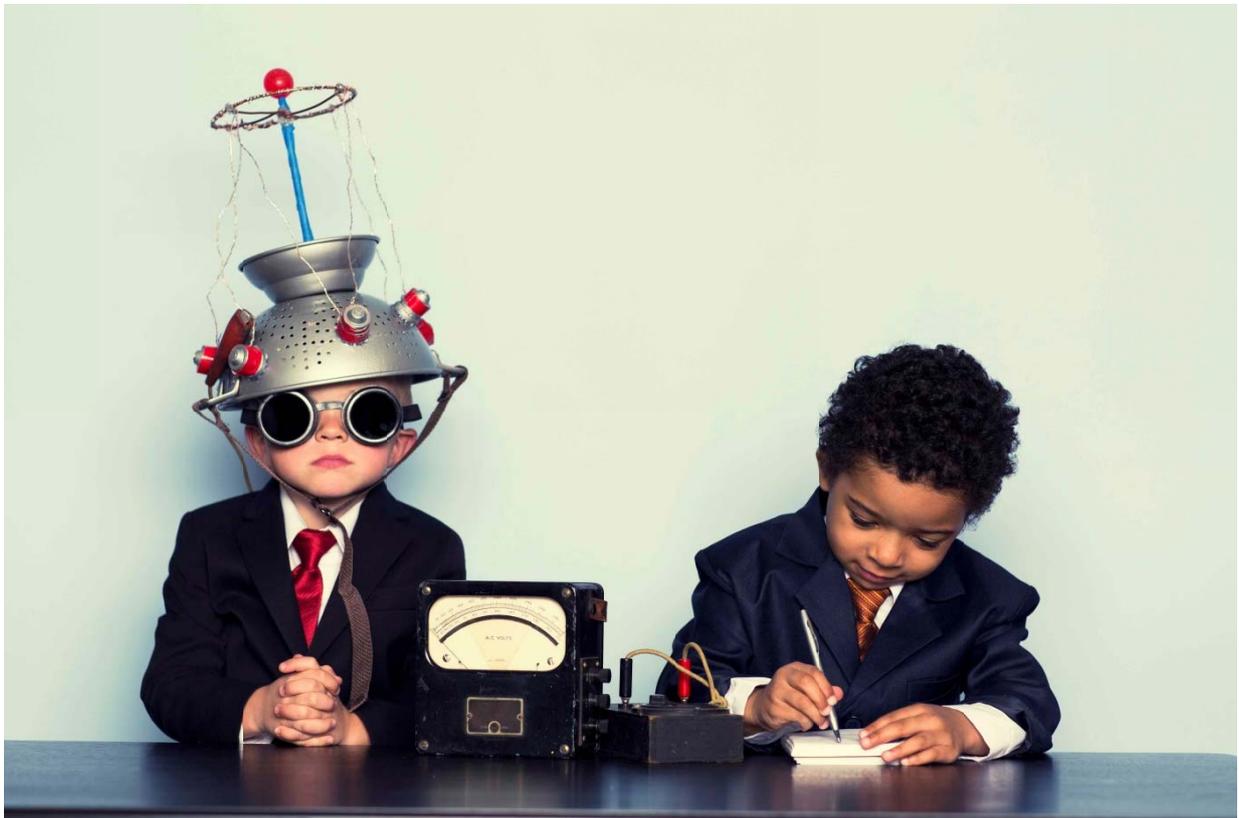


# Education and Children's Services

~ supporting children and young people to  
be safe, learn, achieve and grow

## Workforce Development Strategy



**2017 – 2020**

# Message from the Strategic Director, Children's Services

At Leicester City Council, we are looking forward to the future with confidence and we are tackling the challenges that are facing all councils whilst driving an ambitious programme of change around Education and Children's services. Across our services, whether it is in a frontline role or a strategic position, a host of people are working together to improve the life chances of the most vulnerable children and families in our city.

Education and Children's Services has a strong child centred learning and improvement culture driven by accessible and visible senior management. We are leading exciting initiatives such as the Social Care and Early Help Learning and Development Hub in partnership with De Montfort University delivering: 'twilight bite sized lectures', learning, practice and teaching opportunities and research partnerships. We continue to invest in evidence based edge of care and specialist services including MST CAN and MST standard teams, a multi agency CSE Hub, and a specialist therapeutic service for Looked after and adopted children and young people; developing participatory tools, a child centred practice methodology and reflective supervision tools. All this combines with a strong commitment to on-going improvement for children and families receiving our services.

