

# Children's Social Care Workforce Strategy 2014-2017





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## Foreword

As a council, we recognise that the children's workforce is our most important resource. The ambition of our strategy is to improve the lives of children and young people and keep them safe. 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.

A key element of this is to improve the effectiveness of our recruitment of permanent social work staff across all teams, and to strengthen the council's ability to retain a high quality, experienced children's social care workforce.

This strategy sets out our commitment to the children and young people's workforce, ensuring we recruit and retain suitably qualified and experienced staff, and that staff have the support, information and skills they need. It provides the strategic framework and our priorities for developing the children's workforce over the next three years. The strategy includes reference to work completed so far, and an Action Plan for future work. Performance against this plan is reported regularly to the Slough Wellbeing Board together with reports on the three other improvement programmes: Early Help; Safeguarding; Children Looked After and Care Leavers.

Jane Wood, Strategic Director Wellbeing

*"Being a social worker is a privilege, supporting families through change and protecting children is a role I take very seriously. Enabling parents through some very traumatic and difficult times is hard by rewarding. Removing children from harmful situations, giving them a chance to grow and develop in a more secure home environment and then seeing them thrive, being happy and achieving is a gift. I have never regretted being a social worker even when days are hard."*

*(A Slough Social Worker, Work Social Work Day 2014)*

## About this strategy

This Strategy is focused on Slough Borough Council's children's workforce.

This Strategy sets out the identified workforce required to deliver desired outcomes and positive experiences for children, and how the council intends to meet these objectives through staff recruitment, development and retention, and align the council with current best practice nationally.

In Slough, we know that good social workers keep children safe and help them thrive. We know that good social work can help parents understand what they need to do to improve the care that they give their children. Slough Borough Council's objective is to establish a qualified, experienced, permanent social work staff group so that children experience stability, and as a Service we are able to work together to build expertise and a culture focused on children and excellent social work.

### What do children tell us?

- They want adults to listen to them
- They want to understand what will happen, what is happening
- They want consistency in the adults that help them
- They want us to do what we say we will do
- They want us to spend time with them, get to know them
- They want to be able to contact us when they need to

*"We need encouragement, safety, and protection so that we can build the house of ourselves on secure ground. Then we can trust. Be interested in us and we will be interested. We know that with the right support we can release our own tangled hearts... then we'll shine - like diamonds."*

*(A Slough Looked After Child)*

We are determined to develop a culture within our workforce where children, young people, parents and carers are able to easily understand and question why and how strategic priorities are set, how services are provided, and how resources are allocated. We will develop ways to empower them to influence those decisions. We will provide opportunities to make sure that the voice of the child is heard and acted upon.

This Strategy should be read in conjunction with other corporate and partnership policies and plans.

The Slough Wellbeing Board sets out the overarching vision of making Slough a place where "people are proud to live, where diversity is celebrated and where residents can enjoy fulfilling, prosperous and healthy lives." Within this vision, the Wellbeing Strategy establishes the aim of safeguarding and supporting vulnerable children.

Slough Borough Council's Corporate Plan identifies that the council must work within the confines of the current economic climate, adapting how we work to improve our organisational effectiveness. Improving Children's Social Care through the development of a skilled and capable workforce within Children's Services is part of this process.

This Strategy for Slough Borough Council's Children's Services is also linked to the wider partnership of agencies involved in supporting and protecting children and young people. It is our intention that, over the timeframe agreed, the Children and Young People's Partnership Workforce Strategy and other individual partners' strategies for developing and strengthening their workforces will be intrinsically linked together in order to strengthen and maximise potential outcomes.

This Strategy also complements existing workforce strategies within the Local Authority:

- The Learning and Development Framework for Children, Young People and Families Service 2013-16 which includes a number of activities that will be taken forward through this Workforce Strategy such as the implementation of a Professional Capabilities Framework
- Slough Borough Council's Organisational and Workforce Development Strategy 2014-16 which specifically references the need to develop 'a range of work to improve recruitment and retention in Children's Services' under Theme 4: Recruitment and Retention.

It should also be noted that equal opportunities in recruitment, employment and training are also embedded in Children's and Culture Services' service plans, and the Equalities and Diversity action plan.

## Vision for our children's services workforce

The overall vision for Slough is to have a workforce that will support and enable all children and young people in the borough to enjoy good health, live healthy lifestyles, and stay safe from harm and neglect.

Our vision focuses on our aspiration for Slough Borough Council to be an employer of choice, employing competent staff with high ambition for Slough children, who will deliver good quality services and achieve improved outcomes for local children.

Our vision is:

### 'Getting it right for children'

Our ambition is that the qualities identified in the quote below are evident in all our work with children and young people - they are the standard by which we work:

*"The social worker has clearly immersed herself in the case and completely understands the issues well and helps me enormously. Both parties are very fortunate to have alighted on this social worker as she understands the language, cultural issues and clearly has the child's interest at heart. The social worker clearly has kept this family at the centre of her attention."*

*(A recent 'summing up' by a Judge, comment on a Slough social worker)*



Nova Nunes, social worker

*"I first came here on a student placement and it didn't take me long to realise I wanted to do child protection at Slough."*

## The national context

There have been considerable changes to children and young people's services nationally, which influence the design, management and delivery of the council's children's workforce.

