

24 January 2022

Agenda Item: 9

REPORT OF SERVICE DIRECTOR FOR INTEGRATED STRATEGIC COMMISSIONING AND SERVICE IMPROVEMENT

IMPLEMENTATION OF ADDITIONAL SUPERNUMERARY SOCIAL WORKER AND OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST APPRENTICESHIP POSTS AS PROGRESSION INTO QUALIFIED ROLES

Purpose of the Report

1. To seek approval for an intake of additional supernumerary Social Worker and Occupational Therapist Apprenticeship posts as a progression route into qualified roles.
2. To consider participating in a rolling intake depending on the Department's financial position and the outcome of workforce modelling analysis that is planned in early 2022.

Information

The Council's approach to Apprenticeship

3. The Council as one of the biggest employers in Nottinghamshire has committed to the Government's apprenticeship reforms since their introduction in April 2017.
4. The apprenticeship reforms put employers at the centre of identifying the skills, knowledge and behaviours that are required by the workforce of the future and to ensure apprentices receive high quality training to meet the chosen professional standards. Apprenticeships are a way of ensuring employees are trained in the behaviours that the Council requires and meet competencies for the role that they are appointed to deliver.
5. Apprenticeships are now open to anybody over the age of 16 and are available from entry level (Level 2) all the way through to Higher Apprenticeships at degree (Level 6) and Masters (Level 7) qualifications.
6. The Council's approach to the Apprenticeship Programme is threefold:
 - offering existing employees increased opportunities to develop skills and obtain occupational qualifications

- considering vacant posts as higher-level apprenticeships where an appropriate standard matches the job description and person specification. For example, vacancies for Reablement Managers in Adult Social Care were successfully recruited to with the undertaking of the L5 Apprenticeship in Care Leadership and Management as a condition of that role
 - offering apprenticeship opportunities as an entry route into an occupational area in posts that are additional to the staffing establishment. These new roles are paid at Age Related Minimum Wage and are particularly useful when business continuity planning has identified an existing skills shortage and an ageing workforce. These posts are additional to the staffing establishment and are paid for by the team.
7. There is a minimum requirement of 20% work time spent on training over the duration of the apprenticeship. This does not mean the apprentice will be out of the workplace. However, a number of staff in the same team undertaking an apprenticeship may impact on the service delivery of that team.
 8. The duration of the Apprentice degree course for Social Workers is three years. However, the Occupational Therapist programme could be three or four years depending on the university course provider. On successful completion of the programme, Occupational Therapist apprentices are eligible to apply to the HCPC (Health and Care Professional Council) for registration as an Occupational Therapist, which is a requirement to practice under the protected title of Occupational Therapist. They are eligible to apply for Professional Membership of The Royal College of Occupational Therapists. Similarly, Social Workers that have completed the programme will be eligible to apply to the Social Work England register and then work as newly qualified staff.

Key workforce planning issues for Social Worker and Occupational Therapist roles

9. The current position on Social Workers and Occupational Therapists potentially retiring in the next three years is shown below:

SW/OT possible retirements (Headcount)	Under 57	57 and Over	% of people who could take early retirement
Social Workers	213	53	20%
Occupational Therapists	75	13	15%

10. Following the regional and local trends, high numbers of Social Workers and the workforce are reaching the age where they may consider retirement in the next three years.
11. Across the Department there are 20 FTE Social Worker and 15 FTE Occupational Therapist unfilled posts and current capacity, demand and performance challenges are due to chronic shortages of social care workforce. The impact of Covid-19 and further demands on the services around staffing and demand has been further highlighted. There is also impact on the ability to work in a preventative way and manage the increased number of priorities.

12. Nationally, the difficulties in recruiting Occupational Therapists and Social Workers have been well documented – the Occupational Therapy profession is no longer on the occupations list which has meant that it is no longer possible to recruit international Occupational Therapists to undertake short term work via agencies.
13. Whilst there are various fast track graduate training programmes for Children's Social Care there are no similar schemes for Adult Social Care and there is a need to start developing unqualified staff into qualified front line roles.

The proposal to fund additional supernumerary Apprentice posts

14. There are currently three Apprentices in the department – 2 FTE Occupational Therapist and 1 FTE Social Worker posts which were fully funded from workforce redesign within establishment. The feedback from the Apprentices and managers has been positive. The quotes below demonstrate how the current apprentices value and appreciate the career opportunities that have been offered to them.

"It is an amazing opportunity; I think the council should continue to have apprentices"

"I absolutely love the apprenticeship. It's amazing! I really look forward to my university day on a Wednesday and it breaks the working week up nicely".