We look for creative and talented individuals to strengthen our teams and who can help shape our longer-term plans for children's services in Leicester. We also have a commitment to support our staff – with a range of benefits, including a competitive benefits package, personal and professional development, generous annual leave and a final salary pension with significant employer contributions. Our learning programmes, comprehensive introductory programmes, reflective supervision and a wide range of differing and specialist roles support career development. We strongly believe that everyone can achieve and reach their full potential. By being part of our story, you can share in the interesting and exciting opportunities we have to offer and deliver services to Leicester's richly diverse community.

I'm proud of the people who work in Education and Children's services – time and again, I see proof of their motivation and passion to improve lives, raise aspirations, build achievements and make a difference to the many children and families across our incredible city.

**Frances Craven**  
**Strategic Director for Education and Children's Services**

Go to our website to find out what it's like [working for us](#).  
Follow our Children and Families Principal Social Worker on Twitter @PCFSWLeicester

## Aims of the Strategy

The aim of this strategy is to

- Provide an understanding and an overview of Leicester City Children's services workforce.
- Outline the main strategic activities being taken to enrich and develop the Children's Services workforce

This strategy is for all staff within Leicester City Council's Education and Children's Services Social Care and Early Help Division. It builds on the previous 2015-2018 Workforce Strategy, updated to reflect significant recent activity as part of our improvement journey and the aspirations for the next 3 years.

This strategy sets out what we are doing to attract, retain and support the development of a talented and committed workforce which has the skills, knowledge and motivation to improve children's lives.

## Our Vision, Values and Principles

### Values and Principles

In Leicester, as a City Council, we have a strong set of values and principles that underpin everything what we do to benefit the people of Leicester City.



### Leicester City Council Core Values

**Confidence** means leading by example and focusing on results. This helps raise the standard of our work, as confidence breeds success.

**Clarity** means ensuring that communications and messages are easy to understand. This makes working between departments easier and ensures that members of the public can understand what we do.

**Respectfulness** is something we take very seriously. It is important that every employee of the council understands how their behaviour affects others.

It is also important that we work in an atmosphere of **fairness**. This means we listen to others' opinions and allow everyone to have their say.

**Accountability** means that everyone in the organisation takes responsibility for their own performance. By doing this, we all improve the quality of our own work and the work of the organisation as a whole.

## Leicester's Education and Children's Services vision

Leicester City has a clear shared vision that by 2020, Leicester's Education and Children's Services will be a professional, dynamic and forward thinking service, working with partners to provide the best quality experiences '**supporting children and young people to be safe, learn, achieve and grow.**'

Our mission is to ***"To improve the lives of Leicester City children by working in partnership to raise aspirations, build achievement, and protect the most vulnerable."***

### Our strategic outcomes

With our partners, we will ensure we work to improve the life chances of vulnerable children and deliver changes for the better. To do this, we are guided by our strategic outcomes

- Listening to and hearing children and young people
- Knowing ourselves well
- Effective partnerships
- Committed confident, competent workforce
- Efficient and effective use of resources

We will only achieve our vision through ensuring that we have a well supported and competent workforce and effective partnership working across agencies, including schools and a wide variety of voluntary and community sector partners, placing the needs of children, young people and families at the centre of everything we do.

This workforce strategy is developed to ensure we have the skill and experience mix of competent staff to deliver these objectives.

### National and regional context

*'Working with children and young people is one of the most inspiring and rewarding jobs anyone can do. It can also be the most demanding and difficult'*<sup>1</sup> which is why we believe it is so important to have a culture which is both supportive and promotes dynamic confident practice.

The 2020 Children and Young People's Workforce Strategy sets out the government's vision that everyone who works with children should be:

- Ambitious for every child and young person
- Excellent in their practice
- Committed to partnership and integrated working
- Respected and valued as professionals

---

<sup>1</sup> Margaret Atkinson 2020 Children and Young People's Workforce Strategy

This strategy for Leicester has been developed within the context of some key national and local documents, drivers and strategic groups, including:

- The Munro Review of Child Protection: A Child Centred System (2011) and the government response published in July 2011
- The Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Childcare Act 2006
- The Children and Families Act 2014
- Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2015
- Serious Case Review findings
- HCPC Capabilities Framework and Standards for Employers
- The Social Work Reform Board
- Skills for Care ASYE Programme
- Signs of Safety practice framework
  