The National Children Workforce Strategy, published in 2009, sets out a national framework to direct the effort of local children's workforce development. Four strategic challenges are outlined:

- recruit appropriate staff into the workforce, ensuring the work is attractive and promoting flexible entry routes;
- develop and retain more people within the workforce, improving their skills and knowledge;
- strengthen inter-agency and multi-disciplinary working, and workforce re-modelling; and
- promote stronger leadership, management and supervision.

The national context has been further developed over the years for the children's social work workforce, and is now based around three key aspects: the Munro Review of Child Protection; the Social Work Task Force and Reform Board; and the College of Social Work.

The first report of the Munro Review was published in October 2010, and looked to realign the social work system away from a compliance-focused bureaucratic system to one that values and develops professional expertise, and is focused on the safety and welfare of children and young people. A system that is not just about 'doing things right' but about 'doing the right thing'. In order to achieve this, social workers need to be able to exercise more professional judgment, and this requires social workers to have improved ability from their initial training through to programmes of continuing professional development. (Munro Review of Child Protection: Final Report - A child-centred system, Executive Summary)

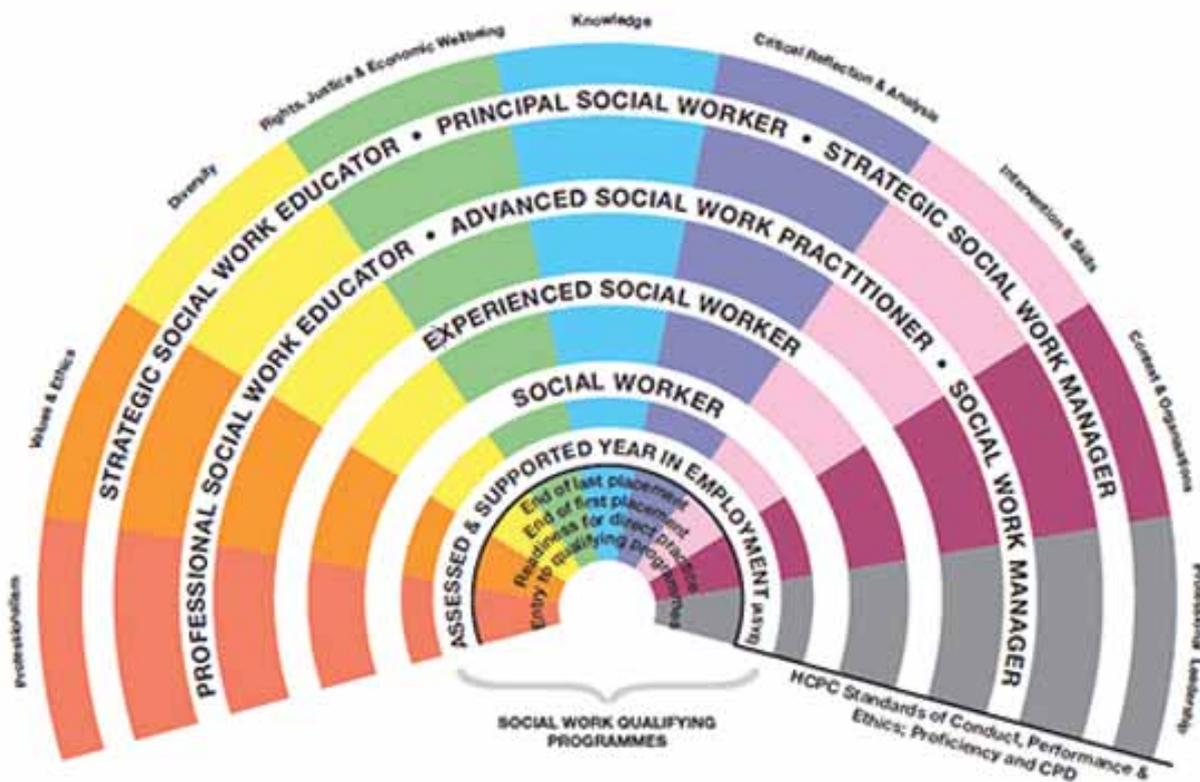
The Social Work Reform Board was established to take forward the recommendations from the Social Work Task Force. The Social Work Task Force and Reform Board recognised the need for social workers to be 'carefully selected, well trained and given good support and supervision as they develop their professional skills'. The Task Force made fifteen recommendations aimed at tackling 'the education and training, development, regulation and working conditions of social workers', and it was these recommendations that the Reform Board looked to put into practice. (Building a safe and confident future: maintaining momentum, progress report from the Social Work Reform Board, June 2012)

The College of Social Work was one of the main recommendations coming out of the Social Work Task Force, and was created in 2012. The College looks to enable the development of the profession, and has taken forward the establishment of a Professional Capabilities Framework, called for by Munro and developed by the Reform Board.

