

**Manchester City Council  
Report for Information**

**Report to:** Overview and Scrutiny Human Resources Subgroup - 6 July 2010

**Report of:** Director of Children's Services, Director of Adult Services and Head of Personnel

**Subject:** Social Worker Recruitment and Retention Update

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**1. PURPOSE OF NOTE**

- 1.1 To update the Sub-Group on the initiatives and measures in place to support the recruitment and retention of Social Workers in Children's and Adult Services Directorates, including:
- i. Update on staffing arrangements
  - ii. Update on accommodation arrangements
  - iii. Update on the long term strategies and actions to maintain a stabilised permanent workforce.

**2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The full report on Social Worker Recruitment and Retention was presented at the meeting of the sub-group on 12 January 2010. Members have previously raised concerns over the high level of vacancies and the use of temporary staffing arrangements in both Children's and Adult Social Care Teams. The last report demonstrated that each department had taken considerable steps to reduce temporary staffing arrangements and vacancies by transferring a significant amount of agency in to permanent posts. The report also detailed measures taken in each directorate around the retention and development of existing staff to ensure that an over reliance on agency staff will not occur in the future. An outline was provided of the work being undertaken to create better working environments which are more conducive to 21<sup>st</sup> Century ways of working in order to promote feelings of value and employee well-being.
- 2.2 As stated in the last report the Social Work Task Force has produced and begun to implement its final report and plan, 'Building a Safe, Confident Future' which sets out fifteen key recommendations for the fundamental reform of the system that supports Social Workers in England.
- 2.3 The plan describes how the government is working with employers, higher education institutions, the profession itself and service users to put the those recommendations into effect. It provides clear objectives and guidance for improvement – setting milestones for achieving the delivery of the reforms and providing clarity around the changes expected to occur within the profession.

- 2.4 The fifteen recommendations focus on such issues as developing National Standards for the support and development of Social Workers including the development of a National Career Structure, regulation and frameworks for effective supervision, improved support to Local Authorities to forecast levels of supply and demand for Social Workers.
- 2.5 In June 2010 the Department for Education released a Written Ministerial Statement setting out its intentions to commission Professor Eileen Munro to conduct an independent review to improve child protection. There will be a number of key focus areas for the review including early intervention, trusting professionals, removing bureaucracy and greater transparency and accountability. In the statement the Department confirmed its commitment to implementing the recommendations of the social work task force. Professor Munro's first report will be released in September 2010 and any further recommendations impacting on social work recruitment, retention and developed will be embedded into the overall programme of work.
- 2.6 In Manchester we welcome the recommendations and support that will be made available to build on existing good practice for the recruitment and retention of Social Workers. Taking a joint approach across both service areas we will work with the Task Force and Sector Skills Councils to implement the reforms described and continue to develop Social Care services in Manchester.
- 2.7 The remainder of this report sets out an update on the current position on staffing and accommodation.

### **3. UPDATE ON CURRENT STAFFING ARRANGEMENTS**

- 3.1 Both Directorates have been working in partnership to stabilise the district, locality and neighbourhood staffing structure, enabling us to focus and develop the corporate priorities of the Think Family and Neighbourhood Working approach to delivering more effective and efficient services for our customers. Therefore we have been able to consolidate and improve on the September 2009 figures set out in the previous report.
- 3.2 Appendices 1 and 2 provide an update on the current staffing arrangements for each directorate. Further detail is presented in appendix 3 and 4 retrospectively on the recruitment activity in each directorate between January and present. Progress in this area can be attributed to both the internal and external promotion.
- 3.3 Externally, the 'Great Social Workers are made in Manchester' campaign has proven successful. It enabled us to attract interest in the role and a further iteration of the campaign will be developed and launched later in the year to attract experienced social workers.

- 3.4 As a result, we have experienced an increase in applications from current Social Work students and Newly Qualified Social Workers. Six social work students due to gain NQSW status in July have been found appointable at interview and placed on a waiting list for permanent employment within the Social Care team.
- 3.5 Additionally, the rolling recruitment campaigns that began in September 2009 have enabled us to maintain the progress made to support the stabilisation of the workforce while at the same time develop our approach within the framework of M people with a view to securing the right people with the right skills for the future.
- 3.6 Within Adult Services, the promotion of the 'Grow our Own' programme has enabled 26 Care Managers to engage in an internal programme to train to become qualified social workers over the next four years. We have also identified a number of qualified social workers working in other areas of the service delivery in both Adults and Children's Services. Alongside this, further work will be developed in line with the M people ethos to enable us to meet the service demands of the future.

#### **4. UPDATE ON ACCOMMODATION ARRANGEMENTS**

- 4.1 In addition to the key issues around recruitment and retention it was indicated in the previous report that a series of measures were underway to address hygiene factors such as the quality of the accommodation for staff.
- 4.2 Following the report presented in January, an evaluation of accommodation arrangements was undertaken and subsequent report was submitted to the Children's Services Senior Management Team on the accommodation issues affecting Children's Services with a particular focus on the South and Wythenshawe District Team Base – Etrop Way.
- 4.3 The report highlighted the access, condition and layout issues of Etrop Way and concluded that the accommodation was not fit for purpose. A number of key recommendations were made including an options appraisal of alternative accommodation in the short term.
- 4.4 However, since this time there has been a freeze on the lease of new premises which has reduced the options available for the whole team, however proposals have been made for the transfer of teams into suitable alternative accommodation until a longer term solution has been found, this would include improved access for customers to the service.
- 4.5 In Adult Services, similar accommodation issues were identified and a strategy to move the twelve Locality Teams either to a new location or improve the physical work environment has been successful. The table featured in Appendix 5 provides details of the improvements and movements in accommodation for district and locality teams within the customer support division.

