

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

**CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND EDUCATION
CABINET BOARD**

22nd October 2015

**REPORT OF THE HEAD OF CHILDREN AND
YOUNG PEOPLE SERVICES
- A. JARRETT**

MATTER FOR MONITORING

WARDS AFFECTED: ALL

WORKFORCE DATA UPDATE

1. **Purpose of Report**

The purpose of the report is to provide an update on Workforce data in relation to Children and Young People Services.

2. **Executive Summary**

There are currently no concerns regarding the Workforce profile of Children and Young People Services and the improvements that have been made over the last three years continue to be maintained. The number of vacancies is low, the use of agency workers is also low and managed appropriately and turnover and sickness absence is at acceptable levels. People management systems are in place to ensure employees are managed appropriately, the result being that there are no on-going disciplinary investigations or grievances.

3. **Background**

Data regarding workforce has been reported on a regular basis since the Serious Concerns Protocol was invoked in November 2012, in order to monitor progress against the Workforce element of the Improvement Plan for Children and Young People Services. The Protocol was lifted at the beginning of 2015 and the monitoring of workforce data has continued to ensure that the improvements that have been achieved in this area are maintained. This report provides an update of the current position.

4. **Report**

4.1 **Establishment Control/Recruitment**

All vacancies continue to be tracked and reported to the Senior Management Team on a fortnightly basis. The Service is only advertising for two social workers at the moment, in the Intake Team and Sandfields Community Team. All adverts are placed via the HR Officer who works closely with the Senior Accountant to ensure that budgets are adhered to.

All appointments are jointly signed off or overseen by the HR Officer and the Recruitment team to ensure that safer recruitment practices are also adhered to.

So far in 2015 thirty people have joined the Service. This includes 14 Social Workers, 3 Independent Reviewing Officers, 2 Deputy Team Managers, 1 Consultant Social Worker and 2 Principal Officers.

4.2 **Recruitment of Social Workers**

The Service has successfully filled its vacancies with mostly experienced Social Workers over the past two years. When the Service advertised for grade 8 (less than 2 years experience) and grade 9 (over 2 years experience) Social Workers in the Summer it received a very healthy response (38 applications). The permanent positions were filled by experienced Social Workers, and to aid succession planning, three temporary positions were offered to newly qualified Social Workers. Positions are advertised on a regular basis so that positions are not left vacant for long. For example, this month 3 offers have been made before employees have finished working their notice periods.

4.3 **Recruitment of Other Positions**

The Service has easily filled unqualified positions, using prior consideration or other internal applicants. Three Practice Support Workers and one Young Person's Advisor have been recruited this way. There are currently no management vacancies that the Service is actively recruiting for.

The current market supplement in place for Principal Officers is due to be reviewed in December 2017. However, due to two Principal Officers leaving recently, this is being reviewed early. Market data has already been obtained that supports the continuation of the supplement until well into the future to ensure that the Service attracts and retains its senior managers.

4.4 Use of Agency Workers

At its height the Service was using over 40 agency workers. There are currently 5 in the Service covering maternity leave, sickness absence and one vacancy. One agency worker is also being used to help reduce the Looked After Children population. The number of agency workers has been as low as 3 and are only being used when absolutely necessary, following receipt of a business case from the team manager.

4.5 Progression/Succession Planning

Every 6 months Social Workers who are currently grade 8 and have 2 years experience are given the opportunity of progressing to grade 9. This month 17 Social Workers are eligible for progression, which is a direct result of the recruitment drive in 2013. The high number demonstrates that the workforce is becoming ever more experienced and shows that those recruited in 2013 have been retained.

Internal employees continue to be promoted to higher positions within Children's Services, thus helping retention and motivation. This year ten employees have been promoted to positions such as Team Manager, Deputy Team Manager, Consultant Social Worker and Social Worker.

Employees also continue to be supported to attend the Team Management Development Programme and other development programmes as appropriate.

4.6 Leavers

The number of leavers so far this year is 20. This compares to 20 in 2014, 14 in 2013 and 23 in 2012.

Although fairly high, the number of leavers includes 4 retirements, 4 promotions to external posts and 2 dismissals. The other reasons for leaving include moving closer to home (2), changing area of work (2), personal issues/job dissatisfaction (2), going to agency work (2), caring responsibilities (1), work/life balance (1).

Exit interviews continue to be conducted with all leavers, unless the circumstances deem it inappropriate.

4.7 Induction/Probation/Supervision

All managers conduct individual inductions, probationary reviews and supervision sessions with their team members. Six monthly corporate

induction days are also held to enhance inductions in teams. The HR Officer spends 2 hours with new recruits to go over HR policies and procedures in between the six monthly corporate inductions. New recruits also attend appropriate training as part of their induction. Every employee has an individual learning plan and corporate appraisals are currently being rolled out.

4.8 Maximising Attendance at Work

The average number of calendar days lost per month for this year (2015) to date is **180** per month. This compares to **171** and **375** average calendar days for the same period in 2014 and 2013 respectively.

There were **6** individuals who were absent on three or more occasions during the year (**6.1%** of the overall staff that have been off sick). Of the six individuals, stress was not listed as the cause for absence for any of these staff members.

During the period there have been **10** instances of sickness absences of 28+ calendar days which compares to **14** and **35** instances for the same period in 2014 and 2013 respectively.

The most prevalent reasons for employees experiencing a sickness absence during the period were: Abdominal/stomach related (**24%**); Cold (**10%**) and Headache (**8%**). Work related Stress accounted for only **1%** of incidents of absence.

This compares to:

2014 absences were: Abdominal/stomach related (**23%**); Other Reasons (**12%**) and Flu (**10%**). Stress related absences accounted for **5%** of incidents of absences.

2013 absences were attributed to: Stomach related (**17%**); Stress related (**16%**) and Cold related (**10%**).

Maximising attendance and managing absences continues to be a priority. Actions in place to ensure staff welfare and absences are managed include:

- Monthly reporting of absences to Children Services Management Group.
- Use of Phased Return to Work following long term absences
- Early intervention of Stress related issues (Work or Home Related Stress)

- Centrally directed issuing of cautions by HR
- Centrally directed Stage One Maximising attendance meetings with staff by HR

5. **Financial Impact**

Not applicable.

6. **Equality Impact Assessment**

Not applicable.

7. **Workforce Impacts**

Not applicable.

8. **Legal Impacts**

Not applicable.

9. **Risk Management**

Not applicable.

10. **Consultation**

Not applicable.

11. **Recommendation**

Not applicable.

12. **Reason for Proposed Decision**

Not applicable.

13. **Implementation of Decision**

Not applicable.

14. **Appendices**

Graph – Net Vacancies and Agency Workers June 2013 to October 2015

15. **List of Background Papers**

None

16. **Officer Contact**

Andrew Jarrett, Head of Children and Young People Services

Tel: 01639 763327

Email: a.jarrett@npt.gov.uk