

# **WORKFORCE PLAN**

**2004 – 2005**

Nottinghamshire County Council  
Social Services Department

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Definition

Workforce planning is a means of matching staff resources with the service needs and objectives of the department. It has been described as the process of:

**“getting the right people, with the right competencies, in the right jobs at the right time”**

Workforce planning can be used by organisations to tackle current staffing shortages at the same time as responding to and planning for changes as they impact upon the workforce.

### 1.2 Benchmarking

The National Health Service has been workforce planning for a number of years and Workforce Development Confederations are currently in the process of developing workforce plans to apply the effects of modernisation and changing roles.

However, workforce planning has not had the same profile within local authorities as it has in the NHS. Local authorities have been variably working to address workforce development and recruitment and retention issues, but have not necessarily organised this work in the shape of a ‘workforce plan’. Our research suggests that developed workforce plans are currently uncommon in local authorities generally and amongst Social Services Departments.

A number of Social Services Departments are developing workforce plans and others have produced documents entitled ‘workforce plans’, but none of these incorporate all the aspects that textbooks or toolkits recommend e.g. forecasting future workforce requirements in terms of roles, working practices, numbers and skills are not features of the sample plans that we have seen to date.

Therefore, there is no set model of workforce planning for local authorities to work towards.

### 1.3 The Employer’s Organisation

The Employer’s Organisation offer some guidance on what workforce planning might involve for local authorities, as follows:

- Analysis of the present workforce profile
- Identification of future skills and competencies needed to deliver change or an improvement of services

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- Identifying labour and skills shortages between the present workforce and the projected needs
- Developing a detailed workforce plan to implement strategies to build capacity where it is needed.

### **2. Purpose of the Workforce Plan**

To ensure that the Department:

- a) addresses our short term recruitment priorities
- b) addresses our short term retention priorities
- c) identifies the skills, experience, knowledge and working practices required of staff over future years
- d) identifies measures to achieve future needs of the Service in an increasingly competitive recruitment market.

#### **2.1 Improving Services**

Social Services Departments are complex organisations with a wide variety of services to plan, commission, manage and deliver. Nottinghamshire County Council aspires to be a top 20 local authority. The Social Services Department is currently a two star authority with promising prospects for improvement. The implementation of a Workforce Plan is an important element in maintaining and improving services.

#### **2.2 Social Care Register**

The introduction of the Social Care Register in April 2003 by the General Social Care Council, has generated implications for workforce planning. The national Codes of Practice for both employees and employers of social care staff promotes high standards of professional practice, post registration development and employee conduct. The implications of registration, which becomes a statutory requirement for all staff in posts demanding a social work qualification, on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2005, need to be taken into consideration.

#### **2.3 Ownership of the Workforce Plan**

The effective development and delivery of a Workforce Plan requires involvement and ownership by managers at all levels. The intention is to identify the overall direction and priorities for the Department in workforce planning terms and to tap into the enthusiasm, creativity and initiative of local managers to guide development of the Plan.

### **3. Linking Workforce Planning with Existing Strategies, Plans and Legislation**

#### **3.1 Strategic Links**

There are close links with a range of other County Council, Social Services and Inter Agency Plans. The success of the workforce plan will be dependent on a clear vision for our services and the specification for services, including staff numbers and types of employment that will be required in the future.

The Workforce Plan is linked to the:

- County Council's Strategic Plan
- Commissioning Plans
- Training and Development Plan
- Organisational Development and Improvement Plan
- Departmental Business Plan
- Department Human Resources Strategy (The People Plan).

There is also a strong link with the corporate Personnel Strategy which in the last two years has been principally concerned with modernising core personnel policies and procedures and developing and implementing a job evaluation and pay strategy in two phases. The County Council is also developing a corporate Human Resources Strategy which may have implications for the Workforce Plan.

#### **3.2 Recent Developments**

Some of the departmental developments in recent years which form a solid platform for further progress include:

- Trainee Scheme for Social Workers
- Violence to Staff Policy
- Stress Management Policy
- Counselling Service
- Health and Safety Policies
- Physiotherapy service
- Black Workers Group
- Disabled Workers Group
- Employee Relations Policy
- Employee Satisfaction Surveys
- Staff Focus Groups
- Organisational Development Reference Group
- Investors in People Champions Group
- Pilots on Flexible Working Arrangements
- PQ Strategy and Targets
- NVQ Strategy and Targets

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- Moving and Handling Strategy
- Management Development Programme
- Employee Learning and Development Plans
- Career Pathways
- Induction (Corporate, Departmental and Service Area)
- Employee Performance & Development Reviews
- Guidelines for Managers on Managing Performance
- Audits and Self-Assessment
- Quality Assurance Schemes
- Attendance Management Action Plans

### **3.3 Links with Organisational Development**

Organisational Development is concerned with the diagnosis of organisational health and performance and the ability of the organisation to adapt to change. It involves a range of processes to ensure the delivery of strategic direction and vision. Organisational Development ensures a co-ordinated and consistent approach by the Department and the County Council aimed at the development of individuals, groups and the organisation and therefore has a close alliance with workforce planning.

The diagram on page 7 illustrates how the current strategies and plans integrate with the Workforce Plan.

### **3.4 The Legislative Framework**

There are a number of legislative requirements that impact upon planning for the social care workforce including:

- Employment Act
- Data Protection Act
- Working Time Directives
- TUPE Regulations
- Disability Discrimination Act
- Race Relations Act Amendment Act
- Sex Discrimination Act
- Age Discrimination Act
- Equal Treatment Directive

Workforce Planning Links with Corporate Strategies and Departmental Plans





**3.5 Equality and Diversity**

The County covers 805 square miles. The profile of current issues and factors indicate different impacts across geographical areas affecting different parts of the County. This may require differential approaches, balanced with the need to ensure adherence to employment law including equal pay legislation. There can be no 'one size fits all' approach.

The Departmental profile should reflect the composition of the community in respect of race, disability and sexual orientation. The Department has a reasonable workforce profile in many respects, but continued improvement is necessary.

**4. Linking Workforce Planning with Potential Future Strategies and Plans**

**4.1 Possible Future Corporate Links**

The approach taken in this plan is to consider a wide range of measures which can be flexibly, but fairly applied to different occupational groups. A whole raft of measures may be relevant, some of which will have corporate implications, including:

- "Marketing" the Department and Career Opportunities
- Pay and Reward Strategies
- Terms and Conditions of Service
- Measures Relating to the Demographic Characteristics of the Workforce
- School to Work
- Supporting Qualifying Training
- Career Path Development (including Career Change)
- Supporting the Mature Workforce
- Flexible Working
- Work / Life Balance
- Individual and Collective Training and Development

**4.2 Health and the Independent Sector**

The vision for the future involves joining up, integrating or linking services with a range of partners. Examples are:-

- Mental health and learning disability integrated management and service delivery
- Children's Trust for children with disabilities
- Joint teams towards single assessment for older people
- Integrated roles for some health and social care staff e.g. home support

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- Hospital discharge teams
- The corporate prevention agenda, including Extended Schools and Preventative Strategy for Children
- Developing a generic health and social care assistant role.

As a major commissioner and provider of services the Authority also has a responsibility to work with partners in the independent sector to ensure that sufficient employees are available to maintain and enhance capacity.

