



**18 June 2018**

**Agenda Item: 8**

## **REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, YOUTH, FAMILIES AND SOCIAL WORK**

### **PRINCIPAL CHILD AND FAMILY SOCIAL WORKER ANNUAL REPORT 2017/18**

#### **Purpose of the Report**

1. This report summarises the work completed by the Principal Child and Family Social Worker.

#### **Information**

2. The summary below outlines the key priorities for 2017/18 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.

#### **Recruitment**

5. The Department for Education (DfE) *Children and family social work workforce in England (year ending 30 September 2017)* information shows that there are national difficulties recruiting and retaining experienced social workers. Since January 2017 Nottinghamshire's 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 offered to them in their first year of employment and beyond.
6. The PC&FSW has been the single point of contact and appointing manager for all of the Council's graduate (newly qualified) social workers. Once verbally offered a job, the PC&FSW contacts the candidates to introduce them to the Council and makes sure they are linked to vacancies most suited to their skills and preferences.
7. In 2017/18, 37 graduate social workers were recruited by the Council's Children's Services. The recruitment of graduate social workers in 2018/19 is also looking positive;

16 new recruits have already accepted positions with the Council (which is nearly double the number at this stage last year).

8. The Assessed and Supported Year of Employment (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 Nottinghamshire children's workforce will complete the ASYE programme.
9. Whilst on the ASYE programme NQSWs should have a reduced caseload so they can attend specific training events, have their practice observed and attend 1:1 mentoring / assessment sessions.
10. The Council has a well-established ASYE programme with the 2017/18 cohort marking the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the programme. New graduate recruits state that the comprehensive ASYE programme offered by the Council is one of the reasons why they have chosen to work for the authority.
11. The PC&FSW and colleagues have monitored the quality and contents of the ASYE programme to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of the workers completing it and the local authority. The satisfaction score given by the 2016/17 cohort was mostly high, some changes have been made to the 2017/18 programme to ensure that there are some additional practical workshops and the less beneficial training days have been changed. Plans for the 2018/19 cohort are now nearly complete.

### **Social Worker Career Progression**

12. The PC&FSW oversees the children's social work career progression process, which is aligned to the national professional capabilities framework (PCF) for social workers.
13. 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 Hay Band B.
14. In the year 2017/18 17 social workers attended the career progression panel and were able to successfully demonstrate that they were working at the level of an experienced social worker.
15. In 2018/19 the PC&FSW and colleagues will be working to align social work career progression process to the new DfE post qualifying standards called the knowledge and skills statements for child and family social work (KSS) .
16. From 2020 experienced child care social workers will be able to complete the national assessment and accreditation (benchmarked against the KSS) to become an approved child and family practitioner. This is not going to be compulsory, but employers of social workers are encouraged to aspire to this standard. In the next 12 months the PC&FSW will be reviewing how prepared Nottinghamshire Children's Services are for this and planning for the launch in 2020.

## **D2N2 Teaching Partnership**

17. Set up in 2016 D2N2 Teaching Partnership's social work academy for excellence is made up of 10 local partners from the social work sector and has been funded, by the Department for Education and Department of Health, to improve and enhance the quality of social work training in the region, as well as providing a research-led and practice-based Continuing Professional Development programme to existing social workers across the region.
18. In 2018 the Teaching Partnership made a successful bid for a further year's funding for 2018/19.
19. The PC&FSW represents the Council's children's social care workforce in the D2N2 Teaching Partnership, is the chair of the Progression & Development Hub, a member of the Knowledge & Skills Hub, and is taking a lead in the development of a regional 'return to social work' programme for qualified social workers who have been out of the profession and who wish to re-gain their professional registration.

## **Step up to Social Work**

20. Step up to Social Work is a DfE funded 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.
21. The PC&FSW and her team represent the Council at the regional and national Step up to Social Work network, completing the recruitment of candidates, curriculum development and assessment and review of the candidates.
22. In summer 2017, the Council hosted one of the regional assessment centres and a member of the PC&FSW's team is the current chair of the regional practice assessment panel.
23. It is felt that this is a positive programme for the County Council to support, and placements are currently being offered to five step-up students who will be doing their training from January 2018 to April 2019.