The Professional Capabilities Framework:

- sets out consistent expectations of social workers at every stage in their career;
- provides a backdrop to both initial social work education and continuing professional development after qualification;
- informs the design and implementation of the national career structure; and
- gives social workers a framework around which to plan their careers and professional development.

(<http://www.tcsw.org.uk/ProfessionalCapabilitiesFramework>)



Other complimentary influences for workforce development have been outlined in the children's services reviews led by Frank Field MP, Graham Allen and Dame Clare Tickle.

A number of themes have emerged from the above developments:

- identifying quality;
- intervening early;
- developing capacity;
- improving capability;
- increasing productivity;
- providing flexibility;
- providing value for money;
- achieving integrations; and
- better supporting the needs of children and young people.

The key challenges, nationally, for the children's social worker workforce are social worker 'sufficiency', capability and workforce stability. This Strategy aims to use the learning nationally, and develop a Slough-specific response to these challenges, creating a child-centred service with a range of responses to meet the needs of the local community; and a council which supports and develops its workforces' professional expertise in order to deliver this support to children and young people.

## Local context

Slough is a predominantly urban area, situated in the east of Berkshire. Berkshire is now made up of six unitary authorities: Slough; Windsor and Maidenhead; Bracknell Forest; West Berkshire; Wokingham and Reading. Neighbouring authorities also include Surrey County Council, Buckinghamshire County Council and the London Borough of Hillingdon.

In many respects, the issues impacting the borough of Slough more closely resemble a London borough than its Home Counties neighbours, with the borough ranking as the 93rd most deprived local authority nationally in the 2010 Indices of Multiple Deprivation out of 152.

Slough is an area of contrasts. There are large disparities between wards within the borough. The borough has one ward within the 10% most deprived nationally, and a further four wards within the 20% most deprived; these wards include some of the most concentrated housing areas.

The population, according to the 2011 Census, is 140,200; and the borough is made up of a younger than average population, with the highest proportion of 0-9 year olds amongst any of the South East local authorities, and has approximately 40,400 (0-19 years old) living within its boundaries (28.7% of population as a whole). The borough area is one of the most ethnically diverse local authority areas outside of London and in the country. The 2011 Census recorded that the local population was made up of 45.7% White and 48.9% Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Groups. The largest minority group being Asian/Asian British (39.7%).

Slough Borough Council's Children's Services has been the subject of an Improvement Notice since 2011, when an Ofsted inspection judged it's safeguarding to be inadequate. Starting in July 2012, a new Senior Management Team began to establish a realistic baseline of practice and performance, and identify the foundations that needed to be put in place to support the improvement programme. Eighteen months later on this improvement journey a second Ofsted inspection in December 2013 reported that insufficient progress had been made and that there were still serious weaknesses in the child protection system.

Ofsted made specific observations regarding Slough Borough Council's social worker workforce:

*'Slough has been unable to recruit enough qualified and suitably experienced permanent social workers. There is an over-reliance on temporary staff, with many examples of their poorly completed work....Nearly all social workers have excessively high caseloads....Too many changes of social worker....The current organisation and physical location of social work teams do not support effective team work....Insufficient privacy to discuss children's cases.'*

Ofsted's Immediate and Priority Actions were to:

- Develop and put into operation a comprehensive workforce strategy to attract and keep high quality, experienced permanent staff to Slough.
- Ensure Newly Qualified Social Workers (NQSWS) have a protected case load and the necessary support to provide a rich learning environment, such as an Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) programme.
- Ensure social workers are able to have confidential discussions with their managers and other members of their teams.