### **4.3 Joint Workforce Planning with Health**

There is a national framework for workforce planning across the health and social care sector and this has been made a primary function of Workforce Development Confederations (WDC). It is recognised that there are many interdependencies between Local Authorities and the NHS in terms of delivering services to meet the needs of local populations. Therefore, integrated workforce planning is very much on the agenda. Our responsibility in this national agenda is particularly in relation to vulnerable children's, older people's and mental health services.

Joint work has already been done in a number of areas with Health including for example, in Learning Disability and Mental Health services and in terms of the social work service at Rampton Hospital.

There is a need to pull together planning processes including an overarching approach between health and social care on workforce planning issues in areas of overlap. It is the intention to progress this work through mechanisms agreed in the Health and Social Care Partnership Board.

### **4.4 Link to Departmental Business Plan**

The Workforce Plan needs to underpin the Business Plan for the Department and incorporate specific targets. For example, the Departmental Business Plan 2004 - 2005 establishes the following workforce planning targets:

- To develop career pathways for Resources staff
- To reduce the vacancy rate to 8% in children's fieldwork services
- To reduce vacancy levels by 10% in Adult Direct Services
- 80% of social workers in Mental Health to be engaged in post-qualification programmes

### **4.5 Actions**

- Ensure that the Departmental Workforce Plan 2004 – 2005 integrates with and promotes the achievement of Social Services Business Plan targets.

## **5 Research and Analysis**

The development of the Workforce Plan has included research in a number of areas. Such research will continually be required to inform the ongoing revision of the Plan to ensure that it meets current and projected needs.

All research activities are listed below and detailed outcomes are presented in the Appendices, which are also respectively listed in the table beneath. Analysis of the research findings is presented in Sections 6 – 12 of this Plan.

| <b>Research Activity</b>   | <b>Analysis Presented in Section</b> | <b>Additional Information Presented in Appendix</b> |
|--|--------------------------------------|---|
| Interviews with Managers to Gather Existing Knowledge and Information                            | 6                                    | Appendix A<br><br>Appendix B<br><br>Appendix C      |
| Staff Conference Feedback  | 7                                    | Appendix D  |
| Analysis of the Current Social Services Workforce  | 8                                    | Appendix E  |
| Environmental Analysis   | 9                                    |   |
| Evaluation of Other Local Authorities Recruitment and Retention Issues                           | 10                                   | Appendix F  |
| Analysis of the Regional Co-ordination of Social Work Recruitment for the North West Authorities | 11                                   |   |
| Comparative Salary Data  | 12                                   | Appendix G  |
| Review of Workforce Plans from Other Organisations   |                                      |   |

## 6. Interviews with Managers

### 6.1 Method

Existing information and intelligence available within the department was gathered during a series of one-to-one meetings with managers from different areas of service and logged via a proforma to ensure key areas of detail were collected from each colleague.

### 6.2 Aim of the Interviews

The aim of the interviews was to allow managers to highlight workforce issues in terms of:

- Current Issues
- Possible Solutions
- Anticipated Service Developments Within the next five years

A list of Service areas that participated in the interviews is included at **Appendix A**.

### 6.3 Issues Raised by Managers

The information at **Appendix B** reflects the issues raised by managers which will be used to guide the development of the Workforce Plan during 2004 – 2005 and in the future. It is acknowledged that some matters have clear links and implications for corporate Policy.

**Appendix C** outlines Anticipated Service Developments within the next five years.

## 7. Staff Conference Feedback 2003

### 7.1 Method

The annual staff conferences in 2003 included workshops where employees were invited to answer the question of “How Do We Keep You at Work?”. The aim was that this question would cover recruitment, retention and well-being issues.

### 7.2 Issues Raised

Feedback and proposal were recorded at each event and summaries made which are attached at **Appendix D**. There were some recurring themes across all staff conferences in relation to recruitment and retention issues. The data collected in 2003 will be used to guide the development of the Workforce Plan during 2004 – 2005. Feedback from similar events in the future will also be used to guide further development of the Plan.

## 8. Analysis of the Current Social Services Workforce

### 8.1 The Workforce

The Social Services Department employs approximately 4,800 staff which represents a diverse range of activity and staff profile.

The table on Page 13 outlines the numbers of staff employed throughout each Service area at 30<sup>th</sup> June 2003. This data will be revised in June 2004 to allow year on year comparisons.

### 8.2 Additional Data

Additional data has been collated from internal personnel systems in order to permit effective analysis of the Department workforce profile (as at 30<sup>th</sup> June 2003).

The tables attached within **Appendix E** provide workforce profile data in the areas of:

- Separation Rates
- Age
- Ethnic Origin
- Gender
- Grades
- Length of Service.

Future data will be prepared that reflects the workforce by locality which will allow further analysis of geographic issues across the Service.

### 8.3 Key Findings

The key findings from the workforce profile data at 30<sup>th</sup> June 2003 are:

- The Department employs more women than men (80.8%)
- The majority of our employees have declared their ethnic origin as White (93.9%) \*\*\*
- Nearly half of our workforce are aged 45 and over (48.7%)
- Over half of our employees were between points 4 and 17 on the pay scale (56.5%)
- More than one third of our employees have over 10 years service (36.6%)
- Almost one quarter of employees have less than one year in service (23.7%)
- The majority of employees are within Adults Direct Services (45.4%).

\*\*\* This should be set in the context of national census population data for the County. 4.8% of our staff are known to be of black and minority ethnic origin compared to a 2.6% black and minority ethnic population recorded for the County (2001 Census).

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## Staff Employed At 30<sup>th</sup> June 2003

| SERVICE AREAS                                  | NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES |
|--|---------------------|
| <b>ADULT COMMISSIONING</b>                     |                     |
| Commissioning & Management                     | 89                  |
| Fieldwork Adults                               | 221                 |
| Fieldwork Hospitals                            | 112                 |
| Occupational Therapy                           | 94                  |
| <b>Total</b>                                   | <b>516</b>          |
| <b>ADULTS DIRECT SERVICES</b>                  |                     |
| Management                                     | 14                  |
| Day Centre - Older People                      | 30                  |
| Day Centre - Physical Disability               | 87                  |
| Home care                                      | 879                 |
| Residential - Older People                     | 768                 |
| Supported Employment                           | 167                 |
| Transport, Catering & Services                 | 211                 |
| <b>Total</b>                                   | <b>2156</b>         |
| <b>CHILDREN &amp; FAMILIES COMMISSIONING</b>   |                     |
| Commissioning                                  | 75                  |
| Fieldwork                                      | 224                 |
| Peri Team & EDT                                | 26                  |
| <b>Total</b>                                   | <b>325</b>          |
| <b>CHILDRENS DIRECT SERVICES</b>               |                     |
| Management                                     | 9                   |
| Family Centres                                 | 117                 |
| Fieldwork                                      | 38                  |
| Childrens Residential                          | 320                 |
| Adoption & Fostering                           | 71                  |
| Youth Offending                                | 8                   |
| <b>Total</b>                                   | <b>563</b>          |
| <b>MENTAL HEALTH &amp; LEARNING DISABILITY</b> |                     |
| Management                                     | 11                  |
| Day Centre - Learning Disability               | 309                 |
| Day Centre - Mental Health                     | 45                  |
| Fieldwork                                      | 143                 |
| Residential - Learning Disability              | 89                  |
| <b>Total</b>                                   | <b>597</b>          |
| <b>RESOURCES</b>                               |                     |
| Localities                                     | 310                 |
| Resources                                      | 284                 |
| <b>Total</b>                                   | <b>594</b>          |
| <b>Department Total</b>                        | <b>4751</b>         |

## **9 Environmental Analysis**

### **9.1 The Local Labour Market**

Health and social care is the largest single employment sector in Nottinghamshire employing 52,526 people ('Spotlight on Industry', Learning and Skills Council, Issue 7).

