

**TITLE OF REPORT:** Recruitment and Retention of Social Workers, Children & Families Social Work

**REPORT OF:** Sheila Lock, interim Strategic Director Care Wellbeing & Learning

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### **Purpose of the Report**

1. To agree the implementation of a recruitment and retention allowance for Social Workers.

### **Background**

2. In October 2015 Gateshead Children's Services received a 'GOOD' judgement following Ofsted's regulatory inspection. This is a noteworthy judgement and sets Gateshead amongst the top 25% of Children's Services in the Country. Shortly after the judgement a neighbouring authority that was judged inadequate began a vigorous and targeted recruitment of staff, offering amongst other things financial incentives to Social Workers. Gateshead was unable to match the financial offers and as a result lost a great deal of talented staff.
3. In response, Gateshead Children's Services have had to rely on procuring agency staff to maintain safe levels of capacity within its Social Work teams – there are currently 21 agency workers employed within the service to cover resulting vacancies, which is contributing to a £448k overspend in 2016/17.
4. The risk of this continuing remains a significant threat: Of the twelve neighbouring authorities four have yet to receive their regulatory inspection three of which are close neighbours. Two from the south of the region also received a Good judgement, a further one received an inadequate judgement and the remaining 3 were judged as requiring improvement. We know that Local Authorities respond to poor Ofsted judgements or anticipated inspections by seeking out experienced quality Social Workers.
5. Since April 2016 16 Social Workers have left the Council. A rolling programme of recruitment advertising for newly qualified and experienced staff since April 2016 has thus far successfully appointed 10 Social Workers against those vacancies. However, this has not attracted sufficient numbers of experienced Social Workers and this continues to be a challenge. Nine newly qualified Social Workers have been appointed and whilst this is helpful in terms of a longer term strategy to 'grow our own' the limits placed on newly qualified Social Workers prevent a full, caseload and the allocation of complex cases. Therefore, there is a limit to how many newly qualified Social Workers the service can manage as experienced staff are needed to maintain the safety of the service.

6. The hiatus in filling vacancies generally and specifically with experienced Social Workers within Gateshead has had a knock on effect upon the capacity for our existing Social Workers within a context of an expedient rise in caseloads over the year.
7. In addition to this national agency recruitment agencies target Social Workers both experienced and newly qualified with lucrative financial packages and guaranteed placements often providing salaries in excess of £50,000 per annum.
8. In addition to these pressures, the proposal (under the Review of Terms and Conditions) to remove the Essential Car User from Social Workers will further undermine the recruitment and retention process.
9. We know most Social Workers remain in the North East and move between the region's Local Authorities so in recruitment terms the pond we fish in is a small one.
10. Children and Families are facing unprecedented pressures with recruitment and retention of Social Work posts and in order to be able to meet our statutory requirements the appointment of agency workers is at an all-time high.
11. The proposed implementation of the Department for Education (DfE) employer practice endorsement process, assessment and accreditation and new knowledge and skills statement (KSS) (as outlined in Appendix 2) provide an opportunity for Gateshead to build on the success of the Ofsted judgement. We want to attract and retain talented Social Workers, develop our succession planning to ensure the best Social Workers stay in Gateshead and become the Practice Leaders of tomorrow. In future we will need to avoid being in a position where the retention of our Social Workers is vulnerable by having an offer sufficient to retain talented Social Workers who have been well supported and schooled in Gateshead.
12. To that end Gateshead needs to further develop an offer for current and future Social Workers- articulated in the six proposed outcomes as outlined in Appendix 3.

## Proposal

13. The proposal is concerned with the first of the six proposed outcomes as outlined in Appendix 3. In order to achieve a strong retention and recruitment, and support the employer practice endorsement, it is proposed that a recruitment and retention allowance is applied (as set out below) to ensure Gateshead has a competitive, if not higher salary offer, than our competitors (as shown in Appendix 4). This will run parallel with the review of existing Job titles and profiles to align them with the KSS titles and descriptors.

