

18 September 2017**Agenda Item: 7****REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, YOUTH, FAMILIES AND SOCIAL
WORK****PRINCIPAL CHILD AND FAMILY SOCIAL WORKER ANNUAL REPORT
2016/17****Purpose of the Report**

1. This report summarises the work completed by the Principal Child and Family Social Worker and seeks comments on any actions required.

Information and Advice

2. The summary below outlines the key priorities for 2016/17 for Nottinghamshire County Council's Principal Child and Family Social Worker (PC&FSW) and the actions which have been taken to meet these objectives.
3. The Munro Review of Child Protection (2011) recommended that each local authority designate a PC&FSW to lead on developing professional practice and standards to ensure good outcomes for children and young people at an organisation and at a national level.
4. Since September 2016 the PC&FSW has been a member of the Children's Social Care, Divisional Leadership Team and has been line managed by the Service Director which allows a valuable line of communication and input by the PC&FSW into strategic planning and decision making.

Recruitment

5. Difficulties recruiting and retaining experienced social workers are typical of the regional and national picture. The PC&FSW has been working with colleagues to look at how things can be done differently when graduate social workers are recruited, and the support which is offered during their first year of employment and beyond.
6. The PC&FSW has been the single point of contact and appointing manager for the graduate (newly qualified) social workers. Once verbally offered a job, the PC&FSW contacts the candidates to introduce them to Nottinghamshire County Council children's social care and make sure they are linked to vacancies most suited to their skills and preferences. The PC&FSW has been able to work closely with colleagues from Recruitment and HR to ensure that all of the pre-employment checks are completed in a timely way, the recruitment process runs smoothly and there is oversight of the recruitment of graduate social workers across the whole service.

Assessed and Supported Year of Employment (ASYE)

7. The ASYE is a DfE sponsored, one year employer led induction programme which develops the skills knowledge and confidence of newly qualified social workers (NQSW). It is expected that all NQSWs entering the Council children's workforce will complete the ASYE programme.
8. Whilst on the ASYE programme NQSWs should have a reduced caseload so they can attend training events and 1:1 mentoring / assessment sessions.
9. In September 2016 the PC&FSW became responsible for the management and co-ordination of the ASYE programme and developed the internal moderation process.
10. The ASYE programme for newly qualified social workers in Nottinghamshire has been very successful; in 2016 – 2017 there have been 95 newly qualified social workers either complete or start the programme.
 - 2015/16 cohort – from September 2016 31 social workers successfully completed the ASYE programme
 - 2016/17 cohort – from September 2017 33 social workers are due to complete the ASYE programme
 - 2017/18 cohort – 31 newly qualified social workers are currently enrolled to start the programme in September 2017.
11. 2017/18 marks the 10th anniversary of the programme; in early 2018 the PC&FSW will be coordinating a celebration of the success of the programme.
12. In the next 12 months the PC&FSW will be working with colleagues to ensure that the ASYE programme continues to develop and meet the needs of the service. The moderation process is also going to be improved so that the quality of ASYE mentors / assessors is measured.

Social Worker Career Progression

13. The PC&FSW oversees the children's social care career progression process, which is aligned to the national professional capabilities framework (PCF) for social workers.
14. With the support of their managers social workers who are able to demonstrate that they are working at the level of an 'experienced social worker' can attend a career progression panel and apply for progression to salary scale Band B.
15. Since the revised career progression process became operational in May 2016 the advancement of 26 child care social workers has been formally recognised.
16. The children's social care workforce want access to opportunities where they can get new experiences and to develop their careers. Across the division a number of programmes have been developed to support staff to transfer to different roles or to get new experiences where they can develop their practice. The PC&FSW is currently coordinating all career progression opportunities working with colleagues in

Communications and Marketing to ensure that all this information is accessible to everyone.

17. The PC&FSW is the children's social work representative on the Children's Services Workforce Development Commissioning Forum. In this role the PC&FSW consults with managers in the service to identify staff development and training needs and works with colleagues in Learning & Organisational Development, Workforce Planning & Development, to commission and facilitate training.

D2N2 Teaching Partnership

18. The D2N2 Teaching Partnership is a Department of Health (DoH) and DfE backed collaboration between 10 local agencies who represent service users, provide social care services and teach and train social workers in the region.
19. The D2N2 Teaching Partnership plans to improve the quality of social work for the local population through the integration and exchanging of values, skills and knowledge gained from experience, practice and research to sustain and improve the local workforce.
20. The PC&FSW represents the Council's children's social care workforce and is the chair of the Progression, Continuing Professional Development and Academic Experience sub-group.
21. During autumn 2017 the PC&FSW will be launching the partnership 'talent pool' and linking people with expertise and knowledge in specific practice areas to the people or organisations where training and development is needed in these areas.