The retail sector is the second largest employer providing employment for 49,935 people. Significant growth is forecast for the retail sector nationally and, given the county's greater dependence on the retail sector for employment than is the average regionally or nationally, we can expect this to have a marked impact on the employment of the working age population of Nottinghamshire.

The retail sector, particularly supermarkets, provide the potential for higher basic pay rates than some lower-paid social care roles such as home care and residential care for older people. There is currently evidence that competition is only likely to increase with anticipated growth in both the retail and social care sectors.

### **9.2 The National Picture**

We cannot understand the local labour market and our own workforce profile without an awareness of the national picture for social care employers. The following information will help to contextualise the current issues.

- Employment rates are at their highest for 10 years (DFEE, 2001)
- The average vacancy rate for field social workers was 16%, 11.3% for home care workers and 9.4% for care staff in residential homes (LGA Workforce Planning Task Group - Recruitment and Retention Survey, December 2000)
- The average grossed vacancy rate for Social Services posts was 9.4% (Social Services Workforce Survey 2001)
- The demand for qualified social workers is growing faster than supply demonstrated by the statistics that the number of vacant social work posts has fallen from 10.1% (2000) to 8.8% whilst staff turnover has increased to 12.4% (Social Services Workforce Survey 2001)
- The Audit Commission predicted that there would be an overall 3% growth in the number of people employed in social care across public sector and independent organisations from 2000 to 2005
- There has been a reduction in the number of staff seeking or obtaining qualifications from qualifying social work courses (and OT). Research for the

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Department of Health found that applications to the Diploma in Social Work (DipSW) courses had fallen by 59% between 1995 and 2001.

- The labour market conditions above have led to the national debate about the recruitment and retention crisis for social services departments across the country. The Local Government Association (LGA) Survey carried out in 2000 confirmed that recruitment of social workers was not just a 'south east problem', but it was also a 'national problem' as was recruitment into many other care roles.
- The Workforce Survey 2001 confirmed that the East Midlands, amongst other regions, were having 'some of the worst problems in recruiting employees'. This survey also identifies the East Midlands as having a particular problem with the recruitment of field social workers to work with children and families.

### **9.3 Comparisons with the Department**

Social Work vacancies in child care have become a significant problem in parts of the Department. Previously the Department had identified social work vacancy levels below the national average, but in 2003 the child care social work vacancy level had risen to nearly 16%. This compared to an average vacancy rate for Children & Families Social Workers in England of 11.3%, and 9.3% for other Social Workers. However, proactive recruitment activity by managers and the introduction of initiatives such as the social work trainee scheme have created major improvements.

In Adults Commissioning the workforce of social workers has remained stable, but there has been evidence of increasing difficulty in recruiting middle managers, particularly at Service Manager level. However, the outcome of Phase 1 of the Corporate Pay Strategy resulted in significant grading increases for the middle tiers of the social work management structure and it is too early yet to estimate the impact that this will have upon the ability to recruit effectively.

The Home Care service has also consistently experienced high vacancy and turnover levels in Nottinghamshire. The statistics produced by the service show a steady decline in recruitment since 2000 which is set against consistently high numbers of leavers.

In Resources there is evidence of a reducing number of applicants for vacant posts, particularly at more senior levels in some sections (eg. Personnel, Staff Development Unit and Finance).



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### **9.4 Gender and Ethnic Origin – How Do We Compare?**

We can make some comparisons between the composition of the Social Services workforce in Nottinghamshire and that across England in terms of gender and ethnic origin using statistics produced by the Department of Health (30 September 2002).

In terms of gender, our workforce compares very closely with the average for all English Social Services Departments (see the chart below).

In terms of ethnic origin we employ on average, a higher percentage of white staff than is the case nationally although we do not differ widely from the national average in terms of our employment of Asian and Black staff. However, the Department of Health statistics on ethnic origin are acknowledged to be inaccurate due to the high percentage of staff being recorded as 'ethnic origin unknown' due to the failure of some Authorities to return breakdowns by ethnic origin. Therefore, we must treat comparisons on this basis with care.

|                             | <b>Women</b> | <b>Men</b> | <b>Asian</b> | <b>Black</b> | <b>White</b> | <b>Unknown</b> |
|-----------------------------|--------------|------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|----------------|
| <b>National Average</b>     | 81%          | 19%        | 2.3%         | 5.2%         | 82.6%        | 8.4%           |
| <b>Departmental Average</b> | 80.8%        | 19.2%      | 1.7%         | 3.1%         | 93.9%        | 1.2%           |

## **10. Evaluation of Other Local Authority Recruitment & Retention Issues**

### **10.1 Local Authority Survey**

Surveys were sent to the Heads of Personnel at 12 local authorities, as follows;

- Nottingham City Council
- Lincolnshire County Council
- Derby City Council
- Derbyshire County Council
- Leicester City Council
- Leicestershire County Council
- Sheffield City Council
- Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council (MBC)
- Rotherham MBC
- Northamptonshire County Council
- Kent County Council
- Hertfordshire County Council

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It is recognised that Nottinghamshire is competing with other authorities in the East Midlands and South Yorkshire for the same labour pools and so such authorities were chosen for the survey. Equally, selected authorities in the South East were chosen as they were identified with some of the worst recruitment difficulties in the Social Services Workforce Survey 2001.

### 10.2 Purpose of the Survey

- To gain an understanding of what is happening regionally in relation to recruitment and retention issues
- To draw comparisons
- To share successes.

### 10.3 Information Requested

- Vacancy rates
- Areas of staffing difficulty
- Reasons for staffing difficulties
- Tried and tested solutions.

### 10.4 Response Rates

One third of the surveys were returned from the following authorities:

- Derbyshire County Council
- Leicestershire County Council
- Lincolnshire County Council
- Northamptonshire County Council.

A complete set of results and comments are attached at **Appendix F**.

Although the rate of return was perhaps not as good as we might have hoped, the results still enable us to build a picture of social care workforce issues faced by authorities in the region. The survey returns reinforce our own experiences to a large extent and give us an indication of the steps being taken by our neighbouring county councils to address similar issues to good effect.

10.5 Summary of Findings

Average Vacancy Rates

- Average vacancy rates ranged from 8.8% to 13%
- One authority was unable to supply a vacancy rate, but gave a turnover rate of 9.69% (12 months to 31 May 2003)
- National grossed averages are 9.4% and 12.6% respectively for a vacancy rate and turnover (Social Services Workforce Survey 2001)
- Therefore, in some cases the region's problems are slightly worse than the national averages, but in others they are marginally, if not significantly, better
- No authority varies from the national average by more than 4% which confirms that recruitment and retention is a national issue subject to slight variations from authority to authority.

Principle Areas of Staffing Difficulty

- Areas acknowledged as issues by all authorities were recruitment of care staff in residential homes for older people and children and families social workers
- In general, recruitment difficulties were considered to be greater than issues of retention
- However, 3 out of 4 authorities cited retention of children and families field social workers and home care workers as a major issue.
- 3 out of 4 also felt recruitment to social worker posts within mental health services, for home care workers and Occupational Therapists were principal areas of difficulty.

