

# **Manchester Children's Social Care Workforce Strategy**

**- *building a stable, skilled and confident  
workforce***

**March 2016**

## **1.0 Purpose of the Strategy**

As a council, we recognise that the workforce is our most important resource. The ambition of our strategy is to improve the lives of children and young people and families and keep them safe and fulfil their potential. This can only be delivered by a confident, competent and highly skilled children and young people's workforce that understands each other's responsibilities and works together to deliver relevant, responsive and high quality services for children, young people and their families.

This strategy focuses on the social care workforce (social work, early help, safeguarding and residential) and sets out how we will create the conditions for our workforce vision over the next three years.

This is a refresh of the social work strategy published in January 2014. A background paper Social Work workforce strategy: Update on Strategic Context and Progress since Jan 2014 provides the context for this strategy.

### **Supporting Documents:**

Social work Strategy 2014 – January 2014

Workforce Strategy: Update on Strategic Context and Progress since Jan 2014 - February 2016

Manchester City Council Social Work Continuing Professional Development Framework – November 2015

Children's social care reform – A vision for change, January 2016

## **2.0 Workforce Vision**

### **2.1 Improvement Vision:**

The refreshed vision for Manchester's improvement journey was agreed in January 2016 as:

- Children and families will be at the heart of the future success of Manchester.
- Children will live with their families in self-sustaining communities.
- Children will be supported by excellent universal services from pre birth to adulthood.
- Achieve good outcomes.
- Children achieving at school, becoming good parents themselves, will contribute to the labour market, productivity and growth.
- Where children and their families need more support we will work closely with our partners to intervene in the right way, at the right time and as early as possible to avoid escalation to statutory services.

As a local authority we will:

- Be a learning and high performing authority seen to innovate and an example of good practice.
- Contribute to corporate priorities including Neighbourhoods, Community and Economic growth.

The vision for our children's social care workforce underpins this broader vision.

### **2.2 Workforce vision:**

Manchester's social care workforce are uniquely placed to transform the lives of vulnerable children and young people and by working with others to create the conditions that enable them fulfil their potential. They will do this by developing positive relationships and robust partnerships; keeping children safe from harm, by working with families to enable them to make positive changes or by finding the best possible care when children cannot live at home so that all children thrive and achieve.

In order to achieve this, we will ensure that all social care workers have the knowledge and skills to do their jobs well, that they are clear of the expectations of them, that they take responsibility for their own development and growth, and that they have the right organisational culture, leadership, tools and working conditions to meet these expectations.

### **2.3 Outcomes – what will be different:**

1. A sufficient, stable, skilled and confident workforce that is able to safeguard, and promotes the welfare of children and young people, enabling them to succeed and achieve their aspirations
2. A culture of success in which staff feel empowered and equipped to practice to high standards, have a strong voice to influence developments and decisions, are proactive in taking responsibility for their own learning and enabling the learning of others, and are driven by strong and high aspirations for Manchester children
3. An asset-based approach to interventions with children and families and to working with colleagues and partners

4. Strong, effective and professional leaders who create the right conditions for effective practice
5. Social care workers are clear about the expectations on them (the ask) and the support available to meet them (the offer)
6. Caseload levels that promote evidenced based practice, decision making and effective relationships with children, young people and their family.
7. Dynamic and responsive recruitment and retention strategies in place to attract and retain the very best social workers to work in Manchester and that enable all social care staff internally to move through the social care career pathway.
8. A clear CPD framework, aligned to social care career pathways, that promotes personal responsibility for development and growth while ensuring access to a broad range of learning, development and reflection activity
9. An organisation that supports staff to be child focused and to spend more time with children and families and to maintain a reasonable work/life balance facilitated by flexible working, efficient business processes, systems and mobile technology and working
10. Manchester social care workers will have a clear sense of purpose, understanding their specific role within the context of the whole-system multi-agency approach to improving outcomes for children and young people through integrated services

### **3. Local and National Changes since publication of the Social Work Workforce Strategy**

Manchester published its social work workforce strategy in January 2014. A lot has changed since then locally and nationally:

Local changes:

- Summer 2014 Ofsted inspection and Manchester's improvement journey
- GM fundamental review of Children's Services
- Teaching Partnerships/GM Academy
- Confident and Achieving Manchester Programme

National Changes:

- Notification that social workers will be subject to three yearly assessment and accreditation
- Social Care reform announcements of January 2016
- Clarification of the children's social work role
- Publication of knowledge and skills statements
- Munro review resulting in shift in focus from "doing things right" to "doing the right thing"
- Publication of the Professional Capabilities Framework

More information about these changes can be found in the Social Work Workforce Strategy Update, March 2016. The scope of this workforce strategy has been expanded to incorporate all social care staff (social work, early help, safeguarding, residential) in line with social care reform plans nationally and regionally.