- Leicester child poverty commission 2013
- Leicester Children's Trust and The Children and Young People's Plan 2014-17
- Leicester 0 – 5 strategy 2016/19
- Leicester's Early Help Strategy
- Two year funded early education entitlement strategy 2015/16
  
- The Children's Pledge
- Leicester City Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB)
- Leicester City Quality Assurance and Performance Management Framework
- Commissioning Strategy for Leicester

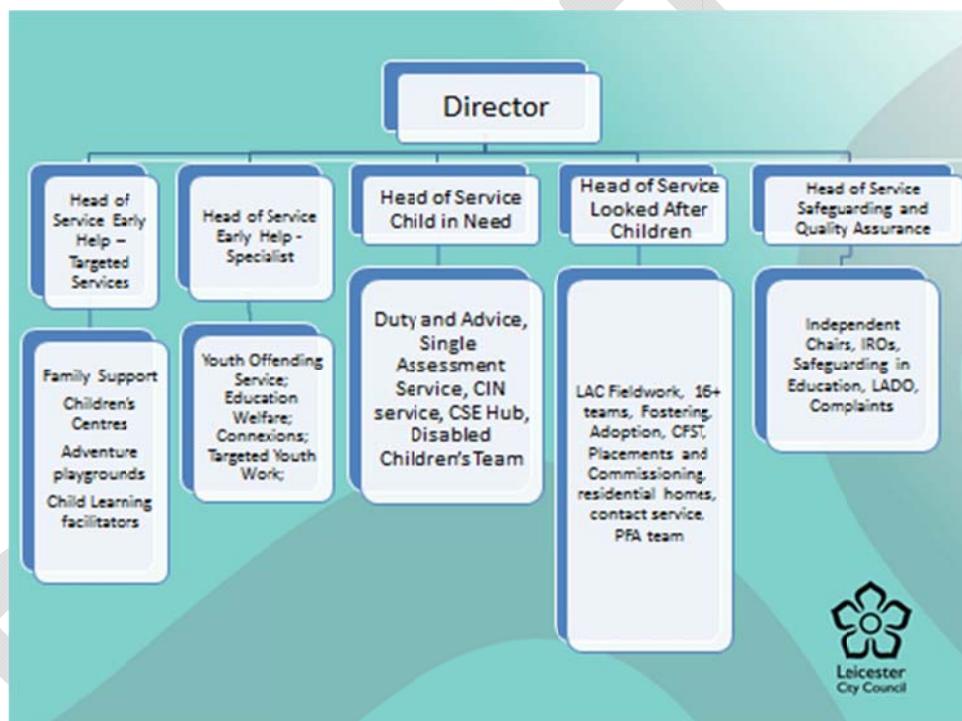
We have a strong relationship with children and young people and through the participation framework and from feedback, children and young people in Leicester are explicit about what they want from practitioners: People who are trustworthy, friendly, reliable, passionate and care about young people. The Pledge (see appendix a), led by the Children in Care Council, sets out our commitment as corporate parents to children and young people.

# Children's Services workforce

Our Early Help and Children's Social Care services work closely together to ensure children/young people and families are supported and safeguarded across the City.

The Children's Services workforce is overseen by 5 Heads of Service;

- Early Help - Targeted
- Early Help - Specialist
- Child in Need (statutory child care intervention until the point of legal permanence for children)
- Looked After Children
- Safeguarding and Quality Assurance



## **Early Help ; 'Support, Strengthen, Thrive'**

Our Early Help offer recognises the strengths that already exist in families and communities, which enable children to grow up to be independent and resilient adults. It is vital that Early Help support is available and easily accessible to avoid crises developing that may need more specialist service involvement.

Our Early Help Strategy outlines the offer and approach from professionals across organisations and services that work with children, young people and families across Leicester. This includes but is not limited to schools, early education providers, colleges, health services and commissioners, voluntary and community

organisations, the police, probations services, the local authority and the Local Safeguarding Children's Board.

This Workforce strategy recognises the role of all agencies across the partnership, whilst applying to those employed by Leicester City Council.