Perceived Reasons for Shortages

- All authorities perceived the local labour market and demand outstripping supply as key factors leading to their staff shortages
- The image of the profession and employment packages were also thought to be key factors by 3 out of 4 authorities.

Solutions

- Flexible working arrangements were felt and, in some cases, evidenced to be the most effective ways of overcoming staffing difficulties
- This supports the nationally published journal articles, which suggest that a real business case exists to promote flexible working in appropriate areas and reinforces the importance of the pilot projects undertaken locally within the Department
- Financial rewards and improvements to the employment package were also rated highly by 3 out of 4 authorities.

Senior Practitioner Posts in Social Work

- Senior practitioner posts are part of the social work career structure in 2 out of 4 authorities responding and being worked towards in one other.
- The remaining authority employs a “Quality Assurance” social worker which is also a higher paying post at the top of the social work scale. Subsequent follow-up with Leicestershire suggests that they perceive real benefits to be gained in terms of retaining skilled and experienced social workers in practice and that this is a proposal which justifies further consideration within the Department.

“Grow Your Own” Schemes for Social Workers

- So called ‘grow your own’ schemes, encompassing sponsorship, secondments and traineeships, are being employed or developed by all four authorities
- Some authorities offer more than one route for training social workers. Two out of the 4 responding authorities offer secondments and sponsorships to training social workers who commit to work for them. The numbers of staff supported via these routes varies from authority to authority
- ‘Grow Your Own’ was also noted to be an option used, in the form of secondment or sponsorship, for training occupational therapists by one authority
- Nottinghamshire also introduced a trainee social worker scheme during 2003/04 which proved to be extremely popular when advertised and all available posts have been filled.

Using Financial Incentives

- No authority felt it necessary or appropriate to use 'golden hallos' i.e. fixed financial incentives paid upon appointment
- However, 3 out of 4 authorities said that they had recently reviewed and/or increased their starting salaries for social workers.

Regional Collaboration in Social Care Recruitment

- All four authorities agreed that sharing information and initiatives would be beneficial in terms of promoting the region and also possibly more cost effective to join together in hosting a recruitment event(s) for the region.

10.6 Actions

- Monitor the impact of the new Pay Band for Social Workers and Occupational Therapists and the revised salary policy
- Further consideration to be given to introducing a senior practitioner post(s) in the social work career structure
- Further consideration to be given to the development of a process for Social Services Departments within the East Midlands to take forward recruitment and retention issues collectively.

11. **Analysis of the Regional Co-ordination of Social Work Recruitment for the North West Authorities**

11.1 North West Collaboration

Local authorities in the North West have been working in collaboration to share information and host an annual recruitment event for at least the last three years.

The SOCNOW recruitment event in 2003 was held in Manchester in June. The event encompasses a standard exhibition as well as a number of workshops on pertinent topics such as 'Work Life Balance' and 'Getting over the Recruitment Hurdle' – a session designed to help with filling out application forms.

### 11.2 Feedback from the SOCNOW Authorities

The event was reviewed and followed up by an evaluation questionnaire sent to all authorities represented. Although only four surveys were returned, very similar views were expressed and the key findings are:

- All authorities find the event an effective recruitment tool in terms of promotion of the profession, but not necessarily in terms of immediate recruitment
- The event was well attended and all four authorities received over 70 expressions of interest, but only one authority had actually recruited to a Social Work post as a result
- The event primarily attracts residents within the region and does not significantly increase the national appeal of the North West as a place to work
- One authority recognised that “an additional advantage is that it has become expected that such an event will be run and that it is the place to go if you want to find out about social care as a career”
- Most attendees were second year students. However, “there were a considerable number of attendees who weren’t in any type of social care work yet, but wanted to be” (Blackburn and Darwen Social Services)
- All authorities found networking with other authorities in the region through SOCNOW to be a benefit to their own authority in terms of sharing information and successes around recruitment and retention issues and initiatives. However, working together did not remove the inevitable element of competition between them as distinct employers in their own right.

### 11.3 Significance of SOCNOW for Nottinghamshire Social Services

Therefore, it may be that such collaboration, although not removing competition, could boost the profile of social work in the East Midlands to the benefit of all.

## 12. **Comparative Salary Data**

### 12.1 Data Collection

The Corporate Pay Strategy – Phase 1, includes a process for considering the application of Market Factor supplements in appropriate cases and salary data for directly comparable posts is relevant information.

Salary data was collected from a number of authorities, depending upon the role being surveyed. A full analysis is attached at **Appendix G**.

12.2 Summary of Findings

Home Care Workers / Community Care Assistants  
NCC Grading SCP 7 – 9  
(£5.70 - £6.07 per hour)

- The Department salary level matched or exceeded three of the sample authorities.
- Nottingham City Council advertised equivalent posts at SCP 11 -13 (£6.59 - £6.91) which is 4 increments above the Department's advertised starting salary.
- Leicestershire County Council advertise a minimum start salary of £6.07 per hour (SCP 9) which is equivalent to our maximum potential start salary. This amount is paid to staff whilst they are training, therefore no experience is assumed.
- Derby are able to start their home care workers on a salary of up to SCP 11 (£6.59 per hour) which is 2 increments above our maximum advertised start salary.

Occupational Therapists  
NCC Grading Previously SCP 24 – 36 (£18,012 - £25, 911)  
New Pay Band B (to SCP 39)

- For newly qualified Occupational Therapists, we have the potential to better NHS salaries providing candidates have some previous local authority experience.
- Our maximum advertised rate of pay can match or better most authorities but 4 out of 5 authorities sampled advertise higher minimum start rates than the Department.
- Leicester City Council and Sheffield City Council advertise at minimum rates of SCP 31 (£22,689) and SCP 28 (£20,469) respectively. Neither of these posts were advertised as involving any additional responsibilities or duties.
- Leicester City Council were also offering the incentive of £300 'Golden Hellos' to new recruits to occupational therapy.
- The Pay Band for Social Workers and Occupational Therapists spans both the Hay and NJE Job Evaluation processes. At the time of writing this Plan the outcome to the evaluation of the bottom half of the former grade is unknown. This could potentially impact upon the commencing salary level.

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Care Assistants in Residential Homes for Older People  
NCC Grading SCP 5 – 10  
(£5.45 - £6.19 per hour)

- Many of the local authorities sampled for this role advertise one start salary only. Five of the 9 in the sample advertised at SCP 7 (£5.70) which is higher than our minimum advertised start salary of SCP 5 (£5.45), although we have advertised a broader scope of salaries up to SCP 10 (£6.19).
- Leicestershire and Lincolnshire County advertise significantly higher salaries than Nottinghamshire. It is not apparent from their adverts that either of these posts requires any additional duties or responsibilities to that required of our own care assistants yet they advertise up to a maximum of SCP 13 (£6.91) and SCP 14 (£7.03) respectively. However, care needs to be taken to ensure that the posts are directly comparable.
- The salary advertised by Hertfordshire does not conform to national pay scales, but is in the region of SCP 14 -16 (£7.03 - £7.35) which is far more than the average advertised salary in the East Midlands which may be influenced by local employment market factors.

