

From: Peter Oakford, Cabinet Member Specialist Children's Service  
Andrew Ireland Corporate Director Social Care, Health and Wellbeing

To: Children's Social Care and Health Cabinet Committee -  
3 December 2014

Subject: Recruitment and Retention of Children's Social Workers

Classification: Unrestricted

Electoral Division: All

**Summary:** This paper provides an update to Children's Social Care and Health Cabinet Committee on recruitment and retention, following the agreement to enhancements to the remuneration package for key staff in Specialist Children's Services presented to this Cabinet Committee on 23 September 2014.

**Recommendation:**

The Children's Social Care and Health Cabinet Committee is asked to:

a) **NOTE** the update in relation to recruitment and retention activity as outlined in this paper.

**1. Introduction**

1.1 Following the discussion at Children's Social Care Cabinet Committee on 23 September 2014, it was agreed that an update on the activities would be presented to the next Cabinet Committee meeting.

**2. Context**

2.1 A detailed and comprehensive recruitment and retention plan is in place and is regularly reviewed by the Specialist Children's Services Resourcing Group. Progress against this plan has been good, but the national shortage of children's social workers has meant that the target of 85% of posts filled by permanent staff has not been achieved. In case-holding teams at the end of September, 75.6% of posts were filled by permanent employees (compared to 69.6% in July) with a further 18.9% being filled by agency staff (compared to 20.6% in July).

2.2 The recruitment activity that has taken place during August and September is summarised in the table below:

Social Workers	Senior Practitioners	Team Managers
30 applications received (29 external, 1 internal)	23 applications received (4 external, 19 internal)	18 applications received (12 external, 6 internal)
6 shortlisted	19 shortlisted	10 shortlisted
1 offered (External from Thurrock)	7 offered (6 internal, 1 external from Reading Borough Council)	4 offered (1 internal, 3 external from Newham Council, Powys County Council, London Borough of Bexley)
(3 still to be interviewed)	(6 still to be interviewed)	(3 still to be interviewed)

2.3 The proposals below were endorsed by this Committee on 23 September 2014.

a) Targeted advertising for experienced social workers. Senior practitioners and team managers has been agreed and planned up to April 2015. This will include targeted on-line advertising, radio advertising, and maximisation of the google search facility to drive potential applicants to our website.

Peridot (a specialist executive search agency) have been engaged to undertake targeted recruitment of Team Managers. The research process has started and plans are in place to make 9 appointments early in the new year.

b) Equalisation of market premium payments for Senior Practitioners and Social Workers will be implemented from the December 2014 payment cycle and will mean that all identified eligible social workers, senior practitioners and team managers will receive a payment of £1500.

c) Additional retention/market premium payments targeted at staff reaching significant length of service landmarks have been finalised and will be implemented from January 2015

d) A new car market premium has been agreed and will be implemented from January 2015

2.4 It is important that the other aspects of the recruitment and retention plan are maintained, particularly in relation to supportive, strong supervision, and the

introduction of the professional capability framework which links to professional development, both of which are known to be valued by staff.

2.5 The ability to attract high quality Newly Qualified Social Workers has continued this year and is fundamental to the underlying importance of planning for the longer term by growing our own supply of social workers.

### 3. Conclusions

3.1 It is anticipated that the agreed initiatives will be instrumental in ensuring we attract and retain the calibre of staff that are required within Specialist Children's Services to continue the improvement journey.

### 4. Recommendation

The Children's Social Care and Health Cabinet Committee is asked to:

- a) **NOTE** the update in relation to recruitment and retention activity as outlined in this paper.

### Background Documents

Children's Social Care and Health Committee report 23 September 2014

### Contact details

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