



**Childrens Services Social Care**

**Social Worker - Workforce Development Strategy**

***Version 1 - Final***

**Catherine Driscoll – Director of Children’s Services**

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1. **Introduction**

**Quote from Catherine Driscoll, Director of Children’s Services**

***‘****I want Dudley Children’s Services to be recognised as a great place to work where people are valued and supported to develop their skills and experience in order to improve outcomes for our children and young people.*

**Vision**

We want Dudley to be a wonderful place for children and young people to grow up and where they will be happy, healthy, safe and benefit from a good inclusive education.

**Aim**

For every child and young person, we work with, we make their lives better.

**Social Work workforce aims**

This is a three-year Workforce Strategy for Social Workers and there are three key pillars to this strategy which are Capacity, Capability, Culture and Communication. To become the employer of choice for social workers, developing a highly motivated and effective workforce where we:

**Capacity**

* Recruit and retain sufficient qualified social workers in order to sustain and improve outcomes for children, young people and families
* Invest in our future social work workforce through student placements and an effective Assisted and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) programme

**Capability**

* Have the right people with the right skills in the right place at the right time
* Continuously develop our existing workers for both their current roles and future careers in Dudley by building and maintaining relevant knowledge, skills, experience and confidence
* Ensure excellent People, Practice and Performance Management, developing the conditions for great social work to flourish and a great place to work

**Culture and Communication**

* Continue to develop a learning culture where improved communication, feedback and focus on quality, helps us to improve outcomes for children

1. **Workforce Profile and Measures / Targets**

Over the past few years, we have experienced a gradual loss of permanent staff which has led to an increase in demand for agency social workers. This not only compromises quality service delivery but also increases the cost-of-service provision and detracts valuable resources away from services for our children and young people.

An overview of the Social Worker Workforce Profile and the established Measures / Targets are attached at Appendix 1

1. **Capacity**

Our aim is to have a stable and committed Social Work workforce that provide consistent quality service to children and their families underpinned by a restorative practice of working and where children and families benefit from meaningful relationships that promotes improved outcomes

To improve the capacity of our Social Workers, we need to:

1. Recruit and retain sufficient qualified social workers in order to sustain and improve outcomes for children, young people and families

Our aim is that children and families benefit from consistent and meaningful relationships with their social worker and tell their story by ‘saying it once’. We want children and families to receive the support and intervention that is impactful and timely. Recruitment and retention is a critical component in securing capacity.

Success measures:

* Increase the number of Permanent Social Workers including Team Managers and IRO’s within Dudley MBC and therefore reducing the number of Agency Workers
* Retain the permanent workforce and therefore reduce the number of staff leaving the Council
* Ensure that social workers have the capacity to work with children and families in a meaningful way that is reflective of their caseload and work allocation allowing for the development of meaningful and trusting relationships leading to improved outcomes

1. Invest in our future social work workforce through student placements and an effective ASYE programme

Our aim is that Dudley offers an increase in the number of high-quality placements to student social workers and that they secure permanent employment with us and as part of the ASYE programme and they are fully supported throughout.

Success measures:

* Increase the overall number of student placement available in Dudley
* Student’s report having a positive experience whilst on placement in Dudley including access to comprehensive support and development opportunities
* To have a high proportion of students subsequently undertaking their ASYE programme with Dudley
* The retention of ASYE/NQSW for a period of 12 months following completion of the ASYE programme

We will consider and review the introduction of a range of benefits and total reward offers that are attractive to staff while providing value for money, to help us attract, retain and motivate Social Workers

A core element of this strategy is to ensure that we offer our social workers competitive and fair rates of pay in recognition of their skills and contribution to the lives of the most vulnerable children and young people in our society. We must also remain competitive with neighbouring authorities.

We will work closely with our Communication and Recruitment Teams to review and streamline our current marketing approaches ensuring we are targeting our resources in the most effective way.

1. **Capability**

Our aim is to ensure that all our Social Workers have the ability to undertake their role and provide excellent services to children, young people and families of Dudley

To improve the capability of our Social Workers, we need to:

1. Have the right people with the right skills in the right place at the right time

To achieve this, we need to:

* Develop and embed workforce planning processes
* Identify workforce required to meet demand and service objectives
* Identify skills and experience
* Inform learning needs analysis
* Identify increase or decrease in student/ASYE programmes and ensure capacity is available to support this
* Identify future career progression ambitions through the My Annual Review (MAR) process
* Identify future leadership capability.