Social Workers  
NCC Grading Previously SCP 24 – 36 (£18,012 - £25, 911)  
New Pay Band B (to SCP 39)

- This national sample covering 12 Authorities reveals a number of instances of higher advertised minimum starting salaries than ours, from SCP 26 (£19,185) up to SCP 28 (£20,469).
- The minimum start salary of SCP 24 (£18,012) for newly qualified staff was advertised by ourselves and 5 other Authorities. However, the remaining 7 authorities advertise minimum start salaries of SCP 25 (£18,582) and above.
- It is notable that some Authorities have chosen to advertise differential rates of pay for children and families social workers. Sheffield City Council advertise such roles starting on a minimum salary of SCP 27 (£19,824). Lancashire County Council advertise a minimum start salary of SCP 28 (£20,469) for children and families social workers and SCP 26 (£19,185) for adult care social workers.
- More recently, the introduction of new Pay Band B has increased the maximum salary locally available to Social Workers to SCP 39. Nottinghamshire reviewed



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the Social Worker starting salary scheme with effect from February 2004 which has had the effect of increasing the minimum starting point to SCP 26 (£19,185)

### **12.3 Actions**

- Continue to review salary levels and recruitment and retention profiles of other Authorities with the intention of ensuring the Department remains competitive.

## **13. Key Themes and Proposed Initiatives**

### **13.1 Key Themes**

Analysis of the available data indicates a number of similarities in the issues raised. Themes have been identified across the Service which have been placed into the following three categories in relation to their proposed status in terms of future work.

- Priority Themes
- Development Themes (Areas of work that require testing for clarity in order to get a clear understanding of their intended impact and feasibility)
- Testing for Viability

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### 13.2 Summary of Themes

| <u>Priority Themes</u>  | <u>Development Themes</u>           | <u>Testing for Viability</u>                                   |
|---|-------------------------------------|--|
| Marketing   | Attracting a Diverse Workforce      | Differential Rates of Pay                                      |
| Grow Your Own Schemes   | Developing Links with Local Schools | Comparison of Health and Social Services Department Pay Scales |
| Career Path Development   | Mature Workforce                    |  |
| Senior Practitioner Role  | Employment Package                  |  |
| Recruitment Advertising and Flexibility                               | Recruitment Panels                  |  |
| Careers Fair Attendance   |                                     |  |
| Work Life Balance   |                                     |  |
| Temporary and / or Supply Staff                                       |                                     |  |
| Reward and Recognition Schemes  |                                     |  |
| Streamlining and Improving the Recruitment Process                    |                                     |  |
| Leadership and Management Development Programme and Graduate Trainees |                                     |  |

Each theme will be discussed in detail below in Sections 14 – 30

## 14. Marketing

### 14.1 Image

The issue of 'image' and career choice in terms of professions and employment in social care work as a whole is a major issue recognised nationally by Government, locally by management and further acknowledged during the Departmental Staff Conferences.

There are issues surrounding how we present and market ourselves and how we are portrayed in the media which are key factors that drove the previous national social

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work recruitment campaign and the current, broader based, national social care campaign.

### **14.2 Recruitment Material**

A poor 'image' of social care as a career choice generally, inadequate presentation materials and recruitment support information were consistently felt to be major factors acting against successful recruitment campaigns. More dynamic marketing, publicity and promotion were thought to be means of addressing recruitment difficulties.

A review of the vacancy support materials sent out in recruitment packs is required. The packs need to be comprehensive, but without unnecessary information, to provide a more 'professional' image. Elected Members propose that specific consideration be given to the applicant support packs provided by Authorities with particularly difficult recruitment situations.

### **14.3 Promotion of the Home Care Service**

Initiatives are in place to promote the Home Care Service through a variety of medias including local newspapers, flyers and posters. Other proposals have include promotion using a variety of media. The Home Care service also has an 'open advert' placed on the Internet site which continuously invites applications for employment as Community Care Assistants.

### **14.4 Social Services Marketing Strategy**

It should be noted that there are a whole range of measures that contribute to marketing the department in some way. The Head of Organisational Development has the lead responsibility in relation to the Department's overall marketing strategy in close collaboration with the communications section. A draft Marketing Strategy has been developed in 2004 which the recruitment process needs to integrate with.

### **14.5 Actions**

- Review and revise information provided to candidates in recruitment packs for all employments with the Department giving particular regard to the information provided by Authorities with problematic recruitment situations.
- Establish a process for keeping information updated and readily accessible ensuring effective linkages with the recruitment support service provided by the County Council Employee Services Centre.
- Integrate revised recruitment material with the Marketing Strategy.
- Cross reference this theme with Careers Fair Attendance.

- Develop a link with the “Experience Works” organisation via their new virtual recruitment hall to help promote both the Department’s image as a positive employer of older people and to aid the promotion of effective recruitment.

**15. ‘Grow Your Own’ Schemes**

Within the national context of increasing problems for local authorities in recruiting employees across a range of social care roles, the profile of so-called ‘grow your own’ schemes has been raised.

**15.1 Trainee Scheme for Social Workers**

The Department’s Commissioning Service for Children have recruited to a trainee scheme to develop and train Social Workers in-house. This scheme, which sponsors students through their Social Work degree whilst they gain practical experience in a Social Work role, originally attracted over 1000 applicants for up to 25 positions when it was made available in 2003.

**15.2 Other Solutions**

In addition, ‘grow your own’ schemes were identified by a number of managers as a possible solution to recruitment and retention issues. Suggestions included:

- Targeting schemes to “apprenticeships” in Home Care, Mental Health Social Work
- Developing managers from existing potential within the Department thus enabling the movement of non care social care employees, such as administrative staff, into social care work via access courses.
- Preparing our own staff for management roles internally was a particular priority identified by Adult Commissioning and the Residential Sector within Children’s Services.
- We also have the potential to develop traineeships for Black staff through linking with an external agency (PATRA). The Personnel Section has previously piloted a Traineeship which proved to be very successful.
- Elected members are keen to review the potential for the development of service advisory roles on the front line to provide an enhanced service to service users. Equally, exploration of other options to optimise the potential for social workers to allocate time specifically to service users.

**15.3 Actions**

- Directorate to consider funding a number of traineeships under the auspices of PATRA (Positive Action for Training and Recruitment Agency). PATRA promotes trainee placements for black workers in a broad range of service areas including social care, personnel and accountancy.
- Further detailed work to be undertaken with managers to build upon the success of the child care social work scheme and identify the potential for other models of Traineeship/Apprenticeship within the Department.
- Consider the potential for the further development of service advisory roles

**16. Career Path Development**

**16.1 Significance of Qualifications**

Pay progression is increasingly being linked to the achievement of qualifications in line with the Central Government drive for greater qualification of the social care workforce expressed through the TOPSS national training strategy (2000).

Further steps should be considered to link career and pay progression to qualification and competence across the Social Services workforce within the framework of the developing County Council Pay Strategy. This may require the development of new career grade structures, linked to both service needs and recruitment and retention factors within the provisions of the corporate Pay Strategy.

**16.2 Feedback from Employees**

Feedback suggests that some employees have difficulty in identifying a clear career path and scope for progression. This was particularly in relation to social workers, resources staff and routes into management tiers across a number of areas.

Many Social Services Departments are reviewing their career structures in the context of tackling recruitment and retention problems and the need to develop non-management career paths has also been recognised. It is acknowledged that career progression up to management levels is not for everyone and there is a need to consider other approaches to enhance career prospects.

**16.3 Actions**

- Explore the potential and costs of introducing an access scheme to social care qualifications for non-social care staff

- Consider introducing a placements scheme from access courses into the Department
- Consider the potential for new career grade schemes within the Department.

