

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

13 OCTOBER 2014

REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE – LEGAL & REGULATORY SERVICES

RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF SOCIAL WORKERS

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To provide members with an update on the work being undertaken in relation to the recruitment and retention of social workers.

2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Objectives / Other Corporate Priorities.

- 2.1 The key improvement objectives identified in the Corporate Plan 2013-2017 have been embodied in the Overview & Scrutiny Forward Work Programmes. The amended Corporate Improvement Objectives adopted by Council on 3 April 2013 formally set out the improvement objectives that the Council will seek to implement between 2013 and 2017. The Overview and Scrutiny Committees engage in review and development of plans, policy or strategies that support the Corporate Themes.

3. Background.

- 3.1 At its meeting in December 2013, the Committee received the quarter 2 performance report for 2013-14, from which they made the following conclusions:

In view of the deterioration of a range of performance indicators around child protection, the Committee was very concerned regarding the destabilisation of the social work workforce – particularly in relation to the ‘poaching’ of experienced social workers by neighbouring authorities via ‘golden hello’s’ and similar incentives. The Committee recommended that the Lead Officer engage with ADSS to address these practices and that the Cabinet Member – Children and Young People should link up with the appropriate WLGA networks. The Committee further recommended that it be provided with a report in relation to the Workforce Plan, currently being developed by Officers, which should also include an analysis of exit reasons.

The Committee was also very concerned at the high levels of newly qualified Social Workers involved in safeguarding work (60 to 70%) as a consequence of the loss of some experienced staff. The decision to reduce numbers ‘grow your own’ type programmes for developing existing staff to become Social Workers was viewed by the Committee as false economy.

- 3.2 As a result the Committee agreed at its meeting in June 2014 to include the Social Services Workforce Plan as an item on their Annual Forward Work Programme.

4. Current Situation / proposal.

- 4.1 Attached at Appendix A is a report from the Head of Safeguarding and Family Support providing information in relation to the recruitment and retention of Social Workers and the actions undertaken and planned to address these issues, including the Project Brief for the Recruitment and Retention Project.
- a) *Given the large number of newly qualified social workers employed by the Authority, how far are we meeting our own 'model' in protecting them in their first year in practice, as outlined in the Care Council for Wales guidance?*
 - b) *What are the timescales associated with the Recruitment and Retention Project?*
 - c) *Does the work of the Recruitment and Retention Project expand upon the work which has already been undertaken by the Workwise project? Are there any risks of duplication?*
 - d) *The report states at point 4.5.5 that 'The current salaries for the Social Work job family are comparable to other Local Authorities in Wales'. Why then is one of the objectives of the project to 'Gain a clear understanding of BCBC's pay position in relation to other Welsh Local Authorities'?*
 - e) *In relation to Exit Interviews, could the process be improved to ensure a higher response rate?*
 - f) *Many of the products identified in the Project Portfolio are standard working practices, for example, training managers in sickness absence process or meeting with team Managers to understand agency staffing levels. How then, are these put forward as actions or workstreams for a project, which by its nature should have an end, whereas these practices should be continuous?*

5. Effect upon Policy Framework and Procedure Rules.

- 5.1 The work of the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee relates to the review and development of plans, policy or strategy that form part of the Policy Framework and consideration of plans, policy or strategy relating to the power to promote or improve economic, social or environmental well being in the County Borough of Bridgend.

6. Equality Impact Assessment

- 6.1 The equality implications are outlined in the officer's report attached as Appendix A.

7. Financial Implications

- 7.1 The financial implications are outlined in the officer's report attached at Appendix A.

8. Recommendation

The Committee is asked to:

- i. Consider and discuss the information within the attached report;
- ii. Explore issues consistent with its challenge and support role;
- iii. Determine whether it wishes to make any comments or recommendations relating to these reports.

Andrew Jolley,
Assistant Chief Executive – Legal & Regulatory Services
2014

Contact Officer: Rachel Keepins
Scrutiny Officer

Telephone: 01656 643613
Email: scrutiny@bridgend.gov.uk

Postal Address: Democratic Services - Scrutiny
Bridgend County Borough Council,
Civic Offices,
Angel Street,
Bridgend,
CF31 4WB

Background Documents:

None