Step up to Social Work

22. Step up to Social Work is a DfE initiative to encourage people to change their career or take up a career in social work, working with children and families. Step up to Social Work is an intensive, 14-month, full-time, employer-led training programme for trainees to work in a local authority, gaining hands-on practice experience whilst also completing their academic study with Manchester Metropolitan University.
23. The PC&FSW and her team represent the Council at the regional and national Step up to Social Work networks, completing the recruitment of candidates, curriculum development and assessment and review of the candidates.
24. In 2016 – 17 the Council hosted the placements for 4 Step up to Social Work students who all successfully completed their training. Two of the students who live in the area have now chosen to come and work for the County Council as child care social workers.
25. Step up to Social Work is a positive programme for the County Council to support, and will host placements for 6 students (maximum permitted) for the next cohort who commence their training in January 2018.

Social Work Practice Consultants Team

26. The PC&FSW is the Manager for the Social Work Practice Consultant Team made up of 21 (17.5 full time equivalent) advanced practitioner level social workers.

27. The role of the social work practice consultant was an innovative development within the Council's children's services to respond to a nationally recognised shortage of experienced and high numbers of newly qualified social workers working in child protection teams. The social work practice consultants work in specific teams and share their practice knowledge and experience, by co-working complex cases with less experienced social workers and providing mentoring, practice guidance and support.
28. Social work practice consultants must ensure that their knowledge and skills are maintained and that as a group they have a shared understanding of good practice and assessment skills.
29. The team is continuing to evolve and develop; in the next 12 months the PC&FSW will be working with members of the team to create a network of practice champions across children's social care.

Practice Improvement

30. There is an increasing recognition that social workers and managers should be using structured tools to assist and guide their professional decision-making.
31. During the last 12 months the PC&FSW and the practice consultants have been working across the service to train and support practitioners to use a suite of standardised tools in the assessment, intervention and review process.
32. The PC&FSW and the practice consultants have also been working hard to promote the use of the Safeguarding Children Assessment and Analysis Framework (SAAF) which is a structured decision-making tool designed to improve child protection assessments of risk.
33. The Council initially started using this tool as a part of a DfE commissioned national study in 2014. It was felt that the SAAF tools had supported social workers and managers when assessing risk in complex cases and there was an appetite for the licenced tools to remain available for social workers to use after the trial period ended.
34. In 2016 the Divisional Leadership Team (DLT) agreed to the commissioning of training for practice consultants to become Agency Based Trainers (ABTs) to deliver the SAAF training to other staff in Nottinghamshire.
35. There are 5 practice consultants who have become ABTs and during 2016-17 have delivered 11 full training courses to over 150 social workers. They have also offered 7 short courses for managers and workers who need a refresher.
36. The initial training phase of the implementation plan has been completed. During the remainder of 2017 and 2018 the PC&FSW and the practice consultants will be concentrating on ensuring SAAF is consistently used across the whole department when complex assessments of risk and neglect are undertaken.
37. The local impact of the SAAF and the standardised tools are to be evaluated.

National Principal Social Work Network

38. The PC&FSW attends and participates in the quarterly national child and family principal social work network. These meetings are hosted on behalf of the DfE and are attended by principal social workers from England. The meetings offer learning and developmental opportunities, an opportunity for information transfer and networking with peers in other local authorities and also for Isabelle Trowler, the Chief Social Worker for England, to communicate with the group. Attendance at these meetings has provided useful information and has enabled the Council to participate in the debate regarding:

- national social work reform
- development and progress made by other local authorities
- Ofsted inspection
- education of social workers
- National Assessment and Accreditation of Social Workers.

Regional Principal Social Work Network

39. The PC&FSW is the chair of the regional principal social work network. Meetings are normally held every two or three months and provides an invaluable opportunity for peers from across the region to share examples of good practice and innovation.

Other Options Considered

40. No other options have been considered.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

41. To seek Members' views on any further actions required.

Statutory and Policy Implications

42. 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 only), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults, 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.

RECOMMENDATION/S

That Committee:

- 1) notes the progress which has been made by the Principal Child and Family Social Worker.
- 2) considers whether there are any actions it requires in relation to the information contained within the report.

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Constitutional Comments (SLB 05/09/17)

43. Children and Young People's Committee is the appropriate body to consider the content of this report. If Committee resolves that any actions are required it must be satisfied that such actions are within the Committee's terms of reference.

Financial Comments (SAS 01/09/17)

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

Background Papers and Published Documents

None.

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

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