## **17. Senior Practitioner Role**

As highlighted by the survey of local authorities, a number of our neighbours have or are developing senior practitioner posts in their social work career structures. At least one major authority in the South East has developed a career structure for social workers which links post qualifying training into progression through 'developing practitioner' and 'maturing practitioner' up to senior practitioner.

### **17.1 Potential Solutions**

Managers and staff in the Department have raised the introduction of a senior practitioner role as a proposition to improve the social work career path and to offer progression for experienced social workers who don't aspire to management roles. It is arguable therefore, that this would improve the retention of experienced workers in 'front line' practice. Many of our social workers have now attained post qualifying awards and further consideration needs to be given to how these enhanced knowledge and skills can best be applied to the benefit of the Service and in terms of competence based career progression for individuals.

Elected members have also specifically raised this issue in the context of supporting the developing workforce plan with a view to enhancing our capacity in social work terms to the benefit of service users.

This issue has previously been explored in principle by the Department, and there are a range of models that could be adopted, but there is a need to revisit the proposal to ensure that all options are kept under review.

### **17.2 Actions**

- Directorate to review the business case for a senior practitioner role(s) and consider possible models.

## **18. Recruitment Advertising and Flexibility**

### **18.1 Feedback from Staff**

In consulting staff and managers, 'poor and unattractive advertising' for posts was cited as potentially hindering our recruitment. Advertising copy restrictions due to cost and limited space and the need to use "glossy" advertising more frequently to

bring us more into line with our competitors are perceived to be are significant factors.

## **18.2 Potential Solutions**

It was suggested that practice could be improved by reducing these restrictions and allowing for a more flexible approach to the content and presentation of our adverts. Considerable work has been done by Children's Services in the Department in this context and consideration needs to be given to applying the good practice across the Department where reasonable and practicable to do so.

Proposals have been made by managers to consider 'rolling advertising' whereby applications are invited on a continuing basis rather than advertising for specific posts as they become vacant. A similar arrangement is already in place in respect of the Home Care Service for recruitment to posts of Community Care Assistant via the departmental Internet site. The cost implications of this form of advertising must be taken into consideration and in addition, it is not a process which would meet the needs of all areas of service.

Elected members consider that wherever practicable and reasonable, the Department should avoid 'losing' good quality candidates for posts if a specific vacancy is not available at that point in time. It would be preferable to exceed the normal staffing establishment for a temporary period of time.

In addition, Members requested that the Department gives consideration to the use of appropriate flexibilities for staff utilisation so that the most effective use of the resources available to us can be achieved to the benefit of service users. A similar arrangement has been achieved in the Residential Children's Sector.

## **18.3 Actions**

- Review the content and quality of recruitment support information packs.
- Consider the further potential for 'rolling advertising' in selected area(s) of service.
- Review the potential to improve our overall recruitment advertising practice in the light of the positive work undertaken within the Children's Services group.
- Identify potential resource implications.
- Consider the appointment of appropriate candidates beyond the constraints of the normal establishment, particularly in areas of particular difficulty, when reasonable to do so.

- Review the potential for optimising the flexible use of existing resources in appropriate areas of service.

**19. Careers Fair Attendance**

The need to achieve a higher corporate profile and professional image as part of our attendance at local and regional careers events is apparent. Careers fairs can be helpful in terms of addressing immediate recruitment issues, but they also represent a longer term investment in the image of the Department as an 'employer of choice'.

**19.1 Effectiveness**

To be effective, events need the support of a dedicated team of managers, staff and personnel officers and to be resourced adequately. High quality publicity materials should be available together with a 'stand' which is appropriate for our needs. Some departments attend fairs regularly and indeed some travel considerable distances on occasion to attend national events. Our approach to careers events requires review and improvement if we are to be in line with the 'best' Departments in this context.

**19.2 Actions**

- The revised structure of the residual departmental Personnel Section, following implementation of the Modernising Support Services Project, will include a Team to focus specifically upon planning and development issues including workforce planning, recruitment and retention issues. This team will work closely with managers to develop an appropriate profile for the whole Department at both generic and specialised careers fairs events.

**20. Work Life Balance**

The Social Services Workforce Survey 2001 highlighted flexible working measures for further consideration. Initiatives in this area have previously been taken by approximately 30% of local authority social care employers to combat staff shortages and levels of staff absence. National evidence of the potential benefits for both staff and employers is encouraging accelerated developments in this area.

**20.1 Departmental Pilots**

The Department has been undertaking a wide range of pilot projects in most service areas. These pilots are experimenting with a number of initiatives including:

- annualised hours
- self rostering
- compressed hours over 4 day weeks, and



- '9 day fortnights'

## **20.2 Continuing Development**

The pilots have been reviewed with almost completely positive results and in the light of these results they are being maintained on an ongoing basis pending corporate consideration of the issue.

Work life balance initiatives have been cited as potentially difficult to manage and yet desirable as a means to address recruitment and retention issues by many colleagues. All six staff conferences registered feedback to suggest that employees are enthusiastic to see continuing development in this area.

## **20.3 Actions**

- Retain the work life balance pilots under review with a view to extending them further into the Department wherever practicable and appropriate.

## **21. Temporary and / or Supply Staff**

### **21.1 Current Supply Register**

A supply register of Social Workers in Commissioning has acted as a partial solution to temporary vacancy problems for them. The register operates across the County but tends to be less effective for the North of the County. Nevertheless, the register is used frequently, often to cover extended sickness absence. Social Workers on the register are very often applicants who have not been the 'preferred candidate' at interview, people who are new to the area or people who want to work on a part-time basis e.g. term time.

### **21.2 Agency Engagements**

Temporary employees are also frequently engaged from specialist Agencies. It is unlikely that any one solution will be adequate to meet all of the needs of such a large and diverse Department. Therefore, together with managers from key service areas, the Personnel Section recently reviewed a lengthy list of social care Agencies. A list of 'approved' Agencies has been agreed and published for the information of managers on the departmental Intranet.

### **21.3 Additional Registers**

Elected members have suggested that a separate Register be maintained of experienced individuals who have retired from the service or left for other reasons who may wish to retain some employment on a temporary and/or part-time basis. This would help reduce the effect of the total loss of experience and knowledge that

occurs when such employees leave the organisation. It should be noted that there are significant resource implications involved in operating 'in house' supply or temporary staff registers. In addition, care needs to be taken in the implementation of any future register to ensure it is consistent with equalities and fairness policy and principles.

#### **21.4 Actions**

- Together with managers, consider the potential to extend the Social Work supply register principle into other areas of the Department.
- Consideration be given to the establishment of a Register of former employees who may wish to be retained to undertake part-time (or potentially full-time) employment on a temporary basis.

### **22. Reward and Recognition Schemes**

The Audit Commission Report 'Recruitment and Retention: A Public Service Workforce for the Twenty-first Century' (2002) identified one critical success factor in this regard as people delivering services feeling 'valued, respected and rewarded'. However, the principle of 'rewards' for service, attendance and performance is not an issue that the Authority has considered in detail before.

#### **22.1 Feedback from Employees**

Feedback from the Departmental staff conferences suggests that the issue of "feeling valued" is an area that the Department could improve on. Equally, staff were concerned to see competitive rates of pay rewarding levels of skill.

