

<b>CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</b>
<b>19 SEPTEMBER 2017</b>
<b>SOCIAL WORKER RECRUITMENT, RETENTION AND CASELOAD MANAGEMENT</b>
<b>REPORT OF HEAD OF LEGAL AND GOVERNANCE</b>

## **1 Purpose**

- 1.1 To review the effectiveness of action taken over the last year to appropriately manage social worker caseloads and improve social worker recruitment and retention.

## **2 Action required**

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to
- a) scrutinise the local approach to ensuring that there is sufficient capacity in the social worker workforce to deliver effective and high quality social work; and
  - b) identify any recommendations for improvement to inform future action.

## **3 Background information**

- 3.1 The OFSTED inspection in 2014 identified capacity of social workers as a key issue, for example it identified the need to ensure that there is sufficient capacity in the workforce to deliver effective and high quality social work and ensure that the caseloads of social workers and independent reviewing officers are manageable and allow them to undertake their statutory duties to a high standard.
- 3.2 In October 2016 the Committee explored the work taking place in Nottingham to support, retain and develop social workers. The Committee heard about the focus on improving the stability of the workforce and the work taking place to strengthen the workforce including:
- A commitment to recruiting permanent social workers
  - Reducing the use of agency staff
  - Fast tracked recruitment for experienced workers
  - Grow Your Own Scheme for Council colleagues and graduates
  - Competitive pay and use of market supplements
  - Supporting a Regional Agency Memorandum to stabilise agency pricing and reference expectations

- Implementation of Liquid Logic to deliver efficiencies in recording processes and increase system capacity.
- 3.3 One year on the Committee wanted to review how effective this work had been and whether improvements are sustainable; and the current state of the Council's social worker workforce.
- 3.4 The 2017 OFSTED pilot inspection of children's services, considered by the Committee in March 2017, noted that the Council had prioritised investment in building a stable, secure and skilled workforce but that independent reviewing officers do not have the capacity to sufficiently monitor the progress of children's plans between review meetings.
- 3.5 A paper from the Director of Children's Integrated Services is attached summarising work that has taken place to improve recruitment and retention of social workers and ensure that workloads are manageable. She will be attending the meeting to answer any questions about this.

#### **4 List of attached information**

- 4.1 Report of Director of Children's Integrated Services

#### **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 2014 OFSTED report of Nottingham City Council Inspection of Services for Children in Need of Help and Protection, Children Looked After and Care Leavers and Review of the Effectiveness of the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

Report to and minutes of meetings of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee held on 18 October 2016 and 21 March 2017

2017 OFSTED report of Nottingham City Council Inspection of Children's Social Care Services (pilot inspection)

#### **7 Wards affected**

- 7.1 All

## **8    Contact information**

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