Present		Proposed	
Job Title	Salary range	Job Title	Salary range
Social Worker (Grade I/J) with Essential Car User	£29,854 - £35,093 + ECU £846 =	AYSE Child and Family Practitioner. To be appointed on	£29,854 – £32,164 / £33,772 - £36,847

	£30,700 – £35,939	Grade I. Bar point @ SCP 37. Progression to Experienced Child and Family Practitioner following competency based evidence	
Social Worker (Grade I/J) with Essential Car User	£29,854 - £35,093 + ECU £846 = £30,700 – £35,939	Experienced Child and Family Practitioner (Grade J) with a 5% recruitment & retention allowance	£33,772 - £36,847
Senior practitioners (Grade K)  (Note: it is proposed that 2 x Senior Pracs in SG&CP and 1 x Snr Prac in Fostering are redesignated & regraded to Practice Supervisor.	£35,093 - £37,858	Experienced Child and Family Practitioner and (Grade J) plus a 5% recruitment & retention allowance Protection arrangements will apply.	£33,772 - £36,847
ATMs (Grade K+1)	£36,019 - £38,789	Practice Supervisor (K+1/Grade L - bar point @ SCP43) plus 7.5% recruitment & retention allowance	£37,725 - £46,641
TMs (Grade L) + 7.5% recruitment & retention allowance	£40,697- £43,665		
Service Manager (Grade N) + 15% recruitment & retention allowance	£49,895 – £53,176	Practice Leader(Grade N) plus 15% recruitment & retention allowance (Further consideration will need to be given to this in light of future structures within CWL).	£49,895– £53,176

14. Newly qualified Social Workers who join the Council from Social Work degree courses in HEI's, or are part of the Governments 'Step up to Social Work' programme or the Frontline programme and completing their Assessed Year in Practice (ASYE) will be designated as Newly Qualified Practitioners (Grade I), and will be on a 12 month fixed term contract pending successful completion of their assessed year. The value of investing in these programmes in future years will clearly help in our succession planning and talent pool.

15. Financial cost

The proposals highlighted above will impact upon 117.23FTE staff within Social Work Children and Families and will require **£279,925** of additional funding. The table in Appendix 5 highlights a breakdown of the additional funding required between each of the grade proposals.

16. Given the scale of the issues in respect of Children's Social Work staff and the proposed options, the Adult's Social Work workforce profile has been examined. Although this work is not yet fully completed, early indications are that there is not currently an equivalent recruitment or retention issue within Adult's Social Work. The majority of people who have left the service in recent years have done so because of promotion or personal reasons, rather than moving to a similar job for higher wages. However, there are some specific recruitment and retention issues within the Approved Mental Health Practitioner workforce, which the service is exploring further; these issues are not unique to Gateshead in the region.
17. It is proposed that the review which is currently being undertaken with the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) service is linked to the proposed social worker framework and the outcome is integrated within the overall workforce development plan.

### **Recommendation**

18. It is recommended that the recruitment and retention allowance as set out in the report is agreed by Cabinet.

For the following reason:

In order to achieve a strong retention and recruitment, and support the employer practice endorsement,

### Policy Context

1. The Department for Education (DFE) published the knowledge and skills statements (KSS) for child and family social work practice leaders and practice supervisors in November 2015. The statements will be used together with the previously published knowledge and skills for Approved child and family practitioners, to develop a national assessment and accreditation system for child and family social workers across these three levels. A proof of concept and Pilot process has been led by the DFE.

### Background

2. The Council's approach to pay has been determined by reference to collective bargaining structures, national and local agreements, and job evaluation in the context of its recruitment markets. The pay policy statement incorporates the key principles which underpin these arrangements.
3. The Council, at its meeting on 16 September 2014, agreed to introduce measures to address low pay in its workforce by deleting the three lowest spinal column points on the pay structure with effect from 1 October 2014. The pay policy has been updated to reflect this. It has also been amended to include the revised ratio between highest paid employee and median rate of pay, which is a requirement of the Local Government Transparency Code 2014, and proposes that the issue of low pay continues to be addressed.

### Consultation

4. The Leader and Deputy Leader and Employees have been consulted on the proposals. The Council's recognised non-teaching Trade Unions have also been consulted.

### Alternative Options

5. There are no viable alternatives to the recommendations made in this report.

### Implications of Recommended Option

6. **Resources:**
  - a) **Financial Implications** – The Strategic Director, Corporate Resources confirms that the proposals highlighted will require £279,925 additional funding which has been identified through the budget process for 2017/18. The remaining funding will be identified in year from within existing resources
  - b) **Human Resources Implications** – The proposal is designed to recruit, reward, motivate and retain as necessary employees with the skills and attributes required to deliver Council Children & Family Social Work services. It is part of the Council's overall human resources policy framework, through which it aims to be an exemplary employer.