Our Early Help workforce encompasses

- Children, Young People and Family Centre staff (CYPFC)
- Early Years Support Team
- Adventure playground staff
- Family Group Conference service
- Education Welfare
- Connexions
- Targeted Youth Services
- Youth Offending Services
- Multi Systemic Therapy Teams (2 x standard and 1 x Child Abuse and Neglect team)

We are focused on developing our workforce to deliver integrated early help that:

- Thinks Family
- Improves outcomes for all children/young people, specifically the most vulnerable
- Improves school readiness
- Ensures quality and is able to demonstrate outcomes
- Works jointly with other professionals' to ensure no child falls through "safety net"
- Accurately assesses the needs of children, young people and families, and is able to analyse strengths and risks
- Promotes children's and young people's safety and wellbeing
- Adopts a co-productive approach
- Develops leadership – systems leadership, and peer review
- Provides effective performance management

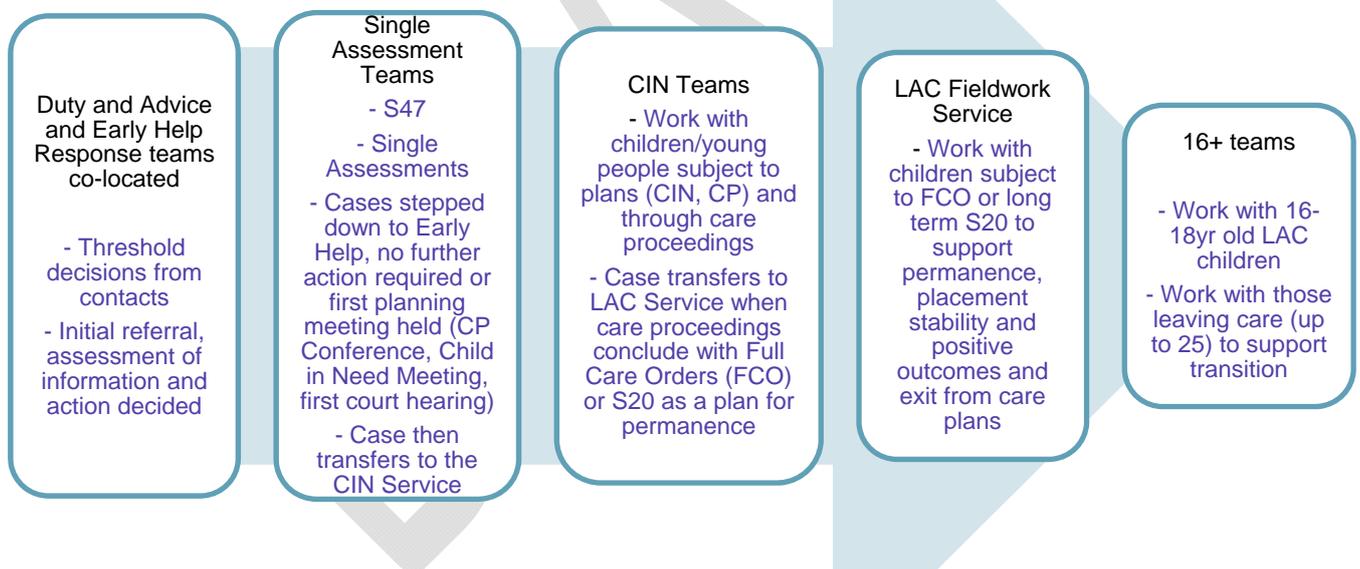
"Children's centre and family support review January 31<sup>st</sup> 2014."

## Children's Social Care

Our teams are structured to ensure that children and families, experience the least possible transitions between workers, to avoid having to tell their story again, reduce the number of assessments and drift and delay

Working in partnership is a range of other front line services and teams. These include:

- Fostering and Adoption services
- Children's Residential homes
- Placements and Commissioning service
- Contact Service
- Children and Families Support Team
- Disabled Children's Service
- Persons from Abroad team
- Safeguarding Unit; Independent Reviewing Officers and Independent Child Protection Chairs
- CSE Multi agency Hub
- Children's Rights and participation



## The Children's Social Care and Early Help workforce

The workforce is made up of a range of qualified social workers and differently qualified staff.

