

30th November 2020**Agenda Item: 18****REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, YOUTH FAMILIES AND SOCIAL
WORK****CHANGES TO STAFFING ESTABLISHMENT IN CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE
TO ESTABLISH A SOCIAL WORK APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMME****Purpose of the Report**

1. To seek approval to establish a Social Work Apprenticeship programme in Children's Social Care Services, with the initial establishment of five Social Work Apprenticeship posts.

Information

2. Nationally local authorities are facing increasing challenges to recruit and retain qualified Social Workers, which leads to an increase in agency worker expenditure.
3. Developments with apprenticeship standards have recently resulted in the Institute for Apprenticeships approving for delivery the Social Work (degree) Apprenticeship. The development of the apprenticeship offers a paid employment-based route into the profession as an alternative to the usual undergraduate study
4. An apprenticeship is a job with an accompanying skills development programme. Through their apprenticeship, apprentices will gain the technical knowledge, practical experience and wider skills they need for their immediate job. The apprentice gains this through a wide mix of learning in the workplace, formal on-the-job training and the opportunity to practise these new skills in a real work environment.
5. In May 2017, the Government's apprenticeship reforms provided employers with the means to pay for training and assessment against apprenticeship standards by introducing the apprenticeship levy. The levy is deducted at a rate of 0.5% of the Council's payroll and is collected monthly by HMRC and placed in a digital account. This digital account can only be used to pay registered training providers to deliver apprenticeship training and assessment costs.
6. The use of the apprenticeship levy and the wider apprenticeship programme has been approved at Personnel Committee and is managed through the Council's Workforce and Organisational Development team as part of the corporate workforce planning response, to meet the Council's future skills needs.

7. The typical duration of this apprenticeship is 36 months and the training cost of £23,000 per apprentice can be met from the Apprenticeship Levy. Apprentices would be offered a substantive post, time limited for the duration of the apprenticeship. Expectation would be that they would work four days in a team, performing non-statutory duties and co-working with qualified social workers as part of their learning and have one day for study (how this one day per week is used could vary depending on the chosen provider, some may do blocks of off-site learning and others day release each week). Social work student placements still need to be undertaken in alternative settings in Year 2 (70 -80 days) and Year 3 (90 – 100 days).
8. The introduction of the Social Work Apprenticeship programme within Children's Social Work Services will support work to ensure there is sufficient workforce capacity to meet the increased demands, ensure manageable caseloads, and to address challenges around recruitment and succession planning. These posts will provide career progression opportunities for non-Social Work qualified staff and add additional non-Social Work qualified worker capacity to support children and families.
9. With the success of the Grow our Own and Step up to Social Work schemes, it is felt the introduction of the Social Work Apprenticeship will attract internal staff who previously have been unable to apply for the schemes, due to the requirement to have an undergraduate degree before entering the step up programme and the impact of the associated financial costs of the two schemes.
10. The apprenticeship salary model will pay a percentage of the starting salary of a newly qualified worker (Hay Band A) for each year of the apprenticeship, 75% in year 1, 80% in year 2 and 85% in year 3. This reflects the skills, knowledge and behaviour the apprentice will develop each year. It also reflects the training investment the service is offering and the impact of study time away from the office.
11. The existing Social Worker job description will be used for the posts to ensure competencies and expectations can be measured against the expected requirements of a newly qualified Social Worker taking into account the level of training received.
12. Initially, five posts will be established in January 2021, with the ambition of developing further Social Work Apprenticeship posts in the future in order to establish a rolling Apprenticeship programme. This would support an increase in the number of qualified Social Workers who will graduate each year, to support with succession planning and recruitment.
13. Funding for the Social Work Apprenticeship posts is subject to the agreement of a budget pressure which has been submitted as part of the Council's budget setting process.
14. The introduction of the Social Work Apprenticeship programme will replace the development of the Social Work Assistant role. This shift in approach is in recognition that individuals attracted to this role are often wishing to pursue a career in Social Work, and the remit and tasks of the Social Work Assistant role could suitably be undertaken/absorbed by a Social Work Apprenticeship role, whilst supporting their studies. The ambition is to eliminate the overspend on agency Social Work Assistants through the use of

Apprenticeships subject to the success of the programme and the Council's budget setting process.