Success measures:

* Defined workforce requirements forecast for 2022/23 and 2023/24 by March 2022
* Succession plans identified for critical posts by June 2022
* 100% target pipelines for student placements, social work apprenticeships, ASYE and aspiring managers identified and implemented by September 2022

1. Continuously develop our existing workers for both their current roles and future careers in Dudley by building and maintaining relevant knowledge, skills, experience and confidence

Our aim is to ensure that the workforce is suitably skilled and knowledgeable which allows them to work with children and their families underpinned by restorative practice principles leading to improved outcomes for children and young people

Success measures:

* Staff have access to regular quality supervision with their line manager which includes individual annual reviews (MAR) to identify and enhance career development opportunities
* Staff have access to group supervision that promotes their learning and development and refection
* Staff have access to a range of learning opportunities and evidence-based research that are linked to their career aspirations and that increase their knowledge base

1. Ensure excellent People, Practice and Performance Management, developing the conditions for great social work to flourish and a great place to work

Our aim is that we provide staff with an environment that promotes openness, transparency, support and challenge where staff will have access to the relevant and necessary tools and resources to support them in their day-to-day work and that their development is promoted

Success measures:

* Staff are provided with opportunities to feedback their experiences of working in Dudley and feel able to participate in a range of engagement sessions that are made available
* There is an increase in the number of staff participating in staff surveys and their feedback is considered and informs future planning
* Staff report that the systems and processes available support their work with children and families

We need to ensure that there is a transparent process to support high performance and address under-performance, supported by an effective performance management framework.

Through our ‘Child Friendly Dudley’ agenda we have the highest ambitions for our children and young people. Our values and beliefs are founded on Restorative Practice principles which provide us with a framework for our organisational culture and practice

In Dudley we believe that families are the experts in their own lives and that when we offer families high support and high challenge whilst providing them with the right resources and support, most families will make good decisions for their children.

Our Restorative Family Led Framework promotes the fundamental principle that families and their networks are of primary importance and the most important and influential on improving outcomes for children.

We believe that if we work with families in a restorative way we keep children at the heart of decisions that affect them, we can support and enable families to effectively resolve their own problems at the earliest opportunity. Providing the right amount of support for the right children at the right time, will ensure that the local authorities intervention in family life, only occurs when necessary but is timely, appropriate, and proportionate when needed.

1. **Culture and Communication**

Our aim is to ensure that we have the right culture across our workforce.

To achieve this, we need to:

1. Continue to develop a learning culture where improved communication, feedback and focus on quality, helps us to improve outcomes for children

We will provide and promote an environment that supports a culture of continued learning and improvements in the quality of practice

Success measures:

* Staff surveys and feedback from them outline that they feel listened to and supported in their work
* The number of children allocated to them allow for staff to provide good quality practice to children and young people
* Reduction in the overall number of common theme complaints received
* Overall improvement in our audit activity- more audits judged good
* Staff have opportunities through learning circles to reflect on their practice
* Formal two-way communication and engagement structures are in place

It is essential that we have a culture of success across Childrens Services in which staff feel supported, empowered and equipped to work to high standards and have a strong voice to influence service developments and service delivery

Staff will be encouraged to be proactive in taking responsibility for their own learning and where possible support the learning of others and are driven by strong and high aspirations for our children and young people.

We need to clearly define our culture to enhance staff engagement and in doing so, ensure that changes to our culture are Responsive, Innovative, Trusted and Ambitious

In Dudley we are establishing and embedding a restorative culture across our children’s workforce, giving colleagues the understanding, confidence and practical skills to work in a relationship-based way. Restorative practice focuses on the principles of doing our work in a manner that promotes high support and high challenge.

Our values and principles reflect our belief that outcomes for our children, our communities and our organisation are improved when we work with and alongside people and avoid doing things to them. Restorative practice provides the foundations for our core value and principle and guides how we work with families, each other and our partners.

Restorative practice is a value-based way of being, that is needs led and strengths focused. It embodies a set of core beliefs, principles and behaviours that promote a way of being with people that actively and explicitly promotes change by working with people on a high challenge, high support basis.

Dudley’s organisational values and principles are being developed as ‘core’ guiding policy to reflect the key Restorative Principles of-

* Being Curious and Questioning
* Being Open minded
* Being Respectful
* Being Reflective
* Challenging – with honesty and openness
* Being Solution Focused
* Being Emotionally Literate
* Being Patient and Supportive

It is envisaged that these principles are expressed and clearly understood by everyone in the organisation and provide a concurrent and underpinning theme for our policies, procedures and practice expectations ensuring that our communities, partners and workforce have a shared understanding of our values and principles.