The impact of any changes in the structure and salary of Children's Social Workers will need to be monitored and the messages to all Social Workers will need to be clearly managed.

The potential for pay differentials to have a negative impact for the recruitment and retention of Adult's Social Workers is noted, as is the need to monitor the wider regional position.

**c) Property Implications** – there are no property implications arising from the recommendations within this report.

7. **Risk Management Implications** – refer to Appendix 6
8. **Equality and Diversity Implications** – Fair pay and reward are fundamental to the Council's approach to employment. The Council's use of equalities-tested job evaluation schemes, Trade Union representation in collective bargaining, and application of consistent pay principles throughout the organisational structure ensure that Equality and Diversity issues are properly taken into account.
9. **Crime and Disorder Implications** – There are no crime and disorder implications.
10. **Health Implications** - There are no health implications.
11. **Sustainability Implications** - There are no sustainability implications.
12. **Human Rights Implications** - Employees have a right to representation through both individual representation and Trade Union representation.
13. **Area and Ward Implications** - There are no area and ward implications.

The Department for Education (DFE) published the knowledge and skills statements (KSS) for child and family social work practice leaders and practice supervisors in November 2015. The statements will be used together with the previously published knowledge and skills for Approved child and family practitioners, to develop a national assessment and accreditation system for child and family social workers across these three levels. A proof of concept and Pilot process has been led by the DFE.

The first stage in the new process will be the endorsement by employers that their social workers have the appropriate knowledge and skills required to be confident, high quality Frontline Practitioners and Practice Supervisors: 'this is the Gateway and a critical source of validation for the Accreditation of Social Workers in the authority'-DFE

The DFE has worked with their partners the Social Care Institute for Excellence and Research in Practice, to develop guidance for employers on the endorsement element and this is was expected in June 2016 but as yet remains unpublished.

The expectation of the DFE is that by April 2017, the process of Employer Endorsement should be largely embedded. By 2020, all organisations that employ child and family social workers in England will need to be confidently and consistently endorsing their social workers as having the appropriate knowledge and skills required to be confident, high quality Frontline Practitioners and Practice Supervisors.

Ministers say the process will give employers assurance that children's social workers have the skills they need to do the job and will also help build public confidence in the profession. The DFE also hopes the process will offer "a window into practice" and act as a learning tool for practitioners.

By 2020 all child and family social workers will have been assessed and accredited in one of three statuses:

- Accredited child and family practitioner
- Practice Supervisor
- Practice Leader

The current work force development strategy includes working proactively with the Regional Teaching Partnership to promote the recruitment of student social workers and proactively working with universities to support entry into social work by providing social work practice educators across a wide range of in house placement opportunities. Newly qualified social workers appointed to the Council are provided with additional supervision, protected caseloads and comprehensive induction training in their first year of practice.

The service has also entered into partnerships with 'step up to social work', Frontline and Firstline which are Government supported initiatives designed to attract and develop talent into Social Work. These initiatives are support by dedicated management

of student social workers in placement and succession planning for staff to develop their social work leadership skills.

In addition the Council has a comprehensive training and development programme for social workers which include post qualification opportunities.



## Appendix 3

To that end Gateshead needs to further develop an offer for current and future Social Workers- articulated in the six proposed outcomes as outlined in Appendix 3

1. A competitive, if not higher salary offer, than our competitors based on the job profiles aligned to the KSS (see Appendix 1 for salary comparators).
2. A recruitment process that is in line with the KSS and selection processes that provide a solid baseline assessment of candidates that can pull through into the employer endorsement process.
3. A clear programme of development that can demonstrably attract Social Workers, both newly qualified and experienced, to Gateshead because they will know their practice will be enhanced and developed within an organisation that is prepared to invest in their future development and achieve accreditation.
4. A clear progression structure that invests in preparing the talented to become future Practice Supervisors and Leaders,
5. Caseloads that are manageable and allow for quality Social Work, whereby risks are appropriately assessed, and proportionate responses provided; helping to manage needs “down”, and preventing them from escalating up.
6. A unique selling point that is rooted firmly in Social Work and appeals to the hearts and minds of our existing Social Workers and those who we seek to recruit.

