

EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE
20 MARCH 2018
7.30 - 8.09 PM



Present:

Councillors McLean (Chairman), Allen (Vice-Chairman), Angell, Ms Miller, Mrs Temperton and Worrall

Also Present:

Councillors Heydon

Apologies for absence were received from:

Councillors Mrs Birch

41. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

42. Minutes from previous meeting

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Committee held on 13 December 2017 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

The typographical error of “customer practice” would be amended to “custom and practice”.

Arising from the minutes the Bracknell Forest Supplement item would be brought back to a future meeting of the Employment Committee once the National Joint Council had concluded and confirmed the national pay negotiations for Local Government Services to enable the pay modelling on the Bracknell Forest Supplement to be completed. The date for it to be brought back to Employment Committee was yet to be confirmed.

43. Urgent Items of Business

There were no urgent items of business.

44. Update from the Chairman of the Local Joint Committee

Councillor Allen reported that UNSION had raised some concerns of discontent in the Adults Social Care team in relation to the Children’s Social Work Recruitment and Retention incentives. However the Chief Officer:HR highlighted that these concerns had been discussed at the LJC and the reasons for the proposal to the extension of the recruitment and retention payments as set out in the report were based on there being objective justification for these payments in these specialist roles due to the market forces and supply and demand. There was no evidence to suggest that the same pressures existed in relation to recruitment and retention in Adults Social Care at this time. It was acknowledged that the communications relating to these payments needed to be made clear.

A response had been submitted from the Director of Adult Social Care, Health and Housing in response to the Accountable Care Systems paper that had been tabled by UNISON at the Local Joint Committee in February 2018. A subsequent response was tabled from UNISON'S regional office as they felt their concerns had not been addressed. There were many uncertainties that could not yet be addressed by the Council as Central Government had not released detailed information and this was set out in the Directors response.

The Chief Officer: HR proposed that a further meeting was held with the Director and UNISON to discuss further.

45. **Minutes of Sub Groups**

The Committee noted the minutes of the Local Joint Committee held on 13 December 2017 and 14 February 2018.

46. **Social Work Recruitment & Retention Incentives**

The Chief Officer: Human Resources and the Chief Officer: Children's Social Care reported that the recruitment and retention of Children's Social Worker pay incentives that the Council had implemented in 2015, in the form of market premia and retention payments, were due for review in April 2018.

To date the incentives had greatly impacted in stabilising the team, reducing agency workers and significantly reduced the agency and recruitment costs whilst retaining a stable level of care for children and families in the Borough. Ofsted had also commented on the ability to stabilise the service in their recent inspection and the positive impact this had had on service.

The turn over of staff had reduced from 40% in 2014 to 15.6% in 2017 which was below the national average. The vacancy rate had also reduced from 14.1% to 6.8% which was again below the national average of 17%. As a result the use of agency staff had decreased which allowed for a more consistent approach with customers and installed more stability within the team which in turn had increased the teams moral. However turnover had slight crept up since September 2017 due to the successful Ofsted inspection. Since October 2017 nine social workers had been recruited, with seven of these experienced.

Addition funding had been secured through the family safeguarding model for the next 18 months, but case loads were still high at approximately seventeen cases, these still needed to be reduced to thirteen or fourteen cases.

Locally a project had taken place in 2015 in the South East which developed a regional protocol through the Memorandum of Cooperation. At the time eighteen of the nineteen South East authorities had signed up, however it was thought that some of the inadequate rated Local Authorities may chose to opt out of the Memorandum which could have an impact on staffing should they choose to pay a higher rate then set out in the memorandum.

In response to the Committee's queries the following points were made:

- There was also a saving from recruitment costs which should be included in the report, as this would probably be approximately £140k.
- A review had been undertaken to ensure that the incentives were consistent with neighbouring authorities, Bracknell Forest were fairly consistent however this would be kept under review.

- The retention payment was paid after the completion of the first year.
- A variety of reasons had been given during staffs exit interviews including, moving out of the area, moving to a different authority or getting jobs at Cafcass.
- Often staff were only in post for 6/7 years due to the difficult and complex nature of the role which resulted in staff wanting to take a different career path.
- Higher rates of pay wasn't given as a key reason for staff leaving.
- Without the incentive it was expected that staff would leave, Southampton had reduced their incentive by 5% which had resulted in staff loss. There was such a shortage of Children's Social Workers that they would be able to get jobs elsewhere.
- A much wider council wide review was being undertaken on staff retention in order to help recruit to specific posts. It was hoped that this would help to stabilise the workforce.
- Turnover would be monitored over the next year to see if Surrey County Council coming out of the memorandum would have an impact on staffing levels.
- The market retention was not part of staffs basic pay and couldn't be built into to basic pay due to the job evaluation.
- Staff were supported throughout to ensure they stay as long as possible. They received training and support and the managers doors were always open.
- The Council were currently working with Buckinghamshire University and Royal Holloway University with seven final year students currently on their placements at Bracknell Forest, with six of them already expressing an interest to apply for jobs at Bracknell.
- Bracknell Forest were the lead authority in Berkshire for the Step up to Social initiative.
- It was thought that a South West apprentice scheme would be set up nationally next year with many Family Support Workers already expressing an interest in applying.
- It was difficult for a Adults Social Worker to move over to become a Children's Social Worker as there was different training, law and placement pathways.

The Committee considered the concerns that had been raised at Local Joint Committee regarding the unrest within the Adults Social Care Social Workers and asked for this to be raised with the Director and Executive Member for Adult Social Care, Health and Housing.

RESOLVED that the Employment Committee agree for the extension of the market premia and retention payments for children's social workers until 32 March 2020.

47. **Exclusion of Public and Press**

That pursuant to Regulation 21 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) Regulations 2000 and having regard to the public interest, members of the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the consideration of item 9 of the agenda (item 48 in the minutes) which involves the likely disclosure of

exempt information under the following category of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972:

- (3) Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person.

48. Information Item - Urgent Action Redundancy

The Chief Officer: Human Resources reported that a request for urgent action had been presented to the Chairman of Employment Committee to consider the proposed redundancy of a chief officer. The report and reasons had been circulated to Members of the Committee at the time of the request for urgent action.

The Committee noted the report.

CHAIRMAN