

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

To: **Children's Social Care Cabinet Committee, 21 April 15**

Subject: Recruitment and Retention of Children's Social Workers

Classification: **Unrestricted**

Summary: This paper provides an update to Children's Social Care Cabinet Committee on recruitment and retention following the agreement to enhancements to the remuneration package for key staff in Specialist Children's Services presented at Cabinet Committee on 23rd September 2014 and the update report on 4 December 2014.

Recommendation(s):

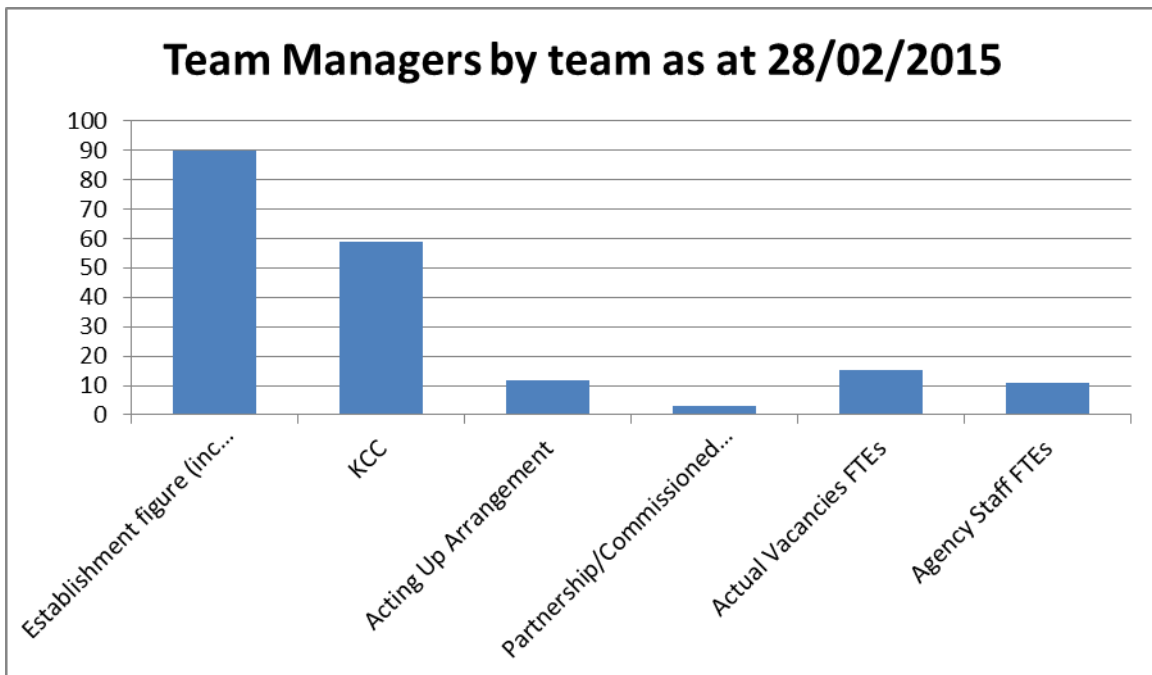
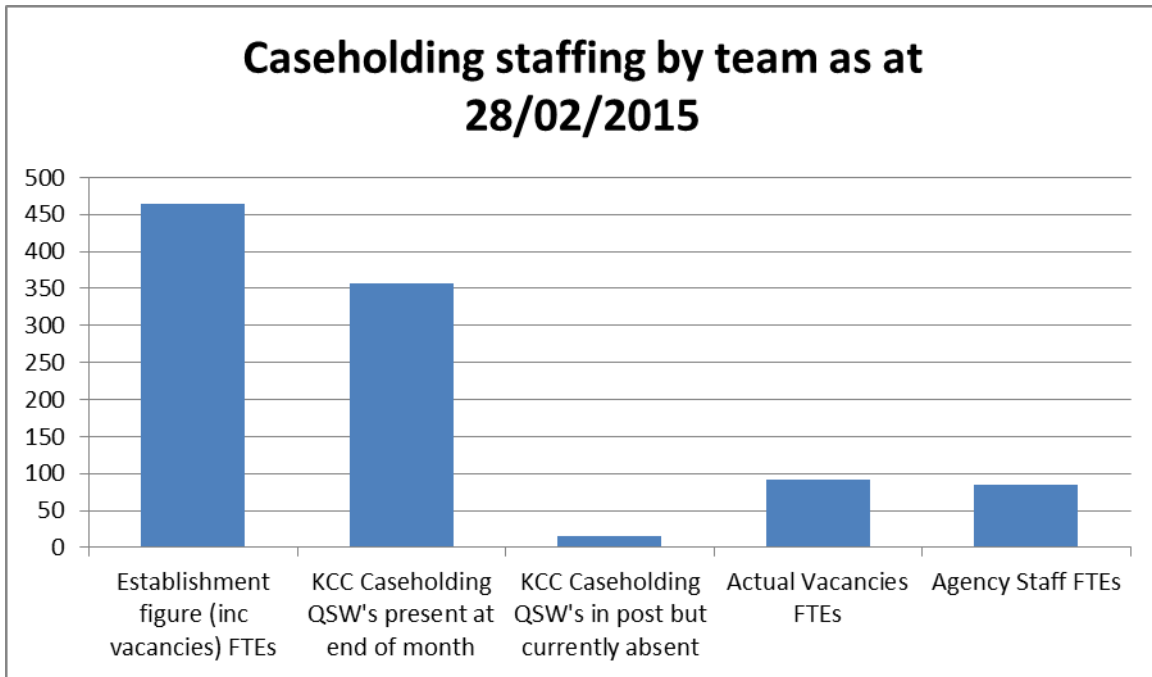
The Cabinet Committee is asked to note the update in relation to recruitment and retention activity as outlined in this paper.