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| --- | --- |
| **Approved by:** | **Date** |
| Workforce Board | 28 March 2022 |
| **Shared with:** |  |
| Elected member |  |
| **Review:** |  |
| To be undertaken by the Head of Service, Safeguarding, Practice and Quality Assurance |  |

**APPENDIX 1**

**SOCIAL WORKER STRATEGY - WORKFORCE PROFILE DATA**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **SOCIAL WORKERS** | **Establishment (FTE)** | **Permanent (FTE)** | **ASYE (FTE)** | **Agency (FTE)** | **Vacancies (FTE)** | **Annual Turnover**  **Rate**  **(%)** | **Average Caseload (Numbers)** | **(1.)**  **BVPI Sickness**  **Days Lost (FTE)** | **Complaints (Numbers)** | **Compliments (Numbers)** | **Response Times (Average Days)** |
| Jan-22 | 135.44 (2.) | 77.66 | 16.00 | 36.13 | 5.65 | 17.0 |  | 18.28 |  |  |  |
| Feb-22 | 135.44 | 84.66 | 16.00 | 36.25 | 5.53 | 22.0 |  | 18.83 |  |  |  |
| Mar-22 | 135.44 | 86.54 | 15.00 | 36.75 | 4.15 | 17.0 |  | 20.57 |  |  |  |
| Apr-22 | 135.44 | 81.85 | 15.00 | 38.75 | 7.34 | 17.0 |  | 23.31 |  |  |  |
| May-22 | 135.44 | 91.85 | 15.00 | 39.37 | 4.32 | 17.0 |  | 23.79 |  |  |  |
| Jun-22 | 144.96 (3.) | 80.71 | 15.00 | 39.37 | 16.88 | 21.0 |  | 26.52 |  |  |  |
| Jul-22 | 148.96 (4.) | 83.11 | 15.00 | 42.37 | 15.48 | 20.5 |  | 25.89 |  |  |  |
| Aug-22 | 148.96 | 93.72 | 15.00 | 37.62 | 9.62 | 20.5 |  | 25.29 |  |  |  |
| Sep-22 | 148.96 | 92.72 | 15.00 | 36.62 | 11.62 | 19.6 |  | 26.29 |  |  |  |
| Oct-22 | 147.46 (5.) | 93.23 | 17.00 | 24.53 (6.) | 23.70 | 19.6 |  | 26.76 |  |  |  |
| Nov-22 | 149.46 (7.) | 85.10 | 14.00 | 20.15 | 39.21 | 16.7 |  | 27.27 |  |  |  |
| Dec-22 | 150.66 (8.) | 84.90 | 14.00 | 26.15 | 25.61 | 20.3 |  | 26.74 |  |  |  |

**Notes**

1. BVPI Calculation to compare with Corporate Sickness Target (10.5 days)
2. Increase in Establishment due to inclusion of the Dudley Exploitation Hub
3. Increase in Establishment due to inclusion of the Childrens Disability Team
4. Increase in Establishment due to inclusion of Families Comes First Team
5. MASH / EDT Review
6. End of Innovate Contract
7. 2xASWP’s in Families Comes First Team
8. Budget Transfer

**WORKFORCE MEASURES / TARGETS**

This is a three-year Workforce Strategy for Social Workers and the following Measures / Targets have been established:

* To have one Student in each Social Worker Team
* To have one Practice Educator in each Social Worker Team
* To achieve 85% of Permanent Social Workers
* To meet the Corporate Sickness Target (10.5 days)
* To achieve 12% Turnover Rate for Social Workers
* To reduce the number of Common Themes from Complaints (Communication and Timeliness of Responses – Adoption Restorative Approach)
* To increase the number of Compliments
* To improve Communication and Timeliness of Responses to Enquiries

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **SOCIAL WORKERS** | **Permanent Starters** | **Permanent Leavers** | **Supervisions** |
| Jan-22 | 3 | 3 | 33 |
| Feb-22 | 3 | 1 | 37 |
| Mar-22 | 0 | 6 | 33 |
| Apr-22 | 0 | 3 | 37 |
| May-22 | 1 | 3 | 47 |
| Jun-22 | 2 | 7 | 45 |
| Jul-22 | 2 | 1 | 40 |
| Aug-22 | 0 | 2 | 31 |
| Sep-22 | 4 | 4 | 35 |
| Oct-22 | 2 | 2 | 41 |
| Nov-22 | 2.6 | 3 | 22 |
| Dec-22 | 0 | 9 | 12 |