REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE

ESTABLISHMENT OF POSTS IN THE CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE FRAMEWORK TEAM

Purpose of the Report

1. To seek approval for the establishment of the following posts in the Children's Social Care Framework Team:

    - 1 full time equivalent (fte) technical specialist post
    - 0.5 fte E-support worker post
    - 0.5 fte administrative support post
    - 1 fte business lead post.

Information and Advice

2. The CFCS Framework-i Development Team was created in 2010. The team undertakes essential work to ensure that Children's Social Care (CSC) has an electronic recording system that social workers can use to record work being undertaken with vulnerable children and families. This includes statutory interventions in relation to child protection work, Looked After Children and adoption work. The CSC Framework-i team is under-resourced generally, which was recognised as part of a review of Framework-i and reporting (ATOS Consulting, January 2012).

3. The work of the team includes designing and producing workflow procedures, templates/forms for recording and reporting purposes, maintenance of the system, plus testing and implementing upgrades and new functionality that will support the work of social workers. The team also provides direct support to frontline practitioners in using the Framework-i system.

4. The Framework-i recording system is also used to produce statistical reports that are required by the Department for Education on our performance against a range of national indicators. It is imperative that information is recorded accurately as the statistical information produced forms the basis for judgements about CSC performance and comparison with other local authorities.

5. Over the past two years demand on Children's Social Care has increased dramatically and whilst front line capacity has increased to meet demand there have been no changes within the Framework-i team. The Children's Social Care Service is moving into a new operating model from November 2012. Planning and support for the new arrangements

will create significant pressures for the Framework-i team. For example, a lot of work is currently being done on Framework-i processes which will support the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). The MASH is a high-priority project for CSC; supporting systems need to be efficient, effective and safe. The Munro Review of Child Protection makes recommendations for a new single assessment and the need to free up social workers from bureaucracy through the development of improved and simplified recording performance systems again placing significant ongoing pressure on the Framework-i team.

6.   The team currently has 1 fte technical specialist post. However, the job-share post holders have both been working 30 hours per week each since September 2011 to complete the electronic Integrated Children's System (ICS) review project and to support the Children's Social Care Transformation Programme and the MASH Project. The additional technical specialist post would concentrate on the latter two areas, ensuring that processes and systems were in place in a timely way, to a high standard. This would enable the staff working additional hours to revert back to their contracted hours and to concentrate on the further development of the ICS recording system.

7.   The E-support worker posts have been invaluable in improving the user experience and developing an understanding of how Framework-i is used not only as a social work case record but also to provide management information to demonstrate how CSC are performing against key performance indicators. The E-workers have made themselves very visible and available in the localities and other service areas as well as being involved in the development and testing of enhancements to Framework-i. Progress has been made in supporting staff to use Framework-i, however feedback from social workers and managers is that they require further input and training to be more proficient users of Framework-i. This is particularly important now as some social workers will be required to undertake work in newly established teams, as part of the Transformation Programme, and additional capacity is needed to embed the new operating model.

8.   The 0.5 fte E-support worker will provide some of the required capacity in directly supporting social workers and in helping to develop role-specific training. The post will also help to address issues of data quality, which is essential in producing accurate performance management reports. Having accurate data will be a critical factor in assessing CSC performance and the impact of the transformation programme.

9.   The team currently has very limited access to administrative support, which is currently one post shared with Adult Social Care and Health. CSC is allocated one third of this worker's time. To support the team's work and ensure efficient use of staff time, an additional 0.5 fte administrator is required. The post holder will have responsibilities for checking configuration and quality assurance of Framework-i documents. This will include maintaining information in the admin tool of Framework-i and in creating and maintaining essential supporting documentation for projects.

10.   It is recommended that a business lead post is established to give direct input into large projects, and to undertake testing and consultation with staff, which would improve the timeliness of outputs. The business lead would be the division's key person in respect of the continued development of Framework-i and would need to ensure that all processes are properly implemented; that training is in place; and that communication about Framework-i within CSC and key organisations is effective. The business lead would be

responsible for assessing and evaluating the implications of key legislative changes which will have a direct impact on Framework-i and other social care ICT systems, and would take the lead in formulating strategies for implementation of associated new business processes. A detailed knowledge of the functions of the CSC service would be required.

Other Options Considered

11. The Framework-i team to continue work without the required additional resources. This would adversely affect CSC services, causing potential delays to the implementation of the MASH and hinder some of the benefits identified with the implementation of the new operating model. Further work will be done at a corporate level to examine the most effective way to support the Council's main systems. This work may suggest different models designed to improve effectiveness and value for money. In the meantime, the case for additional support in Children's Social Care is considered urgent, although the work of the Framework-i Development Team would certainly fall within the scope of any future corporate options appraisal.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

12. Framework-i systems need to support the new operating model in CSC. The benefits for CSC and the Council include improved data quality and better management information. There also needs to be further development of Framework-i case recording functionality, so that CSC will be in a position to implement the recommendations of the Munro report. One of the perceived positive outcomes of this is that social workers will be able to spend more time with children and families, which provides a better service and increases job satisfaction.

Statutory and Policy Implications

13. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of finance, equal opportunities, human resources, crime and disorder, human rights, the safeguarding of children, sustainability and the environment and those using the service and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Implications for Service Users

14. The creation of the additional posts will have a positive impact for service users. By having sufficient capacity to improve our recording system, we will have staff that are more confident in using the system, will be able to record information more easily due to simplified workflow processes and spend more time undertaking direct work with vulnerable children and families.

Financial Implications

15. The costs for these posts will be met out of existing Children's Social Care budgets.

   Specific costs relating to each post are as follows:

- 1 fte technical specialist post (Band C) £44,218
- 0.5 fte E-worker post (Scale 5) £13,944
- 0.5 fte administrative post (Scale 2) £ 8,945
- 1 fte business lead cost (Band B) £38,870
- Total costs £105,977

Safeguarding of Children Implications

16.   The additional posts will help to ensure the new organisational structure in CSC is reflected in the electronic recording system. The additional capacity will also help to ensure social workers receive appropriate training, will improve workflow and make enhancements to the system in a timely way. Consequently, social workers will be better supported in using Framework-i in accurately recording the assessed needs of service users.

Human Resources Implications

17.   It is envisaged that all the posts, with the possible exception of the Technical Specialist post, can be filled through internal recruitment processes. All the operational posts will be line managed by the team's current team manager. The administrative support post will be line managed by the current business support manager. Job descriptions are available as background papers to this report.

RECOMMENDATION/S

1)   That the establishment of the following posts in the Children's Social Care Framework Team be approved:

- 1 fte technical specialist post
- 0.5 fte E-support worker post
- 0.5 fte administrative support post
- 1 fte business lead post.

Steve Edwards
Service Director, Children's Social Care

For any enquiries about this report please contact:

Ty Yousaf
Children's Service Manager for Service Improvement
T: 0115 8546302
E: ty.yousaf@nottscc.gov.uk

Constitutional Comments (KK 09/08/12)
18.   The proposals in this report are within the remit of the Children and Young People's Committee.

Financial Comments (NDR 07/08/12)

19.   The financial implications are set out in paragraph 15 of the report.

Background Papers

Job descriptions for Technical Specialist post, E-support Worker post, Business Lead post and Administrative Support post
The Munro Review of Child Protection, Department for Education, May 2011

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.

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

C0047