However, a sense of value is not necessarily a matter of pay or reward. Therefore, care needs to be taken to not over simplify this issue. There are other ways of recognising good performance in a tangible way. Suggestions made by staff include

- A one-off payment following one years service
- Tiered rewards for service e.g. £1500 over 5 years
- "Champions of Service" in recognition of particular skills held by residential care staff e.g. footcare, nailcare.
- A reward and recognition budget for managers to recognise achievements among their staff.

#### **22.2 Challenges to Overcome**

Some of the above measures may not be consistent with the requirements of equal pay legislation. In addition, as a part of the corporate Pay Strategy Phase 1, the Authority is to consider the potential for including a facility for additional pay linked to

contribution. There is no commitment to introduce such a scheme, but the situation will be kept under review.

Furthermore, certain initiatives in this area may well have corporate implications particularly the Pay Strategy and therefore would require broad based support.

### **22.3 Actions**

- Further, more detailed, consideration to be given to the whole principle of reward and recognition.

## **23. Streamlining and Improving the Recruitment Process**

### **23.1 Current Challenges**

The whole process, from resignation to new appointment, can be protracted and could be contributing to recruitment difficulties in some areas. Whilst timescales will vary between service areas, it is a concern that applicants who may be unemployed or searching for a career change may be unprepared or unable to wait for this period. In addition, in the most competitive areas of the recruitment market, there is a risk of losing candidates to other employers.

There are examples where some processes have been streamlined, e.g. in the Home Care service. This has also been put forward as a possible solution by the residential sector of Children's Direct Services. It is felt that lengthy form completion hinders some applicants and that some of the information currently required on application forms could be removed.

### **23.2 Employee Services Centre**

The new County Council Employee Services Centre (ESC) has the responsibility for sending application forms and literature to candidates for posts. The Head of the ESC has a brief to streamline services to improve them and reduce costs. The ESC is reviewing all of the application forms currently in use in all Departments of the Authority with a view to introducing a very small number of new forms which will be common to all Departments. Social Services Personnel will contribute to this process.

The Department has also recently reviewed our Recruitment Policy and wherever possible, administrative requirements have been reduced to the minimum.

### **23.3 Procedural Requirements**

Other requirements cannot be removed however e.g. pre-employment checks such as health checks and Criminal Records Bureau checks. The 'in house' processes

which support these need to be kept under review to ensure that the information flow is as efficient as possible, but minimum standards are required to ensure that we make 'safe and effective' appointments. Achieving the correct balance is crucial.

There is also a responsibility here for appointing officers to ensure that vacancies are advertised as speedily as possible and that interview arrangements are also not delayed unnecessarily.

**23.4 Actions**

- Monitor the impact of the revised internal recruitment procedures and support the corporate review of existing application forms.
- Consider further solutions to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the overall recruitment process.

**24. Leadership and Management Development Programme & Graduate Trainees**

With a view to attracting, developing and retaining managers as part of career pathways a variety of courses are either commissioned or provided by the Staff Development Unit. The Department makes available a range of qualifying courses including CMS, DMS and NVQ qualifications. Senior managers participated in the Hay leadership programme involving a number of managers in the Authority.

The County Council has taken part in a national Local Government Graduate Training scheme and the Social Services Department hosted a placement for one of the Trainees. Consideration should be given to continuing with a scheme for graduates to enter into careers with a view to future progression into management roles

**24.1 Actions**

- Consideration to be given to the potential for further development in this area by the Heads of Organisational Development and Staff Development.

**25. Attracting a Diverse Workforce**

**25.1 What is a "Diverse Workforce"?**

It is an objective of the National Training Strategy "to continue to recruit and support a workforce which reflects the ethnic communities and diversity of backgrounds and perspectives in society as a whole".

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Diversity is referred to in terms of race, disability, age, gender, sexual orientation and religion.

### 25.2 Does Social Services Have a Diverse Workforce?

Departmental colleagues have raised difficulties in the recruitment of black workers as an issue in Home Care and Fostering services in particular. However, the workforce data shows that the Department **as a whole** is reflective of the community in terms of employees of black and ethnic minority origin. It should be noted though that this does not apply in every service and importantly, at every level of the Department.

There are Corporate Best Value Performance Indicators which set annual targets in this area.

The employment of People with disabilities is a major issue. It has been noted by the Directorate that there is a need to build on the Welfare to Work Plan and, in line with the Valuing People agenda for people with learning disabilities, to enable more people with all forms of disabilities to participate in employment within the Department.

The Development Manager for Welfare to Work for Disabled People has a remit to implement the County Council's Joint Investment Plan in this regard. Planning for the future of the Social Services workforce should be developed in support of and with reference to the Welfare to Work Action Plan. If the Department is to be proactive in the employment of disabled people there are many links to be made with Welfare to Work in terms of improving workplace support, managing the transition into work and providing voluntary placement opportunities for example.

### 25.3 Questions to be Answered

- How can we address the shortage of Black staff in most managerial forums and on interview panels?
- Will "Access to Work" provide support for people with disabilities in our workplace?
- How do we capture the experience and knowledge of our mature workforce?
- How do we address the fact that 66% of middle management posts are held by women when 82% of the Department's workforce are women?
- How do we assess the needs in the working environment for gay, lesbian and / or bi-sexual staff?
- Do we cater for the needs of staffs' background and culture?

- How do we ensure that we are perceived as an employer of choice by older people looking to change careers or return to employment?

Achieving equality and addressing issues of diversity is also on the corporate agenda and the Department should continue to look to this work as we strive to improve and promote diversity in recruitment and staff development.

#### **25.4 Actions**

- In the context of the Equalities Action Plan, further consideration to be given to the options available to the Department in order to open up routes to work in Social Services for people with disabilities.
- Develop links with 'Experience Works' to promote the employment of older employees in the workforce.
- Support the continued development and implementation of the corporate and departmental Equalities Action Plans.
- Develop proposals with managers to work towards the BVPI targets.

#### **26. Developing Links with Local Schools**

The need to renew the Department's links with schools to provide school age children with information on careers in social care and 'plant the seed' at an early age has been identified by a number of colleagues. The Department has previously been proactive in the Understanding Industry initiative in schools and colleges.

Suggestions of how to approach this have included; improving the work experience process, managers going into schools and drama groups in Learning Disability to 'sell' social care as a career.

#### **27 Mature Workforce**

The issue of an ageing workforce is one that faces all local authorities and many initiatives are taking place aimed at engaging younger people's interest in working for local government. However, in recognition of the reducing population of available young people but the increasing size of the social care sector, there is also an issue in terms of both the recruitment and retention of older workers and the need to train and motivate them and make better use of their skills and experience. The reference above to 'Experience Works' links to our intentions to improve our departmental profile in this area.

It is evident from the workforce profile data contained within this report that we have an ageing workforce across the department. Age is an issue in most service areas both in terms of planning for future recruitment as current employees move towards retirement and providing relevant training and/or different work opportunities for these more experienced staff.

## **28. Employment Package**

### **28.1 Benchmarking with Other Organisations**

The Social Services Workforce Survey 2001 indicates that improvements to pay and conditions are measures being taken by local authority employers to attract and keep employees. Improvements to pay are the focus for 31% of authorities whilst 12% also recognise the importance of related conditions.

The British Association of Social Workers (BASW) points to 'inadequate salary levels' as one of the most serious problems contributing to the recruitment and retention crisis for the profession.

### **28.2 Challenges for Nottinghamshire**

Low pay has been identified as an issue by colleagues in relation to Home Care and Residential Care for Older People particularly.

