing the recruitment and retention difficulties within Children and families will help the Council to meet targets against the following Council priorities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevention and early intervention • Protecting vulnerable people. 	
KEY DECISION		No
WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED:		None directly as a result of this report
<u>SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION</u>		
Appendices		
1.	None	
Documents In Members' Rooms		
1.	None	
Equality Impact Assessment		
Do the implications/subject of the report require an Equality and Safety Impact Assessments (ESIA) to be carried out.		No
Privacy Impact Assessment		
Do the implications/subject of the report require a Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA) to be carried out.		No
Other Background Documents		
Equality Impact Assessment and Other Background documents available for inspection at:		
Title of Background Paper(s)		Relevant Paragraph of the Access to Information Procedure Rules / Schedule 12A allowing document to be Exempt/Confidential (if applicable)
1.	None	