1. Introduction

1.1 Following the discussion at Children's Social Care Cabinet Committee on 4 December 2014, it was agreed that an update on the activities would be presented to the April Cabinet Committee meeting.

2. Context

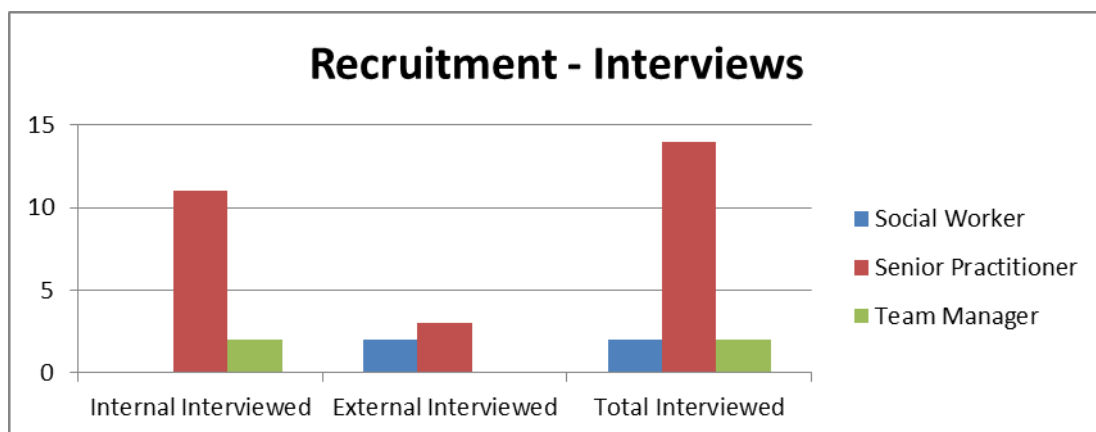
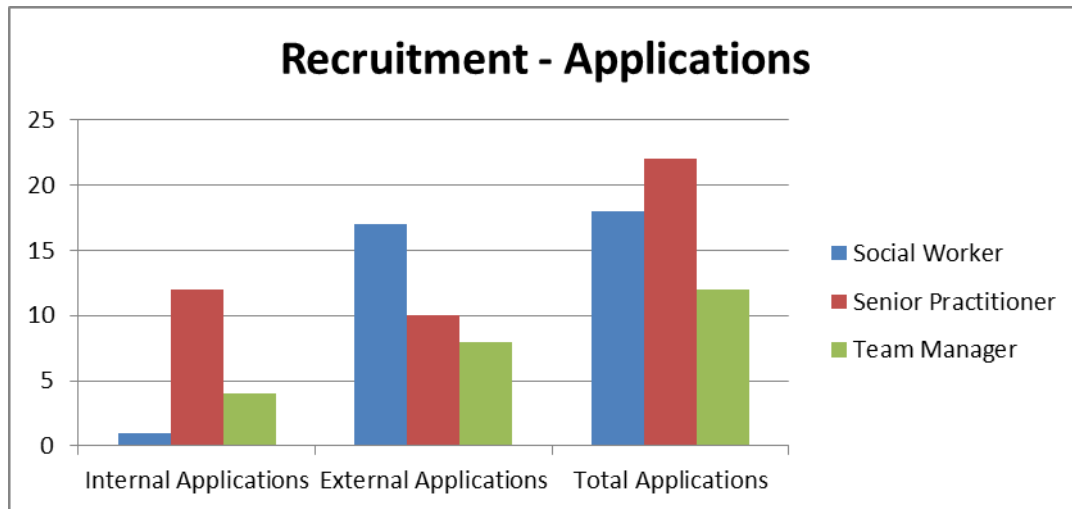
2.1 A detailed and comprehensive recruitment and retention plan is in place and is regularly reviewed by the Specialist Children's Services Resourcing Group. Progress against this plan has been good and the numbers of substantive social workers is slowly increasing, but the national shortage of children's social workers has meant that the target of 85% of posts filled by permanent staff has not yet been achieved. In case-holding teams at the end of February 2015 80.2% of posts were filled by permanent employees (compared to 75.6% in September) with a further 18.3% being filled by agency staff (compared to 18.9% in September). See graphs below for an overview of the current numbers:



2.2 The proposals agreed by Cabinet Committee on 23 September 2014 have been progressed.

- (a) Targeted advertising for experienced social workers, senior practitioners and team managers has been agreed and planned up to May 2015. This includes targeted on-line advertising, radio advertising, and maximisation of the google search facility to drive potential applicants to our website. This campaign also used Spotify to drive potential applicants to the micro-site and generated 1,132 clicks. The total number of clicks to the micro-site from the current campaign is 30,389 and most of these were generated by Google.

The recruitment activity that has taken place since December 2014 is summarised below:



Peridot (a specialist executive search agency) have been engaged to undertake targeted recruitment of Team Managers. The research process has started and plans were in place to make 9 appointments during February/March. Unfortunately this timetable has slipped due to changes in the business and consultants leaving, however the plans have been refreshed and ongoing identification and appointment of potential candidates will be progressed during April and May.

A recent analysis of the application process identified a concern that applicants may be deterred from applying. In order to respond to this, a different approach is currently being tested. This involves a short form within the micro-site which enables applicants to upload their CV or to give contact details. The dedicated Recruitment Officer will then contact them by telephone within 48 hours and undertake a brief screening exercise to determine their eligibility for interview. Individuals will then be offered interviews within the areas as soon as possible. This revised process will be monitored to determine whether this improves the numbers of applications.

b) Equalisation of market premium payments for Senior Practitioners and Social Workers was implemented in December 2014.

c) Additional retention/market premium payments targeted at staff reaching significant length of service landmarks were implemented for staff with 3-years' service paid in January 2015

d) The agreed £2000 car market premium was implemented from January 2015

2.3 It is not possible to analyse the impact of the new market premium payments on the turnover figures for case-holding staff, but the overall comparison of the turnover rate for case-holding staff is positive, reducing from 15.9% in October 2014 to 11.4% in February 2015.

The balance of starters and leavers over the last 3 months is becoming more balanced as shown in the table below:

Month	Starters	Leavers	Reason for leaving
December 2014	5	5	4 resignations; 1 mutual termination
January 2015	6	4	2 resignations; 1 ill health retirement; 1 mutual termination
February 2015	4	3	1 resignation; 1 retirement; 1 mutual termination

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.

2.4 Dedicated Newly Qualified Social Worker recruitment will continue this year and is fundamental to the underlying importance of planning for the longer

term by growing our own supply of high performing social workers. The numbers have yet to be finalised but this activity will start in April.

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(s)

Recommendation(s):

The Children's Social Care Cabinet Committee is asked to note the update on recruitment and retention activity for Children's Social Workers as outlined in this paper.

5. Background Documents

- 5.1 Children's Social Care Committee report 23 September 2014
- 5.2 Children's Social Care Committee report 4 December 2014

6. Contact details

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