

## Response to Request for Information

Reference      FOI 1015136  
Date            28 October 2015

### ***Recruitment and Retention Children's Services Social Workers***

**Request:**

1. Please provide details of your current recruitment and retention strategy. What consideration has been given to options such as international social worker recruitment, a 'grow your own' strategy etc?

**Recruitment:** Develop and manage a targeted rolling recruitment programme for NQSW's, experienced professionals and managers with the aim to increase the percentage for experienced social work practitioner and first line managers with matched reduction in reliance on agency workers.

Plan and deliver at targeted recruitment events and fairs regional and local with the aim of raising the profile of the City of Wolverhampton Council as an employer at specialist recruitment events.

Research and evidence successes achieved in other LA's recruitment offer to recruit and retain SW professionals to inform Wolverhampton offer. This will allow for improved understanding of the key factors that attract social worker recruitment and retention in the local market.

Undertake focus group activities involving current SW employees to inform evidence base of what attracts employees to Wolverhampton. This will assist with Social Work employee engagement in developing and retaining the SW workforce.

Improve on and brand the Wolverhampton 'offer' to new SW recruits including benefits etc... This will allow potential recruits to be fully aware of the Wolverhampton offer including improved literature.

Social Work student final year placement strategy will give an increased percentage of final year student actively encouraged to apply for NQSW posts.

**Retention:** All new starters receive council and service area induction programme for employees and managers. This will give new starters a greater understanding of the City of Wolverhampton Council, the 'Golden Thread' their role and their supported development requirements.

Newly Qualified SW assessed and supported year in employment. All NQSW's are supported in their first year in employment through a rolling dedicated programme.

Planned career pathway for social workers in years 2 and 3 in practice aligned to PCF and HCPC requirements. An agreed published career development pathway for all children's social workers leading to career specialism or on to management practice.

With regard to international recruitment, if considered, what costs and timescales are involved?

We have no involvement in International recruitment

2. How many posts do you have that are designated as social workers, senior social workers, Team Managers?

What proportion are filled by social workers who are directly employed; agency social workers; frozen or vacant? What has employment of agency social workers cost the LA over the last 12 months over and above what would have been the cost had such workers been directly employed by the Council?

Following careful consideration, the Council regrets to inform you that it has decided not to disclose this information.

With reference to question 2 above, the information you have requested has been withheld from disclosure. The exemption engaged is Section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOI).

Section 12 of the FOI exempts Public Authorities from providing information where the estimated cost of compliance exceeds the appropriate limit. Any estimate must be undertaken in accordance with the limits set in fees regulations made under Section 12 (5) of the FOI.

These Fees Regulations (SI 2004/3244 Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations) allow for a refusal where the cost of compliance, for local authorities such as the Council, would exceed £450. As a guide, staff time to identify and extract this information is charged at a rate of £25 per hour.

In summary to produce the requested information would exceed the appropriate time limit of 18 hours as we would have to manually look at all agency payments/invoices which involve:

- “(a) determining whether it holds the information,
- (b) locating the information, or a document which may contain the information,
- (c) retrieving the information, or a document which may contain the information, and
- (d) extracting the information from a document containing it”.

3. Over the last twelve months how many such social workers have left the employment of the LA and how many of these have simply 'swopped' to becoming agency workers?

Following reasonable enquiries, it has been established that the Council does not hold the above information. Consequently, we are unable to provide any information relating to the above, as per Section 1(1)(a) of the Act:

"Any person making a request for information to a public authority is entitled to be informed in writing by the public authority whether it holds information of the description specified in the request".

4. Over the last twelve months how many social workers have applied for frontline social worker posts?

Applicants for Social Worker Positions in last 12 months = **106**

Of these how many were shortlisted for interview; attended interview; were offered jobs and accepted jobs?

Following careful consideration, the Council regrets to inform you that it has decided not to disclose this information.

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In summary it would take us approximately 2 days to answer this part of your request which would involve:

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- (b) locating the information, or a document which may contain the information,
- (c) retrieving the information, or a document which may contain the information, and
- (d) extracting the information from a document containing it”.

5. How many social worker applicants were newly qualified; had less than two years experience; had more than two years experience? What was the 'experience' profile of those who were offered jobs?

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In summary it would take us approximately 1 week to answer the above question which would involve:

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- (d) extracting the information from a document containing it”.

6. Who is the lead officer with responsibility for social worker recruitment (name and/or job title)?

Children in Need – Julian Cunningham  
Looked After Children – Alison Hinds  
Youth Offending – Sally Nash  
Safeguarding - Dawn Williams  
Children’s Disabilities – Claire Gay