There are currently 992 posts within the division

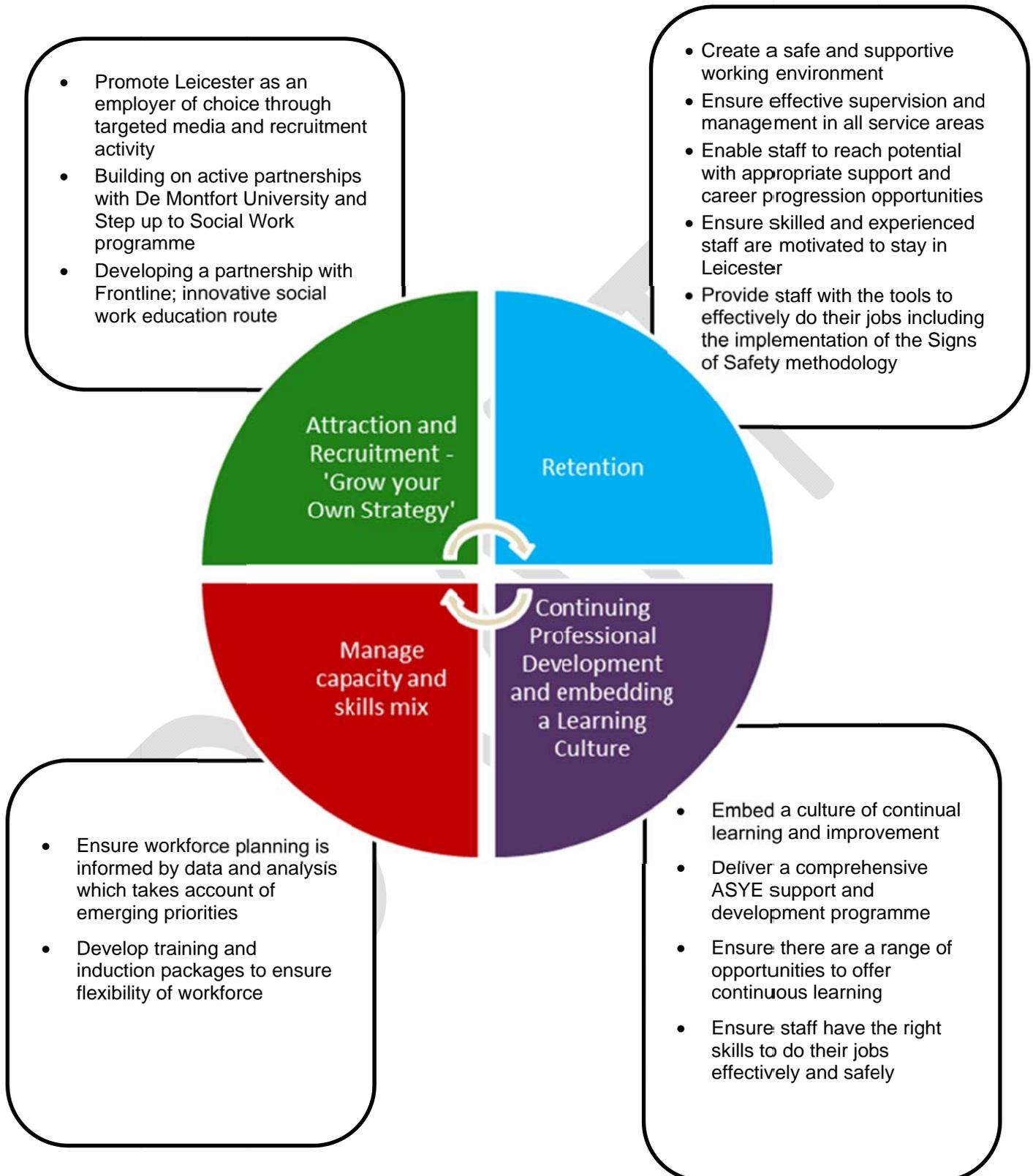
- 123 in CIN services; predominantly social work qualified
- 255 in LAC services; includes social workers, personal advisors, residential and contact centre workers
- 33 in Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Unit; predominantly social work qualified
- 578 across Early Help and Targeted Support
- 80 Corporate Business Support posts

Profiling of the workforce to aid planning has identified the following;

- 78% of the current workforce is female, which is a common feature nationally in Children's Social Care.
- 49% of the workforce is 25-45 yrs old and 48% 46 – 65 years old; with 72% of the Child in Need service under 45.
- 46% of the workforce is white and 30% BME.
- 6% of the workforce identifies as having a disability.
- In terms of identified religion; 27% identify as Christian, 10% Hindu, 6% Muslim, 2% Sikh and 15% of no religion.

Further work is planned to understand the profile and diversity across the workforce, to understand implications for service delivery and develop action plans to address any gaps.

