

WILTSHIRE COUNCIL

STAFFING POLICY COMMITTEE 9 September 2015

Update on Phase 3 of the Social Work Recruitment Campaign

Purpose of Report

1. To provide a further update on the targeted campaign to recruit social workers across adult's and children's social care. This update outlines progress on phase 3 of the campaign which commenced on 1 April 2015. A progress update on phases 1& 2 was provided to Staffing Policy Committee on the 6th May 2015.

Background

2. The social work recruitment campaign commenced in September 2014 and can be broken down into 3 phases. Phases 1 and 2 ran from September 2014 until March 2015. Phase 3 started 1 April 2015 and will run until March 2016.
3. The campaign overall has seen a move away from using 'traditional' recruitment approaches to one where a marketing approach is being deployed. This has involved increasing the council's presence on social media to engage and attract a wider range of audiences, integrating our employer brand into all communications, having a dedicated social care microsite with updated information (including 3 films) and targeted job listings, numerous features and advertising through the Guardian and Community Care.
4. In November 2014, an '18 caseload promise' was developed as a unique selling point for recruitment into the safeguarding and assessment service within operational children's services. Softer feedback gained at interview has indicated that the '18 caseload promise' has been a significant attraction for children social worker candidates to choose Wiltshire Council as an employer of choice.
5. Phases 1 and 2 have been successful; this period saw a total of 127 vacancies in 36 roles advertised across operational children's and adult social care. Across both services (as at 23 March 2015):
 - 425 applications were received
 - 60% and 52% of all vacancies were filled in children's and adults respectively (these figures take into account the increase in establishment agreed in November within operational children's services and vacancies across both services created by turnover in the period since the campaign started)
 - 75 candidates were offered and accepted a post
 - 42 had started
 - All senior management posts were appointed to in operational children's services
 - 52 vacancies remained

6. Due to changes to process where dedicated points of contact were created in HR and in children's and adult care services for all social work enquiries and administration, the average time to recruit from April 2014 – March 2015 dropped from 70 days to 36 days. This has provided a more seamless and improved customer experience for candidates and has no doubt, contributed to the number of appointments made.

Main Considerations for the council

7. Phase 3 of the social work recruitment campaign started 1 April 2015 and will continue until 31 March 2016. A further budget of £100k has been allocated to support this 12 month phase of activity
8. The recent [Ofsted inspection report](#) (dated 1st September 2015) made note of the significant progress the council has made in relation to social work recruitment:

“The local authority has rightly focused on the need to develop a stable, skilled and sufficient workforce. Cross-party political commitment has led to considerable investment in developing the service despite the current financial constraints on the council” (section 107)

9. The total number of vacancies currently stands at 197 (August 2015) with the majority within operational children's services (143). It needs to be noted that the number of vacancies has risen during this phase, mainly due to the creation of new posts within operational children's services:
 - Child Sexual Exploitation: social workers and business support – 3 vacancies
 - School based social worker – 1 vacancy
 - Aspiring Manager – 6 vacancies
 - NQSW - 40 vacancies (see paragraphs 18 – 20)
10. There also continues to be a turnover in social care posts across both services which correlates in part to the increase in vacancies. There has been an increase in turnover especially in adult social care where all the increase (18) can be attributed to turnover. There has been a smaller increase in turnover within operational children's services where the increase in vacancies is predominantly due to the creation of new posts (outlined in paragraph 10). This turnover rate is not unusual or unhealthy but the reasons for leaving will be explored through the use of exit interview and the impact will continue to be monitored as it will shape recruitment activity going forward.
11. Across both services, 68% of all vacancies have now been recruited to (63% in children's and 77% in adults) and to date:
 - 554 applications have been received
 - 133 candidates have been offered and accepted a post
 - 64 vacancies remain
 - 22 candidates are waiting to start
 - 111 have started