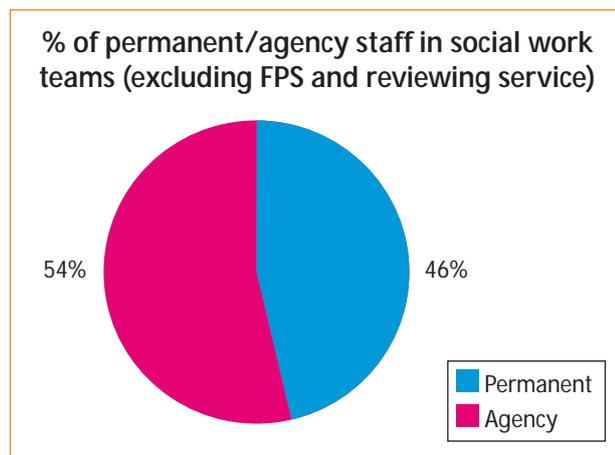
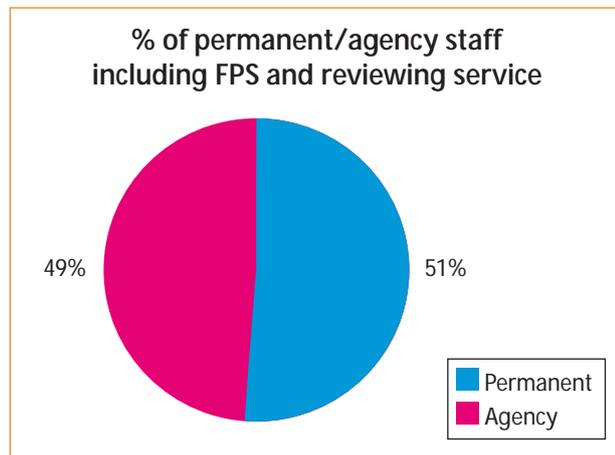
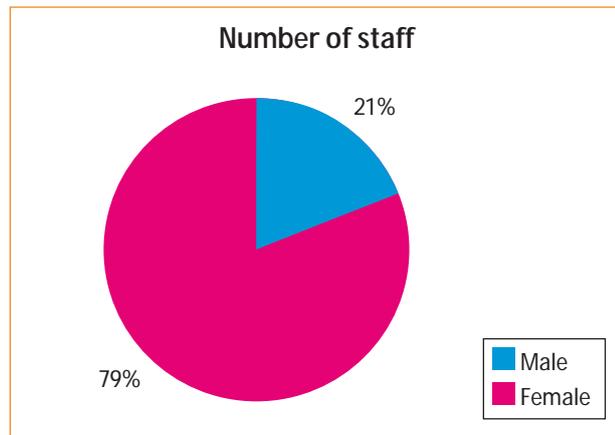
In order to meet these demands, there are a number of challenges that must be taken into consideration in order to drive our priorities.

Slough Borough Council's children's social work workforce is no different from the national picture in terms of social worker capacity and workforce stability. Slough's proximity to London makes management of the market and recruitment and retention of quality social work staff challenging, and must therefore look at alternatives for attracting and retaining quality social work staff.

This Strategy seeks to address these challenges.

### Staff profile summary

- There are 126 qualified social worker and social work manager posts in SBC's social work teams (including Family Placement, and Independent Reviewing Officer/Child Protection Conference Services).
- Of these 126 posts:
  - 27 male; 99 female
  - 2 full time posts and 1 part time post are currently vacant and not covered by agency.
  - 49% of posts are occupied by agency staff
- The figures look different when you look only at the Social Work Teams, and do not include the Family Placement Service (FPS) and Reviewing Service. In this instance, of the 76 employees, only 39% were permanent in February 2014; this will have risen to 46% by November 2014.
- Approximately 45% of employees are from a Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) background, which is closely aligned with the overall population profile of Slough, however, BME Groups are under represented at middle and senior management levels.



## Outcomes - what will look different?

1. **A sufficient and stable workforce of appropriate skill and competency** to ensure caseload levels are within agreed margins and levels that promote good practice, including sufficient time for workers to spend with children and young people.
2. **A range of effective marketing, recruitment and retention strategies** that increase the number of good quality staff who apply and are appointed with the commitment to deliver our vision.
3. **A 'grow your own' organisation** that encourages and supports pre and post qualifying learning and protected personal development and support.
4. **A child-first culture** supported by a range of frameworks, pathways, techniques and behaviours.
5. **An organisation that supports social workers to spend more time with children and families**, through the development of embedded business processes that effectively support the service to deliver good outcomes for children.
6. **Quality social work practice**, which captures the views and feedback of children and families, and of staff, and uses this information to inform continuous improvement, and is supported by effective learning and development, supervision and management.
7. **A 'children's services friendly' work environment** which enables us to achieve our objectives; which promotes good engagement with children, young people and families; promotes team identity, and provides sufficient confidential space for good quality work.



## Measures and targets

The measures we will use to monitor progress will include:

Outcome	Measure	Target
<b>1 - A sufficient and stable workforce of appropriate skills and competency</b>	Quantitative tracking of recruitment figures	Sustainable 80% permanent social worker staff (2017)
	Average caseload figures	Average caseloads at 16 children (50% caseload for Consultant Practitioners and 90% case load for social workers in their assessed and supported year of employment) (March 2015)
	Casework quality audits	80% of audited casework to be judged to be 'good' or better and no more than 5% judged 'inadequate' (March 2016)
	Timeliness of assessments	95% within 45 days (March 2015)
	Child Protection and Looked After Children Visits	95% of children receive CP or LAC visit in accordance with procedures (March 2015)
<b>2 - A range of effective marketing, recruitment and retention strategies</b>	Quantitative tracking of recruitment figures	Sustainable 80% permanent social worker staff (2017)
	Reasons why new recruits applied to SBC	Qualitative information to include: (High score good - monitored through a rolling analysis at 6-monthly intervals) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunities presented in the post e.g. right post at right time,</li> <li>• Interested in working in Slough as a place</li> <li>• Good development opportunities</li> <li>• Attracted by the advert and pre appointment communications</li> <li>• Good terms and conditions</li> </ul>
	Reasons why staff have left	Qualitative information (low score good - monitored through a rolling analysis at 6-monthly intervals) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insufficient support, supervision &amp; personal development opportunity</li> <li>• Workloads too high</li> <li>• No career path/opportunities</li> </ul>

