

Dear Requester

I refer to your recent Freedom of Information request. The responses to your questions are as follows:

These questions concern Children's Services child protection social workers.

1. Do you sponsor social work students? If so, how many each year and subject to what conditions? The Council only sponsors a small cohort of students each year (just 2 during 2020-21) and these are solely students who have studied in this country on a student visa, and who wish to remain and gain employment with us.

2. How many newly qualified SWs have you employed in the last 12 months broken down by sponsored and other newly qualified? Between Jan – Dec 2020 we recruited 88 NQSW's, 2 of whom were sponsored/we paid for their work visas in order for them to join our workforce.

3. What are the retention and promotion rates for both of these categories of social workers going back as far as you can? We don't currently hold this data specifically on our NQSW cohort, but our frontline social worker turnover rate has been around 5% for a number of years now, with only occasional variances from this figure. Equally we have seen our length of service figures improve over recent years, demonstrating that we are managing to retain more staff within the service than we used to. Our 2 sponsored recruits have not yet started with us/where only recruited in the last couple of months.

4. Please provide any social worker recruitment and retention strategy/policy document that you have. This includes any local memorandum between regional employers. As we have almost filled our vacancies at this point in time, and we are currently reviewing the outcomes of our retention activities, our forward strategy around recruitment and retention has yet to be finalised, and a formal document will be produced in due course.

5. Have you recruited on a strategic basis internationally-trained social workers over the last three years? If so, broken down by year how many and from which countries? Again broken down by year, what is the retention rate? No – we haven't recruited internationally, there hasn't been a need to.

6. Please provide details of the relocation package made available to internationally-trained SWs. Please be specific of obligations to repay if leaving employment prematurely? Broken down by year of those who have left what proportion have repaid or failed to repay relocation that was repayable? Not applicable – we don't have internationally trained SW's.

Please also provide details of the pastoral and professional induction programs made available to internationally-trained SWs. As above – not applicable

7. Which Officer de facto takes lead responsibility for recruitment and retention of child protection Social Workers? Our Service Director has overall responsibility for this, but recruitment and retention activity is led by our Children's Workforce Development Manager in conjunction with our Principal Social Worker for Children's Services

8. Is recruitment from outside of the UK on your LA's agenda? If so, what numbers and source countries do you have in mind? How and where do you publicise such initiatives? No

9. Please provide your most recently recorded data concerning the use of agency children's social workers? Please review the latest DfE report on Childrens' Social Work, released in February 2021

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/childrens-social-work-workforce-2020>

10. How much does it cost to support a trainee social worker through a social work Degree? If you have recruited internationally on a strategic level what has this cost? Please include separately items such as relocation, agency fees if applicable, support to bring family members to the UK?

We are assuming that this question relates to all trainee SW's, not just to any recruited from abroad (as we don't offer traineeships to candidates from abroad). The costs can vary – and our traineeships have only been available to internal staff, we don't recruit to these opportunities externally. Our recent Grow our Own programme offered career development loans to existing non-social work qualified staff, to enable them to access a fast-track social work degree programme. The cost to us, per head, was c£3,000, with staff meeting the remaining costs via their career development loan. This cost of course, does not take account of the operational costs involved with placement, study time, on-going support for the duration of the programme, management support and additional on-site training (costs which are difficult to quantify in a precise way). However, we see this investment as a viable use of public funds given that it provides an opportunity for us to fill our vacancies, and reduce our use of agency social workers.

I hope this assists. Should you have any further enquiries please do not hesitate to contact me directly on the details below.

Complaints, Information and Mediation Officer
Nottinghamshire County Council

In addition to this and for future reference Nottingham County Council regularly publishes previous FOIRs and answers on its website, under Disclosure logs. (see link)
<http://site.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/thecouncil/democracy/freedom-of-information/disclosure-log/>

You can use the search facility using keywords.

If you wish to raise any concerns about the way your request was dealt with, then please write to the Team Manager, Complaints and Information, County Hall, West Bridgford, Nottingham, NG2 7QP or e-mail foi@nottsc.gov.uk quoting the reference number above.