### **4. Workforce Profile and comparative position**

The annual ADCS social work benchmarking report collects data from across the North West to facilitate benchmarking. The data set out within the strategy is taken from the annual report in order that comparisons can be drawn with other neighbouring local authorities (data submitted as correct at 30/9/15).

Manchester employs 273 full time equivalent social workers. This is a 9% increase as at the same point of time in 2014 and represents the investment in additional social work capacity to reduce caseloads. The vacancy rate has reduced to 3.5% from 11.4% in 2014. At the end of September 2015 there were no agency workers filling vacancies although they have been used to cover maternity leave, long term absence and to provide additional capacity. This compares to a rate of 15.9% of substantive posts being vacant and filled by agency staff in September 2014.

These improvements reflect the focused recruitment activity undertaken to fill vacancies and reduce reliance on agency workers. The annual turnover rate for social workers reduced in the year from 22.7% to 13% as a result of the introduction of the retention payment scheme. Manchester's performance across the three areas of vacancies, turnover and agency is higher than both the North West and GM average position. Absence rates have reduced from 5.2% to 4.8% but remain unacceptably high with 3316 days lost throughout the year. This compares with absence rates of 4.7% across the North West authorities and 3.9% across GM.

Manchester has a higher proportion of younger social workers than the average across both the North West and Greater Manchester and significantly fewer social workers aged 50 and above. Length of service is generally lower in Manchester with the biggest proportion (39%) having less than 2 years and 23% having 2-4 years of service. Overall therefore 62% of Manchester social workers have less than 4 years of service. This compares to 47% across the North West and 48% across GM. Recruitment strategies have already become more targeted to attract more experienced workers and it will be important for Manchester to continue to build on this to redress the experience imbalance and get closer to the North West and GM averages.

Manchester has the lowest proportion of part-time social workers across the North West (99.5% of social workers work full time compared to an average of 94.4% and the lowest rate in Trafford of 90.3%). Part time working is most prevalent in the over 60s and those aged 30-39 years old. In terms of encouraging staff back to work after maternity leave and attracting more experienced social workers, it may be pertinent for Manchester to facilitate an increased level of part time working. It is of note that the majority of Local Authorities with turnover rates that are better than those observed regionally also have higher proportions of part time staff.

Manchester council employs 238 FTE Early Help staff. Turnover in Early Help is low at 1.8% however absence levels are high with an average of 1.60 days lost per month. It is known however that there are a number of staff within the service currently who have long term conditions requiring intensive and prolonged treatment. This rate of absence for the service is unusually high currently. 82% of staff within Early Help are female and 90% work full time. 33% are aged between 20 and 39 years and 31% between 50 and 69 years. Within Residential Services, Manchester employs and 74 FTE staff, turnover is 5.5% and the current rate of absence is 0.97 days lost per annum per FTE which is an improving picture. 62% of the residential workforce are female and 38% male with 17.4% of staff working part time. Residential Services has a different age profile with 74% of staff being between 40 and 59 years old.

The age and gender profile of the workforce suggests that there are likely to be high rates of maternity leave across the social work and early help workforce. The ability to have a

flexible pool of permanent staff who can be flexibly deployed to cover maternity leave will help to ensure practice standards are maintained during periods of maternity leave and will minimise changes in social workers and key workers for children and young people,

nb. Regional benchmarking information is not currently available for the wider non-social work social care roles.

## **5. Priorities to Achieve Outcomes:**

The priorities to achieve the outcomes over the next three years are:

- Ensuring that the Manchester has a continuous supply of talented social work staff who are appropriately experienced, nurtured and developed to be equipped to meet the needs of Manchester's children and are adaptable to move into vacancies as they arise
- Succession planning to support movement across the social care career pathway and programmes to support staff through change as new delivery models are implemented
- Management of change programme to develop a culture of success
- Continue to develop an asset-based approach through implementing Signs of Safety and rolling out strengths based conversation training
- Leadership and management development at all levels
- Embed practice standards and ensure access to high quality, regular professional supervision, management support and opportunities for reflective practice and learning
- Ensuring staff have access to a good quality induction and that there is robust delivery of the AYSE programme
- Further reduce caseloads of social workers and bring caseloads of early help staff in line with regional benchmarking
- Implementation of Continuing professional development framework
- Processes reviewed and updated aligned to Signs of Safety model
- Flexible and mobile working enabled
- Social work remodel design and implementation
- New delivery models implemented for early help and residential services

## **7. Actions to Deliver Workforce Priorities**

The plan below sets out the activity and timescales for delivering the workforce priorities over the next 12 months together with how we will measure progress. The action plan will be reviewed and refreshed annually.