Outcome	Measure	Target
<b>3 - A 'grow your own' organisation</b>	Number of students	Minimum 4 per year (from 2015/16)
	Average caseloads for NQSWs and students	Sustained caseload of no more than 14 children (March 2015)
	Protected development time for NQSWs	Sustained protective development time of 10% (March 2015)
<b>4 - A child first culture</b>	Change of social worker	80% of children have a maximum of 3 social workers in the course of the children's social care pathway from assessment (2017)
	Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) Visits	95% of children have a mid-way Review visit (March 2015)
	Experiences of children and young people and families subject to CP plans or who are looked after	Qualitative information (monitored through a rolling analysis at 6-monthly intervals. IRO Service to have robust system in place for collecting data for looked after children and families by January 2015): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Involved in decisions and plans about their lives</li> <li>Stability of worker, who is able to spend time with them</li> </ul>
<b>5 - An organisation that supports social workers to spend more time with children and families</b>	Child Protection and Looked After Children Visits	95% of children receive CP or LAC visits in accordance with procedures (March 2015)
	Casework quality audits	Contact element of audited casework judged to be 'good' or better (60% March 2016; 80% 2017)
	Experiences of children and young people and families	Qualitative information gathered at Reviews (LAC and CP) (monitored through a rolling analysis at 6-monthly intervals): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How much, and perception of quality from, contact child and family had with social worker</li> </ul>
<b>6 - Quality social work practice</b>	Casework quality audits	80% of audited casework to be judged to be 'good' or better and no more than 5% judged 'inadequate' (March 2016)
<b>7 - A 'children's services friendly' work environment</b>	Staff Health Check	Qualitative feedback (twice annually beginning January 2015): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the availability of private space for case discussion,</li> <li>the quality of the office environment to support team building and work flows</li> <li>the frequency and quality of supervision and development</li> <li>availability and visibility of senior managers</li> </ul>

## Actions

To recruit and retain staff:

- develop and put into operation a comprehensive workforce strategy to attract and keep high quality, experienced permanent social work staff in Slough through recruitment routes and opportunities for staff, promoting the benefits of working for Slough Borough Council;
- secure the supply and recruitment of social workers long term;
- offer an effective induction programme for practitioners;
- ensure newly qualified social workers have a protected case load (90%) and the necessary support to provide a rich learning environment, such as an ASYE programme; and
- support for social worker staff already in post in terms of their environment, case load management, supervision and ongoing professional development, with a caseload levels averaging at 16 children (50% caseload for Consultant Practitioners) which means that each team should hold a caseload of approximately 90 children, which will be overseen by the Practice Manager.



To manage and develop staff:

- establish a preferred service structure of small teams which will include a Practice Manager, Consultant Practitioner, and 5 Social Workers;
- raise awareness and understanding about who the children's workforce are and what they do;
- provide a comprehensive programme of relevant professional development opportunities for all staff;
- offer a more consistent multi-agency approach to training and develop a common skill set;
- build capacity for professional development;
- create a variety of training provision to meet needs of the workforce;
- develop a programme of evaluation and monitoring to determine the value of training and professional development activities delivered;
- offer support, guidance and advice for high quality and effective approaches to the performance development of the workforce, including enlarging our ongoing audit programme for reviewing the quality of casework to inform improvements across the service;
- promote access to the national framework of standards and qualifications, including Professionals Capabilities Framework; and
- develop effective policies to share information safely and securely to promote integrated working.

Arshia Mahmood, practice manager

*"For anyone who is thinking of coming to Slough, I would say "go for it" - it will be a challenge but you will have the opportunity to make a real difference."*

## Governance

The Children's Social Care Workforce Strategy Programme Board has been established to provide effective leadership ensuring that the identified priorities, key actions and required outcomes are comprehensively addressed.

The Programme Board is responsible for securing rapid and sustainable improvement in children's services, and ensuring outcomes for children and young people in Slough are at least "good" through the effective and timely delivery of the Action Plan. The Programme Board will also be responsible for ensuring that new and innovative ways of delivering improvements are established in line with the Council's current financial plans, providing evidence of value for money.

The work of the Board is one of the underlying themes of the Children's Safeguarding Improvement Plan. As a 'gold project' of the council, progress is reported monthly to the Corporate Management Team, Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet, and at regular intervals to the Improvement Board.

This Strategy will also be reviewed annually, and refreshed in 2016/17, alongside the Partnership Strategy and Children and Young People's Plan.



## Appendix 1 - What has been achieved so far (September 2014)

### Outcome 1

#### A sufficient and stable workforce of appropriate skill and competency

##### Additional Investment

Secured additional investment of £3.2m in 2014/15; £2.3m in 2015/16; £1.2m in 2016/17; and £0.8m in 2017/18 for building our permanent staffing capacity, and future-proofing our competitiveness in the market through market supplements.