12. The significant increase in the percentage recruited (rising from 52 – 77%) within adult social care has been largely due to the appointment of 7 NQSW's in the community team for people with learning disabilities (CTPLD)
13. Phase 3 will differ from previous phases by building on existing successes and lessons learnt from previous phases. This will include reviewing the information and how this information is viewed on the social care microsite, expanding our social media presence (to include social recruiting or direct sourcing of social workers via social media), promoting the new model of working within operational children's services, and the launch of the Wiltshire Institute of Health and Social Care (WIHSC).
14. In addition, work has also been undertaken to explore the links with the military and how to target recruitment activities towards spouses and those returning from Germany in the near future. Attendance at the South West Military Community Career Fair (September) will heighten our presence within the military. A recruitment and marketing campaign has also been negotiated at a reduced rate with the Corsham-based social enterprise Recruit for Spouses, who have a number of qualified social workers on their books. This will involve contact with the regiments returning from Germany to Wiltshire and direct marketing in and around the garrisons and unlimited job postings to their website, candidate search and a social media campaign. Contact is also being made with those leading on the MCI/Army basing projects to ensure that opportunities at Wiltshire Council are promoted to those returning from Germany.
15. Development of up to date marketing materials to use in both current and future campaigns and to keep the social care microsite refreshed has involved working with the communications Team to develop a series of video interviews with our social workers. Further video interviews and service specific promotional videos are planned throughout Phase 3.
16. A number of editorial features have been booked, tying in with key promotional events with Community Care, Guardian and Recruit for Spouses.
17. A number of new recruitment and retention programmes have been developed and are being implemented during Phase 3. These include:
 - 'Return to Social Work' scheme which will attract qualified social workers who have taken time out of the profession and who need to regain HCPC registration to practice again (launching September 2015)
 - A University of West of England student social work bursary scheme, (launching September 2015)
 - Step up to Social Work, a national DfE sponsored 'fast-track' scheme which allows candidates to become fully qualified (children's) social workers within 14 months. Wiltshire Council is taking 6 candidates, 3 of whom are internal council employees
 - Grow Your Own – a Wiltshire Council sponsored programme putting internal candidates through a degree to become fully qualified social workers (launching September 2016).

18. Operational children's services is implementing a new approach to aid with effective succession and new recruitment and retention opportunities. This involves establishing 'pods' of four newly qualified social workers (NQSW) with an 'Aspiring manager' (new role) to support, mentor and assess these NQSWs through their assessed and supported year in employment (ASYE). This new model will mean a more sustainable approach to addressing the (national and local) shortage of experienced social workers through more robust succession planning as NQSWs gain the practice experience and move upwards through the organisation. There will also be a corresponding drop in agency spend as a more stable, permanent workforce is created.
19. A total of 15 pods are planned. This means that 60 NQSWs will need to be recruited (in a staged process) over 2015/16 to kick-start the programme, dropping to 38 NQSWs every year thereafter. A total of 15 Aspiring managers will also need to be recruited (in a staged process) during 2015/16 – 10 permanent and 5 temporary positions.
20. 15 NQSW's have been appointed out of a total of 40 vacancies created to date (August 2015) and 3 out of a total of 6 Aspiring managers have also been recruited. Further vacancies will be created early 2016
21. The Wiltshire Institute of Health and Social Care (WIHSC) is set to launch in autumn 2015. WIHSC will provide a platform for progressive and flexible learning and development throughout a career at Wiltshire Council. As well as offering continuous learning and development, WIHSC will include clear career pathways, coaching and promotion opportunities to leadership and management posts and thus support both our recruitment and retention initiatives.

Environmental Impact of the Proposal

22. None

Equalities Impact of the Proposal

23. Due to the higher than council average percentage of social workers from a BME background within operational children's and adult social care services, further work will be done to understand whether any targeted work can be carried out by way of external promotion. The council's commitment to equality and diversity is clearly articulated through the social care matters website and through all communication where relevant. The recruitment campaign provides opportunities for the council to promote equality of opportunity.

Risk Assessment

24. Whilst the campaign has delivered some success the risk to vulnerable children and adults as a result of the level of vacancies that remain and the on-going difficulties the council is experiencing in recruiting experienced social workers and social work managers remains. This risk means that vulnerable adults and children may suffer harm if steps are not taken to improve the council's ability to recruit.

Financial Implications

25. A budget of £100k to pay for phase 3 of the campaign was agreed by Cabinet on the 21st April 2015. No further investment is required at this stage.

Recommendation

26. It is recommended that Staffing Policy Committee note the contents of this report.

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The following unpublished documents have been relied on in the preparation of this report:

None