## **8. Conclusion**

Manchester will not deliver its improvement aspirations for Manchester's children and families without an engaged, skilled and motivated workforce. Whilst there has been significant progress in taking forward the social work workforce strategy there remains some distance to travel to deliver on the priorities in full. This strategy which is broader in scope, sets out where we will focus our attention for the next three years and how we will know when we are getting things right.

Our most important indicator of whether we are getting it right is what our workforce tells us. We are committed to regular, effective and strong workforce engagement and to using the outputs from this engagement activity to inform our activity, to sense check the impact of activity and to course correct where we are not getting things right.





Priority	Actions	Timescale	Measure
Ensuring that the Manchester supply of good quality, appropriately experienced social workers meets demand and can quickly move into vacancies as they arise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimum of bi-annual “Becoming the Best” recruitment campaigns</li> <li>• Reserve list maintained and monitored with proactive steps to replenish as needed</li> <li>• Over-recruitment to enable timely and flexible deployment to cover long term absence and maternity leave reducing reliance on agency staff</li> <li>• Review social work pay</li> </ul>	Feb 16 and minimum 6 monthly  Monthly monitoring  By June 16  By June 16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduced spend on agency staff</li> <li>• Vacancies recruited to more quickly</li> <li>• Pay levels in line with benchmarking</li> </ul>
Succession planning to support movement across the social care career pathway and programmes to support staff through change as new delivery models are implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing proactive work to attract people with the right behaviours and attitudes to move into Early Help roles and receive appropriate training in evidence-based interventions</li> <li>• Skills audits to determine ongoing learning and development requirements</li> <li>• Develop and commission core training offer for staff commensurate to their roles, duties and responsibilities</li> </ul>	Ongoing as demand arises  By July 16  July 16 – March 17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Non social work social care roles eg. Early help and residential, filled quickly and appropriately.</li> <li>• Clarity about the ongoing learning and development needs for non-social work staff in the context of reform and new delivery models</li> <li>• Non- social care staff demonstrate appropriate skills, competencies to fulfil the requirements of the role</li> </ul>
Management of change programme to develop a culture of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change management programme designed</li> <li>• Senior leadership team participate in change management programme</li> <li>• Senior leadership team coach leaders and managers through change</li> </ul>	End April 16  May 16 to Nov 17 July 16- Jan 18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Behaviours which underpin the desired culture clearly articulated, understood and owned</li> <li>• Improved performance</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>management programme</li> <li>• Access to coaches or mentors facilitated</li> </ul>	From May 16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>evident</li> <li>• Directorate tone and style is evident</li> <li>• Evidence of effective leadership at all levels</li> <li>• Sense of team evident</li> </ul>
Continue to develop an asset-based approach through implementing Signs of Safety (SoS) and rolling out strengths based conversation (SBC) training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partner and staff SoS briefings</li> <li>• Introductory/basic SoS training for all staff</li> <li>• Advanced training for SoS Practice Leaders/Champions</li> <li>• Align supervision to SoS model</li> <li>• Implement programme of learning lunches/forums</li> <li>• Roll out additional 2000 SBC training sessions to partners</li> <li>• Continuation of learning forums for early help staff and key workers</li> </ul>	<p>From Feb 16 May – Aug 16</p> <p>2 years from May 16</p> <p>Monthly</p> <p>March 16- March 17</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• QA Framework demonstrates improvements to quality of practice</li> <li>• Increased staff satisfaction (Healthcheck)</li> <li>• Reduced turnover and absence</li> <li>• Increase in number of Early Help Assessments completed by partners</li> <li>• Early help staff access peer learning opportunities</li> </ul>
Leadership and management development at all levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leadership and management development programmes scoped and commissioned</li> <li>• Coaching and mentoring opportunities made available</li> <li>• Clear accountabilities framework in place</li> <li>• Development programme introduced to support fast track to leadership</li> <li>• Participation in design and implementation of GM Academy leadership and management development programme</li> </ul>	<p>May 16</p> <p>June 16</p> <p>June 16 March 17</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Leaders and managers equipped with skills and behaviours to support development of staff and teams</li> <li>- Ongoing individual support available for leaders and managers</li> <li>- Leaders and managers clear on their responsibilities and accountabilities and those of colleagues around them</li> </ul>