To date, this additional funding has enabled the introduction of 4 additional social work teams. The impact of this investment can be seen in falling caseloads (Assessment and CIN Team's average caseloads were 36 in December 2013, this is now 16; and Protection and Care average caseloads were 21 in December 2013 and are now 14.5) and improving timeliness of assessments following the introduction of Single Assessments in October 2014.

The additional investment also provided a financial buffer, enabling the recruitment of high quality agency social workers during the recruitment period for permanent staff.

##### For all social workers

- Support to identify training needs and develop a Personal Development Plan
- A Learning Agreement
- An induction programme
- A rolling programme of practice based training that will always be relevant such as 'Court Skills'
- A rolling programme of ICS training
- A programme of mandatory training (commissioned from an external provider) for social workers and practice managers
- A programme of Continuing Professional Development training courses available to all social workers and managers
- One-off bespoke training for each service area (as determined by the Head of Service)
- Topic based lunchtime 'Practice Workshops' - a minimum of 4 a year

- Occasional 'Advanced Practice' seminars led by experts in their fields
- 3 Graduate Diploma places per annum
- 3 Practice Educator awards per annum
- Social work case and practice consultation from Consultant Practitioners
- Membership of the College of Social Work
- Membership of Research in Practice
- E-learning/web-based courses
- Access to Pan-Berkshire Multi-Agency Safeguarding Training
- Access to specialist training delivered by local providers

### Outcome 2

#### A range of effective marketing, recruitment and retention strategies

##### Recruitment

In April we began a co-ordinated response to attract and keep high quality, experienced permanent staff in Slough. A working group formulated plans for a recruitment campaign.

- 1) **Benchmarking** - we measured Slough Borough Council against neighbouring authorities in relation to all terms and conditions, rewards and incentives. This led to some proposed costings and recommendations agreed by the Corporate Management Team and the consequent introduction of a revised market supplement for front line (Assessment, Children in Need, Child Protection, Children Looked After) social workers and their line managers, and a relocation package which includes an intermediate rental housing scheme for key workers in conjunction with a local Housing Association.
  - Impact - Slough Borough Council improving the competitiveness of its offer within the local market.

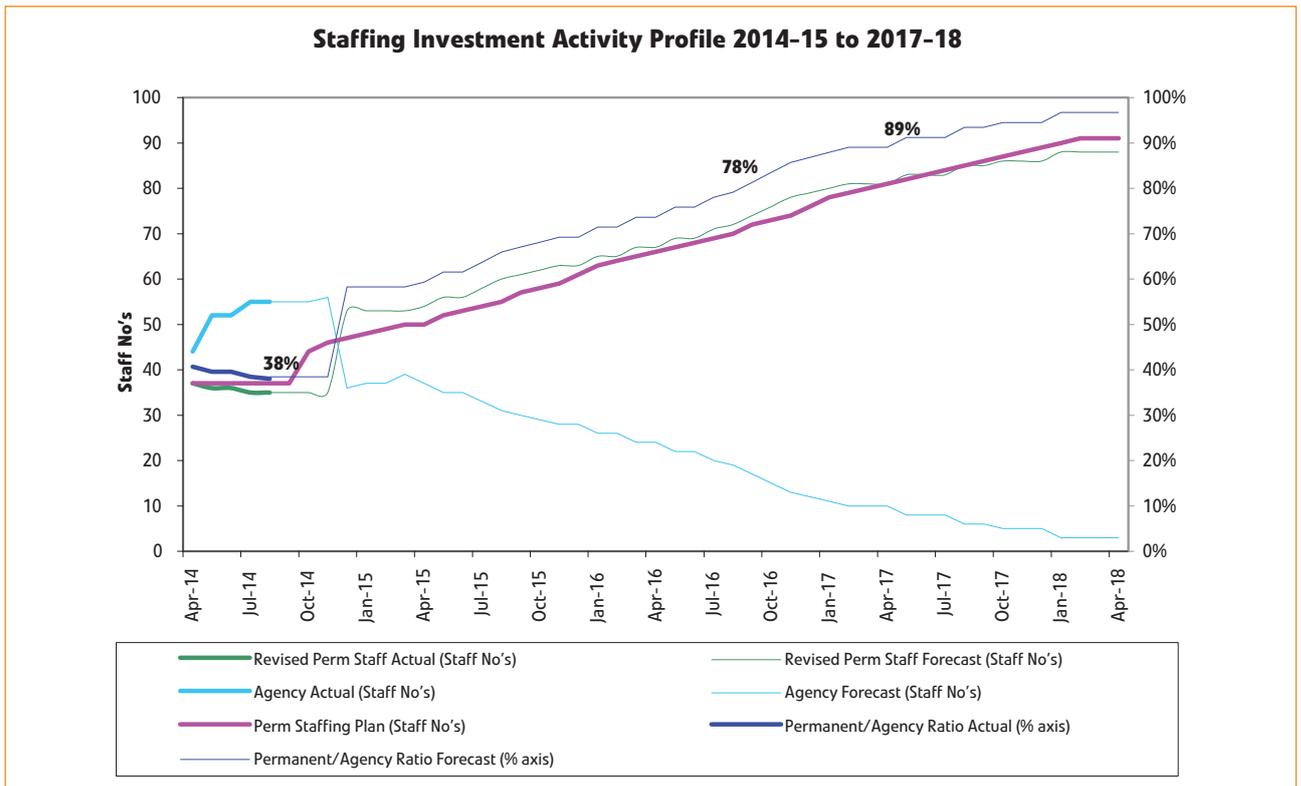
2) **Children's Social Care Website** - redesigned so that the important information about recruitment and the benefits of working in Slough was succinct and immediately available. Information was brought up to-date with the information about new market supplements and testimonials (and photographs) of a number of existing and permanent post holders in Slough.