# Workforce Development Priorities 2017-20



- Promote Leicester as an employer of choice through targeted media and recruitment activity
- Building on active partnerships with De Montfort University and Step up to Social Work programme
- Developing a partnership with Frontline; innovative social work education route

- Create a safe and supportive working environment
- Ensure effective supervision and management in all service areas
- Enable staff to reach potential with appropriate support and career progression opportunities
- Ensure skilled and experienced staff are motivated to stay in Leicester
- Provide staff with the tools to effectively do their jobs including the implementation of the Signs of Safety methodology

- Ensure workforce planning is informed by data and analysis which takes account of emerging priorities
- Develop training and induction packages to ensure flexibility of workforce

- Embed a culture of continual learning and improvement
- Deliver a comprehensive ASYE support and development programme
- Ensure there are a range of opportunities to offer continuous learning
- Ensure staff have the right skills to do their jobs effectively and safely

## Attraction and Recruitment

We will continue to explore and support a range of routes into social work, through partnerships with local universities, and other national social work education providers including Step up to Social Work. September 2017, will see the start of our partnership with Frontline, delivering evidence based social work training in the workplace. We will closely monitor this development to identify learnings and any potential expansion.

We are committed to a diverse workforce, where different skills, experiences and qualifications are welcomed and valued and continue to develop strategies and ideas to ensure that we are able to attract the best people to our jobs.

We continue to refresh and update our recruitment processes; creatively using social media, targeting our advertising and recruitment activity, further developing our bespoke Living and Working in Leicester website (<http://socialcarejobsleicester.com/>) refreshing our application, interview and assessment processes and ensuring that we actively include young people and service users in the process. In addition, we will work with City Council colleagues to ensure that we are able to offer a range of benefits to increase the appeal of working for the City Council.

We are committed to working in conjunction with our regional colleagues to stabilise the social work job market, through training and recruitment initiatives and pay agreements.

## Retention

We are committed to providing a safe and supportive working environment, where staff feel listened to, valued, able to make a difference, perform to their best ability and to develop in their career.

Meaningful consultation is built into any major changes (of service delivery or structure) and there is an ongoing commitment to listening and consultation by senior managers to frontline practitioners and managers through monthly meetings.

We are committed to improving the frequency and quality of supervision; ensuring that all staff have regular access to reflection, support and case direction and management oversight. New tools (such as the reflective supervision tool developed in conjunction with Dr Jackie Robinson and the Aspergers Consultation group at De Montfort University) and processes (eg group supervision for ASYEs and MST) support this. Further embedding of these tools and processes is planned. Annual appraisals and the newly implemented Social Work workforce progression document support career development and aspiration.

As a division we are developing our capacity for celebrating success. We have a commendation system which provides feedback to senior managers. We hold annual ASYE completion celebration events supported by Lead Members and Strategic Directors. The regular blog of the Strategic Director recognises and highlights success. Individual successes are recognised in service areas. Further

mechanisms to identify good practice examples and individual success / commitment and

We are actively supporting workers to consider progression and identifying opportunities for development and growth eg Signs of Safety Champion, Advanced Practitioner roles, Early Help qualification. .

We offer a range of career opportunities and development within our service provision, allowing people to develop and grow in their knowledge and skills. As a local authority we are committed to innovation and ensuring that we have evidence based services to meet the needs of our diverse and changing population. We have 3 MST teams (including MST CAN), a specialist therapeutic service offering a range of interventions to looked after and adopted children, a persons from abroad team and

We are committed to providing an appropriate working environment for all our staff, and are continuing to review accommodation options and IT requirements including supporting flexible working.

We have invested in and are committed to a 5 year implementation of the Signs of Safety practice methodology. This will be rolled out across the workforce; building workers' skills, confidence and ability to effectively work in partnership with families.

## Continuous Professional Development and embedding a 'Learning Culture'

We are committed to creating and embedding a learning culture across the division; where learning and knowledge is shared and valued. This will be demonstrated through a variety of training and learning opportunities. Workers will be freed up and attendance at identified training supported and promoted by managers. **In house expertise** is acknowledged and promoted through weekly 'lunch and learn' sessions and regular practice workshops.