Whilst pay comparisons with other local authorities are important, there is also an issue in terms of how we compare with other partners such as the Health Service in some respects. Suggestions for improvement made by staff have included issues such as medical plans and discounted leisure facilities.

Such flexible benefit schemes are now a feature at some local authorities and are being looked into by others as they search for alternative ways to address recruitment and retention issues in some areas. Local authorities are portrayed as flexible employers and employees are enabled to choose a package that is right for them individually.

The Authority is implementing Pay Strategies Phases 1 and 2, and Phase 1 has seen some pay improvements for particularly sensitive groups in recruitment and retention terms, such as Social Workers. Further consideration still needs to be given to other initiatives such as those highlighted above which will have to be viewed in the light of equal pay considerations and corporate policy.

The Pay Strategy includes a facility to agree 'market factor' payments to recruitment and retention problem areas that meet specific criteria. The effectiveness of this mechanism will be monitored.

**29. Recruitment Panels**

Countywide recruitment panels have emerged as a proposal in a number of service areas including Children's Commissioning and Family Centres. It was noted that this method of recruitment could aid consistency and standardisation of the process and allow everyone to select from the best pool of candidates.

**30. Testing for Viability**

These are themes that have been identified by managers and staff as potential issues for development, but which could potentially be contentious and/or have implications in terms of good practice or legal requirements. Further detailed feasibility work will need to be carried out before any action is taken.

**30.1 Differential Rates of Pay**

Different rates of pay have been suggested as an area for consideration in terms of:

- Areas with high vacancy levels
- Staff working in different areas of fieldwork

To some extent, similar arrangements are already being used by the independent sector and other local authorities respectively.

However, it is understood that this approach may be against national terms and conditions and not legally viable. Again, it should be considered in the context of equal pay requirements.

**30.2 Comparison of Health Service and SSD Pay Scales**

The loss of staff externally to other organisations is a factor to keep under review. The Department has agreed an 'in-house' Exit Interview procedure which will help our information base in this respect. We have a clear Pay Strategy which has Job Evaluation at its heart and therefore all job types are evaluated individually and paid within the County Council's pay band structure. Where it is perceived that pay is a major factor in the natural wastage of staff to organisations, such as Health, we have the potential at least to consider a market factor based pay solution if appropriate.

**30.3 Workforce Planning Model**

The Trent NHS Workforce Development Confederation promotes a philosophy of workforce development intelligence gathering whereby NHS organisations are able to plan their workforce development needs as an integral part of their planning for service development. Equally, the Metropolitan Police Service has instigated such a model and should be further investigated to determine transferable good practice.



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A workforce planning model essentially involves the effective use of a regular process to establish current workforce profiles, together with future staffing requirements over a specific period. A model that permits the collection of quantitative and qualitative workforce data that generates a “forecast” of needs is one method of workforce planning that requires further investigation within Social Services.

### **31. Conclusion**

The issues identified for further action above have been listed in the Summary of Actions below (section 32). All actions will be integrated and prioritised within the Social Services Departmental HR Strategy 2004 – 2005. Achievements and performance against each of the actions will be reviewed as part of the regular review cycle at the end of the financial year.

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### 31. Summary of Actions

| <u>Theme</u>            | <u>Action</u>   |
|-------------------------|---|
| Monitoring              | Ensure that the Departmental Work Force Plan 2004 – 2005 integrates with and promotes the achievement of Social Services Business Plan targets.   |
|                         | Continue to review salary levels and recruitment and retention profiles of other Authorities with the intention of ensuring the Department remains competitive.   |
| Marketing               | Review and revise information provided to candidates in recruitment packs for all employments with the Department giving particular regard to the information provided by Authorities with problematic recruitment situations.  |
|                         | Establish a process for keeping information updated and readily accessible ensuring effective linkages with the recruitment support service provided by the County Council Employee Services Centre.  |
|                         | Integrate revised recruitment material with the Marketing Strategy.   |
|                         | Cross reference this theme with Careers Fair Attendance.  |
|                         | Develop a link with the “Experience Works” organisation via their new virtual recruitment hall to help promote both the Department’s image as a positive employer of older people and to aid the promotion of effective recruitment.  |
| “Grow Your Own” Schemes | Directorate to consider funding a number of traineeships under the auspices of PATRA (Positive Action for Training and Recruitment Agency). PATRA promotes trainee placements for black workers in a broad range of service areas including social care, personnel and accountancy. |
|                         | Further detailed work to be undertaken with managers to build upon the success of the child care social work scheme and identify the potential for other models of Traineeship/Apprenticeship within the Department.  |
|                         | Consider the potential for the further development of service advisory roles  |

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| <u>Theme</u>                            | <u>Action</u>   |
|---|---|
| Career Path Development                 | Explore the potential and costs of introducing an access scheme to social care qualifications for non-social care staff.  |
| Career Path Development                 | Introduce a placements scheme from access courses into the Department.  |
|   | Consider the potential for new career grade schemes within the Department.  |
| Senior Practitioner Role                | Directorate to review the business case for a senior practitioner role(s) and consider possible models.   |
| Recruitment Advertising and Flexibility | Review the content and quality of recruitment support information packs.  |
|   | Consider the further potential for 'rolling advertising' in selected area(s) of service.  |
|   | Review the potential to improve our overall recruitment advertising practice in the light of the positive work undertaken within the Children's Services group.   |
|   | Identify potential resource implications.   |
|   | Consider the appointment of appropriate candidates beyond the constraints of the normal establishment, particularly in areas of particular difficulty, when reasonable to do so.  |
|   | Review the potential for optimising the flexible use of existing resources in appropriate areas of service.   |
| Careers Fair Attendance                 | The revised structure of the residual departmental Personnel Section, following implementation of the Modernising Support Services Project, will include a Team to focus specifically upon planning and development issues including workforce planning, recruitment and retention issues. This team will work closely with managers to develop an appropriate profile for the whole Department at both generic and specialised careers fairs events. |

## Social Services Department Workforce Plan 2004 – 2005

| <b><u>Theme</u></b>   | <b><u>Action</u></b>   |
|---|--|
| Work Life Balance   | Retain the work life balance pilots under review with a view to extending them further into the Department, wherever practicable and appropriate.  |
| Temporary and/or Supply Staff   | Together with managers, consider the potential to extend the Social Work supply register principle into other areas of the Department.   |
|   | Consideration be given to the establishment of a Register of former employees who may wish to be retained to undertake part-time (or potentially full-time) employment on a temporary basis.                   |
| Reward and Recognition Schemes  | Further, more detailed, consideration to be given to the whole principle of reward and recognition.  |
| Streamlining and Improving the Recruitment Process                    | Monitor the impact of the revised internal recruitment procedures and support the corporate review of existing application forms.  |
|   | Consider further solutions to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the overall recruitment process.   |
| Leadership and Management Development Programme and Graduate Trainees | Consideration to be given to the potential for further development in this area by the Heads of Organisational Development and Staff Development.  |
| Attracting a Diverse Workforce  | In the context of the Equalities Action Plan, further consideration to be given to the options available to the Department in order to open up routes to work in Social Services for people with disabilities. |
|   | Develop links with 'Experience Works' to promote the employment of older employees in the workforce.   |
|   | Support the continued development and implementation of the corporate and departmental Equalities Action Plans.  |
|   | Develop proposals with managers to work towards the BVPI targets.  |

Comm/Select/WPKP