- Impact - There were clear spikes in website hits following the publication of adverts for vacancies in June. 7 of the 13 successful applicants recruited listed the website as the media which guided them to the vacancies available, and feedback on what attracted them included clear, open information, inclusion of staff testimonies and positive messages/use of language. Of the wider cohort of unsuccessful applicants, the website continued to provide the main source, with the Metro producing 2 applications each (1 of whom was successful), the Guardian and JobsGoPublic producing 2 and 1 applications respectively.

- Impact - Ofsted Lead Inspector, having reviewed the updated website recruitment pages, fed back positively on the quality of the information available.

3) **Smarter recruitment processes** - working proactively with our business process partner, arvato, to review and update our 'Open Advert' process, and agree actions to speed up the process of short listing, interviewing candidates, and appointing successful candidates. We also joined an e-DBS scheme to significantly speed up the job of screening candidates with the Disclosure and Barring Service.

- Impact - Offer letters are being issued the same day as the paperwork is submitted by the interview panel, and the period of time to get from offer letter to completion of the DBS check has dropped from an average of 8 weeks to 4.5 days.



4) Proactively encourage good quality agency staff to consider permanent employment with Slough Borough Council. This has been complicated by uncertainties about the future since the Minister's decision (15 July 2014) to move Children's Services into a Trust arrangement, with a number of agency staff saying that they will 'wait and see' before making a decision.

- Impact - one Head of Service and one Practice Manager have switched from agency to permanent positions.

### Overall Impact

The result of this first recruitment drive has been the successful recruitment of 4 permanent Practice Managers, and 11 permanent Social Workers, including 6 new NQSWs (more details below). This is beginning to deliver against the permanent staffing plan, which was part of the growth bid in January 2014, and will result in a significant improvement in the permanent/agency ratio, and a saving against the contingency (agency) staffing budget.

## Outcome 3

### A 'grow your own' organisation

#### For Newly Qualified Social Workers and Step-up to Social Work students

- A new post established in mid 2014 of Practice Development Coordinator to co-ordinate out AYSE programme and support the development of our NQSWs
- 10% protected development time (0.5 days a week);
- 90% protected case load;
- funding of a consolidation module (post qualification) at a local university;
- reflective supervision with a line manager, fortnightly for 6 months and then monthly;
- additional group supervision with an external Practice Educator;
- additional monthly 1:1 supervision with the Practice Educator and their line manager;
- the ASYE programme; and

- Participation in the Step up to Social Work Programme (2 students are in placement at Slough from the 2014/15 cohort)

#### NQSW Scheme, and Training and Development initiatives

With a view to growing our own Social Workers, ensuring our permanent staff have the right knowledge and skills and retaining our good social workers, there has been significant focus on continuing professional development for all our Social Work staff.

- In May, we appointed an interim Practice Development Manager to support an existing cohort (5) of NQSWs who will complete their assessed and supported year in employment (ASYE) in February 2015.
- The Practice Development Manager has also helped Heads of Service select and support candidates for a target number (up to 8) new NQSWs. The post-holder has experience of working within the Hertfordshire NQSW Academy, one of the first to be developed, and has written a draft programme for the new cohort that will start in September.
  - Impact - more than 20 candidates were interviewed, and 6 new NQSWs have received offers. Together, with one NQSW returning from Maternity Leave, these 7 Social Workers will take part in a month-long induction programme before moving into their teams. 2 will be placed in Assessment and Children in Need teams, 3 in Protection and Care teams, and one each into Family Placement and the Learning Disability and Disability teams.
- We are also looking to offer placements (working to existing or training Practice Educators) to 3 third-year Social Work Students, and we will take part again in the Government's re-run Step Up to Social Work programme, offering placements to 2 or more Students. The probable start date for this will be 2015.

- Our Social Work progression procedure has been revised, linking our team model to the College of Social Work Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF), and incorporating our Learning and Development Framework. Our draft Career Progression Pathway is ready to be signed off, and sets out the criteria for moving through associated salary levels.
- The past five months has seen renewed effort to improve the publicity, and therefore take up of, training and development opportunities: Mandatory (commissioned) basic skills training; Continuing Professional Development training courses; Bespoke Team training programmes; Training and Development Lunchtime Workshops; and external courses and conferences.
- We have also introduced a robust system for cascading training and development key information through team meetings, service meetings, full service meetings (for managers), development days, and Children and Families Management Team meetings.