### **Ensuring staff have the right tools, knowledge and capability to do their jobs**

- Effective induction programme; to the City Council, the division and the role (to be further developed for new starters in a range of roles)
- Effective management of probationary reviews and appraisals with a feedback loop (commitment to all staff having annual appraisals and divisional training plans being developed according to identified need for 2018 onwards)
- Systems and processes training developed to meet need– eg Liquid Logic, Asset Plus
- ASYE programme (workshops, 1-1 support and mentoring, group supervision)
- Effective feedback loop from Quality Assurance team regarding findings from audit activity to inform individual, team and service practice.
- Early Help Qualification
- Annual Divisional training offer of 'must do, should do, could do' delivered

- Bespoke and specialist training - eg Achieving Best Evidence training or PAMS training
- Management and Leadership training including partnership with Firstline from October 2017.

### **Learning opportunities based around bespoke models and methodologies**

- Signs of Safety practice methodology implementation
- LAC Diversity Panel (based on the Heritage Model, Leicester City Council 2000)
- YOS Diversity Panel
- Secure Base Model training - residential staff, fostering and adoption in particular – roll out to wider division to be considered.
- The Division in conjunction with Organisational Development is committed to funding a number of service / individual specific training opportunities.

### **Access to a range of resources and training**

- Social Care and Early Help Learning and Development Hub in conjunction with De Montfort University will expand its delivery beyond monthly twilight lectures focussed on the latest research to identify other learning and development opportunities.
- The division will maintain and promote their membership of Research in Practice (RiP), which provides access to webinars, research, practice materials and learning events
- Weekly lunch and learn events led by practitioners
- Monthly Practice based workshops led by Advanced practitioners and other experts
- Regular 'Learning from Serious Case Review' workshops and events
- Participation in the LSCB's training events
- CPD workshops in conjunction with Adults' Services
- Research, articles and resources promoted via Principal Social Worker's twitter account

### **Evaluation**

We will continue to review and evaluate our training offer in conjunction with feedback from staff and service users. We are committed to developing training and systems that support the ongoing impact of training and positive change to work practices. Effective monitoring and evaluation of impact to be an expectation of all training options.

### **Management training**

The Division is committed to a 'grow your own' strategy, identifying, encouraging and supporting practitioners to become managers and senior managers, retaining in house expertise.

- A refreshed management and leadership training programme will be rolled out from July 2017 across the division, acknowledging people's skills, needs and experiences. This will focus on managing people, processes and performance and leadership as an individual and for your team.

- The division is committed to working with Organisational Development to internally and externally commission high quality and targeted appropriate packages of training and support to develop managers' skills and abilities.
- From October 2017, the division will invest in developing the leadership skills of outstanding social work managers through the Firstline Programme. This will be one option, in a suite of management training options.
- The Social Worker Advanced Practitioner role (5 posts) have been confirmed as permanent and recruited to (March 2017), offering progression and an experience of leadership, supervision and a step up to management.
- In conjunction with Higher Education courses and more specifically De Montfort University we will continue to offer people the opportunity to develop their supervisory skills and gain a practice education qualification; both for differently qualified workers as On-site Supervisors and for social workers as Practice Educators.

## **Leicester City's social work offer**

The College of Social Work published the Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF) and the Knowledge and Skills Statement by the Chief Social Worker provided a refreshed narrative by which employers and social work professionals map development, measure knowledge and skills to more effectively plan our aspirations. We are in the early stages of planning for social worker endorsement and accreditation, exploring Social Work Teaching Partnerships and developing social work apprenticeships.

Leicester is working to raise consistently high standards of practice, which will lead to improved outcomes for service users and an enhanced profile and reputation of social work as a profession.

To do this, we offer a range of programmes to support practitioners at different levels in their career in social work:

- Strong partnership working with De Montfort University to ensure supportive and good quality student placements
- Step up to Social Work programme
- Frontline programme into Social Work  
(2 year programme for for high potential university leavers and career changers)
- Assessed Supported Year Employment (ASYE) Programme  
(12 month programme supporting and assessing newly qualified social workers)
- Ongoing CPD workshops and role specific and specialist training

- Practice Education qualifications (On site supervisor, Practice Educator 1 and 2)
- Firstline programme for managers (for first line managers of front line social workers to develop skills to create change at a personal, relational and cultural level.)
- Advanced Practitioners development role
- Management and Leadership Training and Development

Leicester City's Social Work Progression framework maps out the expectations of Social Workers in Leicester, at each stage in their career. It is a proactive tool to support the performance management process. It provides both clarity and guidance on the expectations for each respective level of social work. Progression through the levels is based on the Professional Capabilities Framework and through the submission of portfolios of evidence which demonstrate the requirements outlined in this framework. Progression through social work career grades is approved at the Operational Workforce Group following the consideration of evidence.