## **Grow our own Social Workers**

24. The PC&FSW is currently working with colleagues across the East Midlands looking at the feasibility of collaborating on a 'Grow our own Social Workers' programme, where current employees would be able to complete a fast track social work qualification whilst remaining employed in their substantive post.
25. The PC&FSW is currently working on a proposal for the Council to support up to 10 current employees to undertake this training programme, which is due to commence in September 2018.

## **Team Managers Support Programme**

26. It is widely acknowledged that the role of the first line manager (Team Manager) is crucial in the development and retention of a skilled workforce and for promoting positive outcomes for the children and families the Council work's with. Feedback from team managers showed that newly appointed managers can struggle to adapt to their new role and needed more support. In response to this the PC&FSW and colleagues have developed and launched a Management Support Programme which will run throughout 2018/19.

## **Social Work Practice Consultants Team**

27. The PC&FSW is the manager for the social work practice consultants team made up of 17.5 full time equivalent advanced practitioner level social workers.
28. 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.
29. There has recently been a positive recruitment campaign which saw an unprecedented number of high quality applicants to the vacancies in the social work practice consultants team.
30. In 2018/19 members of the social work practice consultant team will be setting up a network of 'practice champions' across all teams, where experienced social workers can learn together, share their own knowledge and expertise and develop 'expert' practice across the workforce.
31. The practice consultant's team will continue to facilitate multi-agency problem solving meetings (MAPS) which support groups of professionals work together and creatively identify different ways of working with a child or family. In 2017/18, 35 MAPS took place with nine meetings already scheduled for 2018/19.

## **Practice Improvement**

32. Following the detailed analysis of the progression of work in the department completed by Newton Europe in 2017 the PC&FSW and the social work practice consultants team have identified a number of improvement opportunities which they are now embedding into practice.
33. The proposed revision to Working Together identifies that the Designated Principal Social Worker should have a key role in developing the practice and the practice methodology that underpin direct work with children and families.

34. The PC&FSW and the practice consultants have already been working across the service to train and support practitioners to use a suite of standardised tools in the assessment, intervention and review process.
35. They 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.
36. In 2018/19 the PC&FSW and the practice consultants will continue to work with managers and social workers to ensure these practice methods become embedded into practice.
37. The PC&FSW will also be joining the East Midlands Region Practice Framework & Methodology Group to ensure that Nottinghamshire continues to share and learn from others and develop best practice within their organisation.

### **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.
39. The Chief Social Worker for England, and representatives from the Department for Education, attend the meetings and share information regarding national social work reform and agendas for improvement.

### **Regional Principal Social Work Network**

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

### **Other Options Considered**

41. No other options have been considered.

### **Reason/s for Recommendation/s**

42. The report provides an opportunity for the Committee to consider any further actions arising from the information contained within the report.

### **Statutory and Policy Implications**

43. 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.

## **Financial Implications**

44. The costs of all the initiatives are met from a combination of grant funding (ASYE, D2N2 Teaching Partnership and Step-up to social work training), the existing budget held by the PC&FSW and the existing budget held by the Learning & Organisational Development, Workforce Planning & Development Team.
45. The Grow our own Social Workers scheme would incur no additional cost to the Council; the cost would be met from a combination of placement funding from the University and the existing budget held by the PC&FSW.

## **RECOMMENDATION/S**

- 1) That Committee considers whether there are any further actions it requires in relation to the information contained in the report.

**Steve Edwards**

**Service Director, Youth, Families and Social Work**

**For any enquiries about this report please contact:**

Diana Bentley  
Principal Child and Family Social Worker  
T: 01158040768  
E: diana.bentley@nottsc.gov.uk

## **Constitutional Comments (LM 25/05/18)**

46. The Children and Young People's Committee is the appropriate body to consider the contents of the report. Members should consider whether there are any actions they require in relation to the report.

## **Financial Comments (SAS 07/06/18)**

47. The financial implications of the report are contained within paragraphs 44 and 45 of the report.

## **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.

Children and family social work workforce in England - Department for Education February 2018  
Knowledge and skills statements for child and family social work – Department for Education May 2018  
D2N2 Teaching Partnership  
Multi-agency problem solving meetings  
Working Together

Safeguarding Children Assessment and Analysis Framework

**Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected**

All.

C1124