

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
18 OCTOBER 2016
STABILITY OF SOCIAL WORKERS IN NOTTINGHAM
REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR RESILIENCE

1 Purpose

- 1.1 To explore the work taking place in Nottingham to support, retain and develop social workers in Nottingham.

2 Action required

The Committee is asked to:

- 2.1 Consider whether there is any long-term workforce planning for social work in Nottingham, such as a retention strategy;
- 2.2 Identify any potential areas for further scrutiny for inclusion in the work programme.

3 Background information

- 3.1 Social work is a profession that is centred on children and young people, right the way through to older people. Social workers work with individuals and families to help improve outcomes in their lives, which might include protecting vulnerable people from harm or abuse or supporting people to live independently.
- 3.2 Social workers usually manage a number of cases and will work with many individuals/families at any one time.
- 3.3 In order to practice as a social worker, you must be registered with the Health and Care Professions Council having first successfully completed an approved social work degree.
- 3.4 Historically, the social care sector has some of the poorest rates of retention and staff turnover in the UK. Whilst the average turnover rate is around 15% across all industries, many social care roles far exceed this, with 32% of registered nurses and 27% of care workers leaving their job each year.¹
- 3.5 The average working life for a social worker is less than eight years,² despite the fact that it is a profession that requires the commitment and

¹ The State of Health Care and Adult Social Care in England, 2013/14 – Care Quality Commission.

² Retaining experienced social workers in children's services: the challenge facing local authorities in England, Mary Baginsky, August 2013

cost of a degree and children's social work is now on the national occupational shortage list.³

- 3.6 The Committee may seek to establish if this trend is mirrored in Nottingham and if there are known reasons why social workers are not staying in social care.
- 3.7 Like all staff in the public sector, social workers' salaries have been frozen and then subject to a 1% cap, the Committee might inspect whether this is a contributory factor to many looking for better-paying roles elsewhere, often with agencies.

4 List of attached information

- 4.1 None.

5 Background papers, other than published works or those disclosing exempt or confidential information

- 5.1 None.

6 Published documents referred to in compiling this report

- 6.1 The State of Health Care and Adult Social Care in England, 2013/14 – Care Quality Commission.
- 6.2 Retaining experienced social workers in children's services: the challenge facing local authorities in England, Mary Baginsky, August 2013.

7 Wards affected

- 7.1 Citywide.

8 Contact information

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³ The Government approved occupational shortage list depicts social workers working in children's and family services.