15. The Social Work Apprentice posts will be placed in the Hard to Retain teams, providing additional resource to these teams, and placements in years 2 and 3 will be offered across the whole service to meet qualification requirements.
16. All options for protecting the investment of the Council in Social Work apprenticeships will be explored, including contractual arrangements to ensure the services of the staff are retained once qualified.
17. In terms of ability to recruit to the above posts, recruitment data shows that the Council has recruited 51 newly qualified social workers in 2019 and 36 so far in 2020. Between 2015 and 2019, 98 Social Work students have been offered employment, of which 81 completed their placement with Nottinghamshire County Council, suggesting that Nottinghamshire is an employer of choice for social work students.

Other Options Considered

18. One option is to establish the Social Work Assistant posts in teams; whilst this would provide additional resource to support children and families, it would not support with succession planning, recruitment challenges and have an impact on agency expenditure.
19. Alternatively, an option could be to do nothing; this would reduce the career opportunities for staff and support available to children, their families and Social Workers to improve outcomes for children.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

20. The establishment of the Social Work Apprenticeship programme and the initial establishment of five Social Work Apprenticeship posts is being recommended to provide a career pathway for non-Social Work qualified staff wishing to progress into Social Work, to support with recruitment challenges and succession planning and for the duration of the Apprenticeship to provide non-Social Work qualified resource to Social Care teams to improve outcomes for children and their families.

Statutory and Policy Implications

21. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance, 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, smarter working, sustainability and the environment 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

22. The total cost of the five posts at 75% of Band A in 2020-21 will be £42,000 including £7,250 for running and one-off equipment costs. This will be met from the release of five agency

Social Work Assistants and therefore contained within the overall Children & Families budget.

23. The total cost of these posts in 2021-22 is £150,000, including running costs, with an additional £10,000 in each of the following financial years as the apprentices progress through the apprenticeship salary model as outlined in **paragraph 10** i.e. 75% in year 1, 80% in year 2 and 85% in year 3. The funding will form part of the Council's budget setting process for 2021/22.
24. The training cost of £23,000 per apprentice (£115,000 in total) will be met from the Apprenticeship Levy, this budget is held by corporate HR Learning and Development.

Human Resources Implications

25. Procurement of the training provider will be undertaken by the Council's Workforce and Organisational Development Team in line with Nottinghamshire County Council's procurement policy.
26. A recruitment exercise will be undertaken each year to identify suitable candidates for the role.

RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1) That the Committee approves the establishment of a Social Work Apprenticeships programme in Children's Social Care, with the initial establishment of five Social Work Apprenticeship posts.

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Constitutional Comments (KK 16/11/20)

27. The proposal in this report is within the remit of the Children and Young People's Committee.

Financial Comments (SAS 19/11/20)

28. The total cost of the five posts at 75% of Band A in 2020-21 will be £42,000 including £7,250 for running and one-off equipment costs. This will be met from the release of five agency Social Work Assistants and therefore contained within the overall Children & Families budget.

29. The total cost of these posts in 2021-22 is £150,000, including running costs, with an additional £10,000 in each of the following financial years as the apprentices progress through the apprenticeship salary model as outlined in **paragraph 10** i.e. 75% in year 1, 80% in year 2 and 85% in year 3. The funding will form part of the Council's budget setting process for 2021/22.
30. The training cost of £23,000 per apprentice (£115,000 in total) will be met from the Apprentices budget held by corporate HR Learning and Development.

HR Comments (BC 19/11/20)

31. The staffing implications are contained within the body of the report. The establishment of a social work apprenticeship programme will provide a career pathway into social work for existing NCC staff. Posts will be appointed to in line with the agreed recruitment procedures.

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.

None.

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All

C1416