Consideration has been given to broadening access to the Department Social Worker and Occupational Therapist Apprenticeship programme.

15. The proposal is to fund seven additional supernumerary Apprenticeship roles with the split of 4 FTE Occupational Therapist and 3 FTE Social Worker:

Annual cost (per FTE and for all 7 Apprentices) year 1 (2022):

	Grade	FTE	Pay with on cost	Mileage	Phone cost	Total Cost
Apprentice SW/OT	Band 5	1	£35,691	£293	£180	£36,164
Apprentice SW/OT	Band 5	7	£249,835	£2,054	£1,260	£253,149

Additional one-off costs in year 1:

	Mobile	Headset	Laptop	Total one off
1 FTE	£150	£40	£1,560	£1,750
7 FTE	£1,050	£280	£10,920	£12,250

16. The Department recognises the pressures and the financial constraints that the workforce has to operate under in Nottinghamshire. It is committed to ensuring that the workforce is appropriately trained, and with opportunities for career development. An empowered and supported workforce will allow the Council to achieve better outcomes for the citizens of Nottinghamshire.

17. Apprenticeships can play an important role in investing in the workforce, ensuring they feel valued, motivated, and skilled for future service developments. In addition to aiding with staff retention, managing talent and promoting succession planning, the opportunity to access training whilst in work and seeing how that can develop a career pathway may also result in a more diverse workforce.
18. The duration of the Apprentice degree course for Social Workers is three years. However, the Occupational Therapist programme could be three or four years depending on the university. The Department will commit to the duration for the course for the apprentices to complete the qualification. However, the Department will withdraw from the programme or reduce the numbers of apprentices depending on the financial position or further work on workforce remodelling.
19. The summary of the three-year apprentice intake cost profile is as follows:

Roles	2022 Year 1	2023 Year 2	2024 Year 3	2025 Year 4
Social worker	3	3	3	
Occupational Therapist	4	4	4	4
Annual salary cost	£253,149	£253,149	£253,149	£144,656
Annual one-off cost	£12,250			
Apprenticeship Levy	£47,000	£47,000	£47,000	£24,000

Other Options Considered

20. Whilst there are various national fast track graduate training programmes for Children's Social Care there are no similar national schemes for Adult Social Care. In this way, the Apprenticeship Levy is being utilised. However, there are annual cost implications for the Council.
21. There are Continuous Professional Development and Advanced Practitioner Modules for Social Workers and Occupational Therapists. Some short courses will continue to be delivered under the existing arrangements, but these are post qualification.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

22. To support with the highlighted issues around an ageing workforce, staff retention, managing talent and promoting succession planning. Employees will have the opportunity to access training whilst in work and seeing how that can develop a career pathway may also result in a more diverse workforce.
23. Utilising the apprenticeship levy to support employees in developing their skills, knowledge, and qualifications ensures the Council's workforce has the right skills and knowledge required for Adult Social Care service delivery.

Statutory and Policy Implications

24. 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

25. Any financial implication will be covered using the Apprenticeship Levy and the Departmental budget. There will be a financial implication in relation to salary costs and one-off additional costs as outlined in **paragraph 19**.
26. The Department will commit to the three-year Social Worker course and four-year Occupational Therapist course. However, further any decision to participate in the intake for additional supernumerary apprentices will depend on evaluation and the financial position.

Human Resources Implications

27. There will be a corporate recruitment process for all the apprenticeship posts. The use of the Apprenticeship Levy to fund Social Worker and Occupational Therapist qualifications outlined in the report enables the Council to maximise career development opportunities to support succession planning.

RECOMMENDATION/S

That:

- 1) Committee approves the implementation of additional supernumerary 4 FTE Occupational Therapist and 3 FTE Social Worker Apprenticeship posts as a progression route into qualified roles for a 3 - 4 year programme, as outlined in **paragraph 19**.
- 2) any decisions to participate in further Social Work and Occupational Therapist Apprenticeship intake will depend on the outcome of the evaluation of the programme, workforce remodelling analysis and the Department's financial position.

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Constitutional Comments (KK 11/01/22)

28. The proposals in this report are within the remit of the Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee.

Financial Comments (DG 23/12/21)

29. The annual cost of the posts will be £253,149 and one-off costs of £12,250. These costs will be met from the Apprenticeship Levy and an increase of Vacancy Level Turnover (VLT) across Adult Social Care & Public Health.

HR Comments (WI 10/01/22)

30. Any HR implications are detailed in **paragraph 27**.

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.

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