## Outcome 5 Organisation that supports social workers to spend more time with children and families

### Team structures and roles:

In July 2012 we agreed the following roles, using the College of Social Work Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF) as our starting point. All of our social work teams have the following established roles and most to the numbers set out below:

- **Practice Manager (1)** - accountable for the practice and performance of the team;
- **Consultant Practitioner (1)** - holding a small case load, supporting the Practice Manager with a focus on practice development and quality within the team;
- **Social Workers (5)** - with the aim of a mix of social workers and experienced social workers (PCF).

We took the decision to design our system around the following:

- Timely and high quality assessments;
- A consistent Needs and Risks Assessment Framework;
- A robust approach to children subject to child in needs plans, to prevent, wherever possible, the need to escalate to child protection or repeat referrals;
- A close alignment between child protection and public law outline work;
- Consistency for all children in the system (as few changes of social worker as possible) but in particular, consistency for looked after children, including 'across' the looked after/leaving care threshold.

Since October 2013, we have had the following structure in place:

- **'First Contact' Service:** Integrated (with early help) duty arrangements, gathering information, triage arrangements and applying the threshold into children's social care or early help;
- **Assessment and Child in Need Service:** 4 teams who undertake assessments (Section 17 and 47) and are responsible for cases where children are subject to a Child in Need plan;
- **Protection and Care Service:** 5 teams who are responsible for children subject to child protection plans, cases within the Public Law Outline (pre and post proceedings) and the implementation of plans for permanency where the plan is adoption (or special guardianship) or return home. 1 'Looked After and Care Leavers Team', which is responsible for those children who will remain within the looked after system, through to leaving care;
- **Children with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities:** a social work team working closely with SEN services and other services who are responsible for children with disabilities and complex needs;
- **Fostering and Adoption:** 3 teams of social workers, one responsible for 'Connected Person's' work, one for fostering and one for adoption.

## Outcome 6 Quality social work practice

We have implemented an expanded ongoing internal social work practice audit programme to evaluate the quality of social work practice across all teams. Whilst numbers of cases audited has been relatively small, this demonstrates an improving picture in terms of quality, and the expanded audit programme will continue to monitor and evaluate this trend.

- Impact - on the basis of the 30 evaluations undertaken between April and June, the majority of practice ranked as 'requires improvement' and in some cases (40%) 'good'. This is an improvement from over 33% being rated as 'inadequate' during the Ofsted Inspection in November 2013.



## Outcome 7 A 'children's services friendly' work environment

A working group aimed at creating effective business support and administrative systems that support the teams, and frees up Social Workers to spend more time with children and families (as per Eileen Munro's expectation from her Review of Child Protection) has now completed its task and reported.

The Ground Floor East (open plan office space) at St Martins Place is now solely for the use of Social Work and Early Help Teams.

Three more private spaces (high screening) have been created at one end of the Ground Floor East room so that managers and social workers can conduct supervision and case discussions/meeting with a greater degree of privacy.

Some of the larger desks have been replaced with smaller desks and this has created more work space but a better environment.

Staff report that all this provides for a much better working environment with regards to case discussions and confidentiality. A full refurbishment (Two meeting rooms instead of one, and all desks replaced with smaller one) planned over the next 12 months will mean greater improvements.

### Patrick Mukalazi, social worker

*"The work is challenging but in a good way, as you get to see the impact of what you're doing, which is very rewarding."*



## Children's Social Care Workforce Strategy 2014-2017

If you would like assistance with the translation of the information in this document, please ask an English speaking person to request this by calling 01753 875657.

यदि आप इस दस्तावेज में दी गई जानकारी के अनुवाद किए जाने की सहायता चाहते हैं तो कृपया किसी अंग्रेजी भाषी व्यक्ति से यह अनुरोध करने के लिए 01753 875657 पर बात करके कहें.

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਸ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਵਿਚਲੀ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਦਾ ਅਨੁਵਾਦ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ, ਤਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਬੋਲਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਨੂੰ 01753 875657 ਉੱਤੇ ਕਾਲ ਕਰਕੇ ਇਸ ਬਾਰੇ ਬੇਨਤੀ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਕਹੋ।

Aby uzyskać pomoc odnośnie tłumaczenia instrukcji zawartych w niniejszym dokumencie, należy zwrócić się do osoby mówiącej po angielsku, aby zadzwoniła w tej sprawie pod numer 01753 875657.

Haddii aad doonayso caawinaad ah in lagu turjibaano warbixinta dukumeentigaan ku qoran, fadlan weydiiso in qof ku hadla Inriis uu ku Waco 01753 875657 si uu kugu codsado.

اگر آپ کو اس دستاویز میں دی گئی معلومات کے ترجمے کے سلسلے میں مدد چاہئے تو، براہ کرم ایک انگریزی بولنے والے شخص سے 01753 875657 پر کال کر کے اس کی درخواست کرنے کے لئے کہیں۔