

25th April 2016**Agenda Item: 6****REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR, CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND
CULTURAL SERVICES****CHILDREN'S WORKFORCE HEALTH CHECK 2015-16****Purpose of the Report**

1. The report provides a summary of the responses to the latest Children's Workforce Health Check Survey, which was completed in November 2015.

Information and Advice

2. The 2015-16 Children's Workforce Health Check combines responses from employees across the entire Children's, Families and Cultural Services Department, including Children's Social Care, and therefore encompasses data that would previously have formed part of the Social Work Health Check. The purpose of the Health Check, which is undertaken annually, is to explore key workforce and workforce development issues, and provide a local research base for workforce development and support initiatives.
3. The 2015-16 Children's Workforce Health Check covered the following areas:
 - workforce demographics and stability
 - workforce resources
 - workforce development
 - workforce health, wellbeing and support.
4. The key headlines from the Health Check are summarised below:

Workforce Stability

- 74% of respondents have been with the Council for 3 years+ (62% for 5 yrs +)
- 78% of respondents would like to still be working for the Council in 12 months' time
- The percentage of social workers who have been with the Council for 2 years or less has decreased from 68% of the social worker cohort in 2014, to just 32% of that cohort in 2015
- the total number of sick days across the Department has reduced by 15% in 2015 when compared to the previous year
- some staff reported difficulties in taking back time (Flexi & TOIL) when their work has required them to operate longer hours or outside of normal hours.

The above figures are encouraging at a time of both national and local concern regarding the stability of the children's workforce, and particularly the retention of social work staff.

They suggest that local retention initiatives are beginning to impact upon workforce stability.

Workforce Support

- 90% of respondents felt that they had the right professional support to do their job
- 79% are able to access the ICT network when they need to (84% of Social Work respondents stated that they had found the introduction of Lenovo devices beneficial to their practice)
- 77% stated that their managers were accessible when they needed them
- 100% of social workers in teams supported by Social Work Support Officers (SWSOs) identified clear benefits to the quality of service provision and practice, with particular emphasis on the time they could now focus on work with families and on case recording. (This is consistent with the findings from the Council's quality assurance audits undertaken during the same period on cases managed within social care teams that are supported by SWSOs)
- 81% rated their supervision positively
- 82% of respondents had received an Employee Performance and Development Review (EPDR), and 76% of those had identified training needs and had subsequently accessed that training
- 69% of respondents had received a full induction when they came into post
- 92% of respondents felt they were adequately supported and listened to all, or most of, the time
- 75% felt that they had been kept well informed and supported during service changes and reorganisation
- 81% felt that there were good processes in place to monitor their personal safety, but some responses suggested that these processes may need reviewing with certain teams
- 50% of respondents knew about the Occupational Health Unit; 27% knew about Health and Wellbeing Champions.

Overall, these responses suggest that the majority of staff feel that they have the right support, development opportunities, and management infrastructure to enable them to carry out their duties. They also suggest that staff feel broadly supported at an individual level, which is important when viewed within the context of changes that have taken place over the last year. They indicate, though, that communication around health and wellbeing support, and the Occupational Health Unit, could be improved.

5. In addressing the responses to the 2015 Health Check, an action plan has been developed that will feed through into the Children's Workforce Development Plan for 2016-17. The key elements of the action plan are:
 - to monitor the levels of staff within the upper age range, and to facilitate recruitment activity and succession planning that takes account of these levels over the coming five years, whilst also ensuring that the workforce has a safe balance of experienced and less-experienced staff
 - to develop and implement a departmental induction process that complements the corporate induction programme, by providing in-coming staff with an overview of the Department's activities and priorities and the part they will play in the delivery and achievement of same

- to monitor the quality and effectiveness of supervision across the Department by way of a quarterly random-sample audit of staff from each division
 - to ensure that line managers take a more active role in monitoring the working patterns of their staff, in order to bring the quantity of additional hours being accrued down to an operationally manageable level wherever possible
 - to broaden the adoption of a Team Meeting Protocol across the Department, so that managers and staff are able to make effective and productive use of their time together
 - to develop the awareness of the workforce – through a variety of communications media – to the range of support services that are available to them as employees
 - to review the processes through which staff safety outside of the office, and outside of office hours, is monitored to ensure that all staff feel safe and valued in the work they do.
6. Progress on the implementation of the subsequent action plan will be monitored by the Children's Services Leadership Team with key outcomes informing a revised Children's Services Workforce Development Strategy.
 7. The Children's Services Health Check produced in the Spring of 2015 proposed a number of recommendations that officers have sought to address in the subsequent 12 months. A brief review of these recommendations and their outcomes is provided at **Appendix 1**.

Other Options Considered

8. Whilst the Department could have continued to employ both a social work health check and a separate children's workforce health check, the move towards a more integrated children's workforce supported the option of combining all workforce data to provide clearer comparisons across service areas, rather than them being viewed in isolation from each other.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

9. The implementation of the Children's Services Workforce Health Check action plan will address the key issues identified by staff across the Department and support the development of an informed forward plan that will help meet future workforce needs and aspirations.

Statutory and Policy Implications

10. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, sustainability and the environment and ways of working and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Financial Implications

11. There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

Implications for Service Users

12. An effective, consistent, and motivated workforce will positively impact on the lives of children and families living in Nottinghamshire.

RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1) That the summary of the responses to the Children's Services Workforce Health Check Report 2015-16, and the recommendations made, be noted.

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Constitutional Comments (SMG 29/03/16)

13. The proposals set out in this report fall within the remit of this Committee.

Financial Comments (SS 31/03/16)

14. There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

Children's Services Workforce Health Check 2015 – report to Children & Young People's Committee, May 2015

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

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