			- Leaders and managers enabled to access development opportunities to develop skills required for future working across GM
Embed practice standards and ensure access to high quality, regular professional supervision, management support and opportunities for reflective practice and learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Practice standards rolled out to all staff</li> <li>Practice standards reinforced through appraisals, supervisions, reflective practice and development sessions</li> <li>Revised supervision policy introduced to all staff</li> <li>Supervision policy embedded through effective management and monitoring</li> <li>Monthly reflective learning forums introduced</li> <li>Supervision policy reviewed and refreshed to align with SoS</li> </ul>	<p>March 16</p> <p>Ongoing from March 16 Mid April 16</p> <p>Ongoing from March 16</p> <p>June 16</p> <p>May 16</p>	<p>Improved level of social work awareness of practice standards</p> <p>Supervision audits evidence that practice standards are being utilised as a social work practice development tool</p> <p>Opportunities for reflective learning become embedded and part of a learning culture</p>
Ensuring staff have access to a good quality induction and that there is robust delivery of the AYSE programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Induction programme reviewed, refreshed and rolled out so that all managers can consistently deliver</li> <li>Compliance with delivering induction monitored through monthly workforce reports</li> <li>Bi-annual refresh of induction programme to accommodate new ways of working, policies and procedures</li> <li>All AYSEs access commissioned programme of support</li> <li>Staff with less than 2 years experience who have not previously accessed a robust AYSE programme enabled to flexibly access the AYSE programme in line with identified developmental needs</li> </ul>	<p>April 15</p> <p>From April 15</p> <p>Aligned to recruitment campaigns</p> <p>April 16 to March 17 and ongoing</p>	<p>New staff demonstrate good level of awareness</p> <p>Feedback from staff is consistently Positive</p> <p>Sustained protective development time for AYSE of 10% April 2016</p> <p>AYSEs successfully complete first year and progress to social work status</p>

<p>Further reduce caseloads of social workers and bring caseloads of early help workers in line with regional benchmarking</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional capacity secured and in post</li> <li>• LAC discharge team effective in reducing LAC numbers</li> <li>• LAC strategy proactively implemented to reduce LAC numbers</li> <li>• Ongoing implementation of EH strategy to reduce demand</li> <li>• Social workers flexibly deployed to meet demand as it changes throughout improvement journey</li> <li>• Caseloads proactively monitored and activity progressed to address outliers</li> <li>• Implement new EH delivery model to bring caseloads in line with regional benchmarking</li> </ul>	<p>June 16 – Sept 16</p> <p>In line with LAC reduction schedule Ongoing</p> <p>March 17 and ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Sept 16</p>	<p>Quality Framework shows improvements in quality of practice</p> <p>More timely progression of cases</p> <p>Improved staff morale (healthcheck) and retention</p>
<p>Implementation of Continuing professional development framework</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CPD self-assessment tool introduced to inform annual appraisal process</li> <li>• Proactive analysis of trends and issues arising from appraisals to inform annual training and development plan</li> <li>• Training plan refreshed and commissioned annually and visibility improved</li> <li>• SWC work programme reviewed and refreshed annually</li> <li>• RiP is made available to social workers</li> <li>• Opportunities for reflective practice made available through supervisions, learning forums and team sessions</li> <li>• Managers skilled up to coach and mentor staff</li> <li>• Opportunities to gain experience in different social work roles are available</li> </ul>	<p>March 17</p> <p>May/June annually</p> <p>By June annually</p> <p>By June annually</p> <p>May 16</p> <p>From May 16</p> <p>Dec 16</p>	<p>100% of staff have appraisals and are proactive in preparing for them</p> <p>Staff proactively seek feedback to inform their learning and development</p> <p>Quality framework demonstrates increase in evidence-based practice</p> <p>Staff are proactive in maintaining HCPC registration</p> <p>Increased awareness of learning and development opportunities available</p> <p>Evidence of coaching style</p> <p>Social workers perceive movement across functions as positive and linked to their development (Healthcheck)</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>and actively promoted to underpin CPD</li> <li>Evaluation programme designed and implemented</li> </ul>	<p>From Jan 17</p> <p>Sept 16</p>	<p>Improved ability to demonstrate impact of training and development activity</p>
<p>Flexible and mobile working enabled, improvements to systems</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quick wins and urgent changes to Micare implemented</li> <li>Best practice workshops held to inform further changes</li> <li>Pre- upgrade business process changes</li> <li>Mosaic upgrade</li> <li>Laptop rollout including sessions with managers to promote new ways of working</li> <li>Flexible working arrangements scoped and implemented</li> </ul>	<p>April, May &amp; July 16</p> <p>March – May 16</p> <p>July &amp; Aug 16</p> <p>March 17</p> <p>Feb – April 16</p> <p>June 16</p>	<p>Social workers report that Micare is easier to use</p> <p>Data quality improves</p> <p>Timeliness of recording improves</p> <p>Social workers adopt new ways of working which are less office-based</p> <p>Improved satisfaction and motivation of social workers (Healthcheck)</p> <p>Improved retention</p>
<p>Social work remodel design and implementation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New model of integrated children’s social care designed</li> <li>Consultation on new model</li> <li>Implementation of new model</li> </ul>	<p>Nov 16</p> <p>Dec 16 – Jan 17</p> <p>March 17</p>	<p>Organisational arrangements underpin new ways of working and promote integrated, multi-agency working</p>