

Children's Trust Board Sponsor: Colin Pettigrew

CHILDREN'S WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Purpose of the Report

1. To update the Board on the work being done to ensure that Nottinghamshire's children's workforce is equipped to meet the new challenges that are facing it.

Information and Advice

2. The children's workforce, within the context of this report, encompasses the following cohorts of staff:
 - (a) The workforce employed by NCC
 - (b) Staff working for a provider where the council is the commissioner of services
 - (c) Members of the wider children's workforce, including (but not limited to) Nottingham City staff, health, education, police, leisure, Private, Voluntary and Independent (PVI) organisations
3. In order to ensure that children and young people are safe, happy and healthy; achieve their potential; and – with their families – receive the support they need; there is a requirement that those involved in managing the children's workforce provide a robust and relevant development package to those who work directly with children, young people and their families so that they are equipped to meet the challenges that currently present themselves e.g. child sexual exploitation, radicalisation, New Psychoactive Substances (NPSs).
4. Equally, there is a need to develop and maintain clear career pathways within the children's workforce, to help attract and retain high quality workers, and provide our young service users and their families with a consistent support infrastructure.
5. To this end, a number of key initiatives have been introduced, over the last 12 months, which seek to address these requirements:
 - a) Regular engagement with Locality Management Groups (LMGs), to ascertain the development needs of the children's workforce represented within these groups.
 - b) The roll-out of regular multi-agency, practice-focussed, training events – open to all members of Nottinghamshire's children's workforce – and based on the expressed training needs identified across the LMGs (the most recent event included training on NPSs, Lesbian, Gay and Bi-sexual (LGB) awareness, Future in Mind, and suicide & self-harm). These events will continue to be delivered on a quarterly basis, and will be informed by the frontline's expressed needs about their challenges, and those being experienced by the children and young people they engage with.
 - c) The development of a unique multi-agency Child Development E-learning programme (prompted by the findings from a number of Serious Case Reviews¹), which encompasses development from conception through to 19 years of age, and is aimed at

all those working directly with children, young people & families. Developed in partnership with the University of Nottingham's Health Sciences team, this resource will help frontline professionals identify where child development may be going "off track", as well as raising their awareness to the underlying issues that delayed development may be indicative of e.g. neglect, mal-nourishment, physical abuse etc.

- d) The roll-out of Prevent training across the county has ensured that those who engage with children, young people and families are more aware of what might constitute a concern, and know how to report those concerns in an informed and timely manner to the appropriate agencies.
 - e) The Council's corporate training programme has been opened up to enable a broader range of its staff to benefit from training that had previously been offered on a more service-specific basis and has thereby allowed a better exchange of experience, skills and learning between colleagues from different services.
 - f) The Council has also better promoted its children's workforce Continuing Professional Development (CPD) offer over the last year, through the circulation of Development Directories on a termly basis and regular training updates within its Team Talk newsletters.
 - g) We have also reviewed the CPD offer for our Children's Social Work workforce, as well as developing a clearer career pathway for our social workers (including an aspirant managers scheme), which enables them to identify and work towards a range of career options within the Authority; encourages them to remain with the Council; and helps contribute to workforce retention. Indeed, our CPD offer is often cited as one of the main reasons that new social workers join the Council.
 - h) Along a similar vein, the Council is about to launch an extended Management & Leadership Development programme across the wider organisation, which will provide additional development opportunities for aspirant managers – enabling us to "grow our own" and building succession planning into our workforce offer.
 - i) The Social Worker Recruitment & Retention Plan² is beginning to show improvements in both workforce retention (staff turnover has reduced from around 17% to just over 10%), and in the recruitment of new workers (with vacancy levels falling by over 50%). The provision of a market factor supplement, along with social work support officers and IT resources that allow more flexible and mobile working, have all contributed to a turn-around in recruitment. Whilst there will always be more to do in this regard, this initial progress indicates that our children's social work workforce will become more stable over the coming 2 years.
 - j) The introduction of additional apprenticeship opportunities will also allow members of the workforce to consider up-skilling, and the proposed introduction of a social work apprenticeship may certainly help address the needs of existing frontline workers who may wish to become social workers, but who cannot afford to give up their jobs in order to return to higher education.
 - k) At a regional level, we are working with neighbouring authorities, training providers, and Higher Education Institutions, to develop clearer career pathways across the various strands of the children's workforce. Ultimately, we hope to address the long-standing issue that workers face when wanting to transfer across job-roles i.e. the requirement that they undertake a whole new qualification, when in fact they already have a significant level of prior learning and experience that currently goes unrecognised. This work has the wider support of the Association of Directors of Children's Services, and we are working on a national lobbying campaign to drive this initiative forward through Government.
6. With a long-term ambition to create "one children's workforce" for Nottinghamshire, that is adequately equipped to address the challenges it encounters, and our desire to see that Nottinghamshire's children and young people are safe, happy and healthy, we feel that the

current direction of travel that is embedded within, and evidenced by, the above initiatives, will go a long way to achieving these outcomes over the coming 2 years.

RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1) That the Board supports the work being undertaken to develop the children's workforce, and that its partners continue to contribute to the initiatives and activities that are planned.

Liz Maslen

Children's Workforce Development Manager, NCC

For any enquiries about this report please contact:

Liz Maslen: Liz.Maslen@nottscc.gov.uk 0115 977 3004

Background Papers

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.

¹ Child and family practitioners' understanding of child development: Lessons learnt from a small sample of serious case reviews (Marion Brandon et al 2011, DFE RR110)

² Social Worker Recruitment & Retention Plan 2016-2017