The expectation is that the employer will not put forward an employee for accreditation until they have been endorsed and there is every confidence that they are ready for accreditation - in other words they will pass the rigours of the accreditation process. There are clear reputational risks should Social Workers sponsored by Gateshead as ready to pass accreditation in fact fail.

## Appendix 4

Local Authority	Job	Salary Scale	Other financial	Other incentives
Gateshead	<b>Social Worker</b>	<b>£29,854 - £35,093</b>		
Sunderland	Social Worker/Senior Social Worker	£28,203 - £36,019	+1 market supplement up to £36,937 depending on experience	An average of 20 caseloads per worker Laptops and mobile phone to make flexible working easier Career progression scheme Planning a Professional Leadership Programme High quality supervision Small teams of Manager, Prac and no more than 7 SWs A relocation package Salary sacrifice car lease scheme Discounted parking costs <i>Will consider 4 day working weeks</i>
Sunderland	Advanced Practitioner	£37,858 - £41,551		As above
Sunderland	Team Manager	£42,474 - £46,232		As above
Darlington	Social Worker	£25,694 - £36,019		
Newcastle	Social Worker	£27,394 - £35,093		
Newcastle	Senior Practitioner/Team Manager	£36,019 - £38,789-£46,232		
South Tyneside	Senior Practitioner	£37,858		
Stockton-on-Tees	Social Worker	£25,694 – £36,937	A golden hello of £3,000 - £5,000 Payment of £3,326 for unsocial hours	Rota basis across 7 days including over night
North Tyneside	Social Worker	£29,854 – £33,106		
Middlesbrough	Social Worker	£24,717 – £31,288		
Durham	Social Worker	£26,293 - £29,558 £30,978 – £34,746		Generous annual leave entitlement Induction programme Training and Development Flexible working hours Family friendly benefits Childcare Voucher Scheme Discount leisure facilities

## Appendix 5

A breakdown of the additional funding required between each of the grade proposals

Post	Current Grade	FTE	Current cost £	Proposed grade	FTE	Revised cost £	Additional Cost £
Social Worker	I/J plus £846 ECU	83.28	3,974,474	J plus 5% R&R	83.28	4,092,362	117,888
Senior Practitioner	K	7.95	422,391	J plus 5% R&R <b>excl protection</b>	4.95	255,551	-166,841
Assistant Team Manager	K+1	8.00	435,720	K+1/M plus 7.5% R&R (bar @43)	11.00	721,964	286,244
Team Manager	L plus 7.5% R&R	10.00	613,696	K+1/M plus 7.5% R&R (bar @43)	10.00	656,331	42,635
Service Manager	N plus 15% R&R	3.00	224,743	N plus 15% R&R	3.00	224,743	0
		<b>117.23</b>	<b>5,671,074</b>		<b>117.23</b>	<b>5,950,950</b>	<b>279,925</b>

The Risks and Implications of doing nothing

Risks to the Service.

Children's social work

1. A continued reliance on agency staff with the associated financial impact on the Council.
2. A failure to retain our experienced staff particularly in the face of existing and predicted targeted recruitment by other regional authorities prior to or subsequent to their Ofsted judgement.
3. A continued challenge in recruiting experienced Social Workers with an over reliance on newly qualified Social Workers with their professional limitations.
4. A continued erosion of Social Work capacity inevitably resulting in low morale, and Social Workers leaving the Council.
5. Children's services is experiencing 30% higher work load. Caseloads are beyond the recommended levels stated by Ofsted. This is a risk to the next Ofsted inspection.
6. Caseload and capacity that compromises the safety of children and organisational effectiveness

To the Council

Children's social work

1. The implications for the council if the service is seen not to have the staffing capacity to manage the complexity and volume of the safeguarding work would risk the next Ofsted outcome and the council be rated inadequate with regard to leadership. This is a clear reputational risk.
2. The experience of other local authorities judged to be inadequate by Ofsted has led to substantial sums of money being invested in the service which was not anticipated as part of the council's wider strategic plan and has impacted on wider services.

To Service Users

Children's social work

1. Service users will not have a timely service and may lead to critical safeguarding risks.
2. Slower pace of service users moving through the system due to lack of staff capacity which could lead to higher costs
3. Critical safeguarding risks could trigger serious case reviews open to public scrutiny and an early Ofsted inspection