### **Social Worker Endorsement and Accreditation**

Leicester is in the initial stages of planning for the national implementation of Social Worker accreditation based on the Knowledge and Skills statements for practitioners, supervisors and Practice Leaders.

It is a priority for Children's Social Care to understand the expectations and process and to develop internal processes to ensure that Accreditation is seen as aspirational, the endorsement process is simple and to minimise any repercussions for the social work workforce and Leicester's reputation.

The division is committed to supporting all staff to achieve endorsement and accreditation; providing the relevant support. A separate strategy and implementation plan is being developed to achieve this.

### **Teaching Partnerships (Social Work led)**

An initial small scale bid was submitted unsuccessfully to the DfE to develop a teaching partnership in conjunction with De Montfort University in 2016. A priority for the Principal Social Worker role is to scope and plan for future learning and development partnerships.

## **Manage Capacity and Skill Mix**

The division has started workforce mapping processes to understand skills mix, roles and requirements. This is further advanced in Early Help and Targeted Support, where organisational reviews and service re-alignment have led to significant workforce and role analysis.

There have been significant developments in our systems and ability to track workforce capacity and development.

We maintain and monitor how Social Care and Early Help key policies and processes are working through the workforce strategy group including:

- % of people having professional supervision
- % of people having an annual appraisal and career discussions
- % of completed specified learning needs in personal development plans
- % of people receiving professional or additional qualifications
- % of people completing compliance training

The local authority has committed to the LSCB that all staff who work in a role where awareness of safeguarding children is required, will undertake and be assessed against locally developed Safeguarding Competencies. These have been successfully implemented in the Early Help and Targeted Support Services. There is therefore confidence in workers' skills and knowledge regarding safeguarding. Integration of these competencies with other expectations for social workers (HCPC, PCF, practice standards) needs to be completed to ensure compliance.

A dashboard report to the Departmental management team includes:

- % absence rates
- % vacancies
- % of agency staff
- Exit interview comments
- Performance management procedures
- Age profile

Key themes from exit interview and performance management processes are fed back. These will be further considered (at Workforce Strategy meetings) to inform the divisional and individual training plans.

### **Legislative changes**

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 has a number of implications for the delivery of social work and social care practice. As with all legislative changes, the implications for the division in terms of workforce and practice will be directed and monitored through the Strategic Workforce group.

### **Worker flexibility / return to social work**

The vision for the division (in particular the social work workforce) is to have a skilled and flexible workforce who are able to (in terms of capacity) respond to changes in demand and service configuration, moving roles as required.

Further work to develop this, including training and support packages for workers wishing to gain experience in other areas, is planned.

### **Apprenticeships**

The division is committed to supporting employees to maximise the benefit of any learning and training. Apprenticeship routes to develop qualifications and provide a framework for professional development will be explored in all areas, in conjunction with the Organisational Development team. This will be particularly relevant for and therefore targeted at differently qualified staff (non social work staff or those without a professional qualification). We are committed to working with regional colleagues to develop these options, and will be supporting all our relevant Early Help staff to undertake a regional Early Help qualification as part of a nationally piloted scheme.

### **Agency staff**

The stabilisation of the workforce and increasing numbers of permanent staff and managers over the past year has been as a result of focused recruitment. Agency staff employment has been focused in specific areas of need in the division. Positive and effective relationships with the key agency have been facilitated by strong leadership from HR / recruitment and identified divisional leads.

We recognise the realities and benefits of a mixed economy of workforce and are committed to welcoming and supporting agency staff in their roles. We are committed to working to mitigate any uncertainty or instability for children and families caused by temporary contracts. We will continue to monitor performance information regarding % of agency staff by area and numbers of workers per family.

We have, and will continue to, collaborate with regional colleagues to understand, plan and manage workforce demands across the region. This will include agreements around recruitment and remuneration.

## **Governance of Workforce Strategy**

This strategy is implemented and monitored via the monthly divisional Workforce Strategy Group, led by a Head of Service and attended by senior managers across the City Council, including representatives from HR, Organisational Development and the Principal Social Worker. Key decisions and recommendations are then presented at SMT and DMT for discussion and ratification.

Bi-monthly meetings of the Operational Workforce Group, made up of representative service managers and team managers across the division, operationalise the strategy and provide key recommendations and feedback into the Workforce Strategy group.

DRAFT