- 4.6 Feedback received from individual staff and groups indicates that the improvements in accommodation have been well received and morale has increased across the group.

## **5. LONG-TERM STRATEGIES FOR STAFF DEVELOPMENT**

- 5.1 As the statistical information demonstrates, both services have achieved considerable success in stabilising the existing professional service through the recruitment of permanent Social Workers to assignment. Development programmes are in place alongside measures to improve working environments in order to retain the quality Social Workers we currently have and provide stability for the future of this front-line service.
- 5.2 In line with the recommendations from the Social Work Task Force summarised above, the next challenge will be to create clearer pathways for Social Workers to develop into managerial and leadership roles within the service. We will continue to develop our recruitment and retention strategies, monitor and manage caseloads and improve supervision and assessment.
- 5.3 There will be a focus on developing the Social Worker role to become more specialised and assuming more responsibility for assessments, care plans and supervision with the more senior roles of Advanced Practitioner and Senior Social Workers being developed to carry a reduced caseload, enabling them to focus on the support and development of Social Work practice through the social work supervision.
- 5.4 Under the broader spectrum of the M People pathway, we are committed to developing career pathways through which existing staff can progress. We aim to produce a culture of success that other services can emulate which will support the overall effectiveness of the M People programme and can contribute to a more fluid and mobile workforce.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

- 6.1 From the information presented in the appendices, it is evident that the measures put in place in both Adult and Children's Services have been successful in stabilising the permanent Social Work workforce. We will continue to embed an integrated approach to the recruitment and retention of Social Workers across both areas to ensure that we will be in a strong position to meet the Social Work workforce challenges in the future.
- 6.2 We will continue to link our short-term and long-term strategies to the 15 recommendations of the Taskforce, developing these at a local, regional and national level.
- 6.3 We will maintain to build on the progress that is being made in making Social Work within the City a career of choice which provides the support, development and opportunity for effective and high quality Social Work within a structured personal, professional and career development pathway.

**ATTACHED AS APPENDICES**

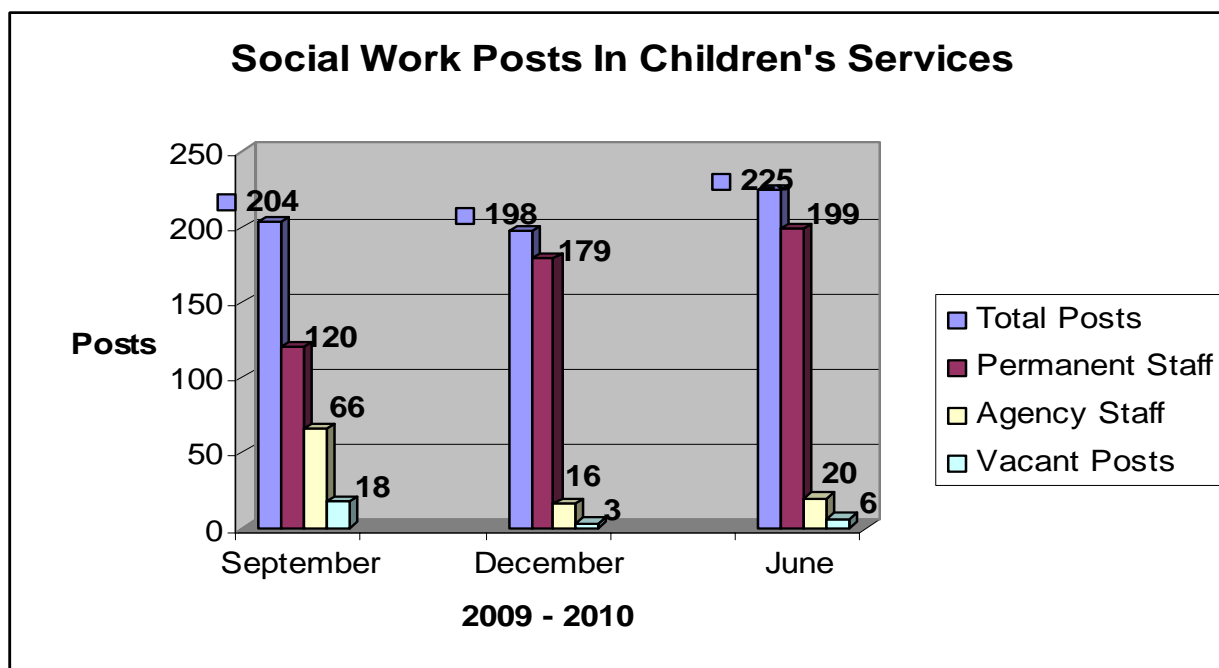
1. Social Worker Assignments for Children's Services: September 2009 – December 2009 – June 2010.
2. Social Worker Assignments for Adults Services: September 2009 - December 2009 – June 2010.
3. Recruitment Activity for Children's Services in April 2010.
4. Recruitment Activity for Adult Services in March 2010.
5. Accommodation Improvements in Adult Services.

**APPENDIX 1**

**SOCIAL WORKER ASSIGNMENTS FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES  
 SEPTEMBER 2009 – DECEMBER 2009 - JUNE 2010**

	September 2009	December 2009	June 2010
Permanent Staff	120	179	199
Posts filled by agency staff while recruiting to posts	43	3	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>163</b>	<b>182</b>	<b>204</b>
Vacant	18	3	6*
Long term sickness (agency covering)	1	3	7
Additional Workload (agency covering)	12	3	0
Secondments (agency covering)	7	4	3
Maternity leave (agency covering)	3	3	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>21</b>

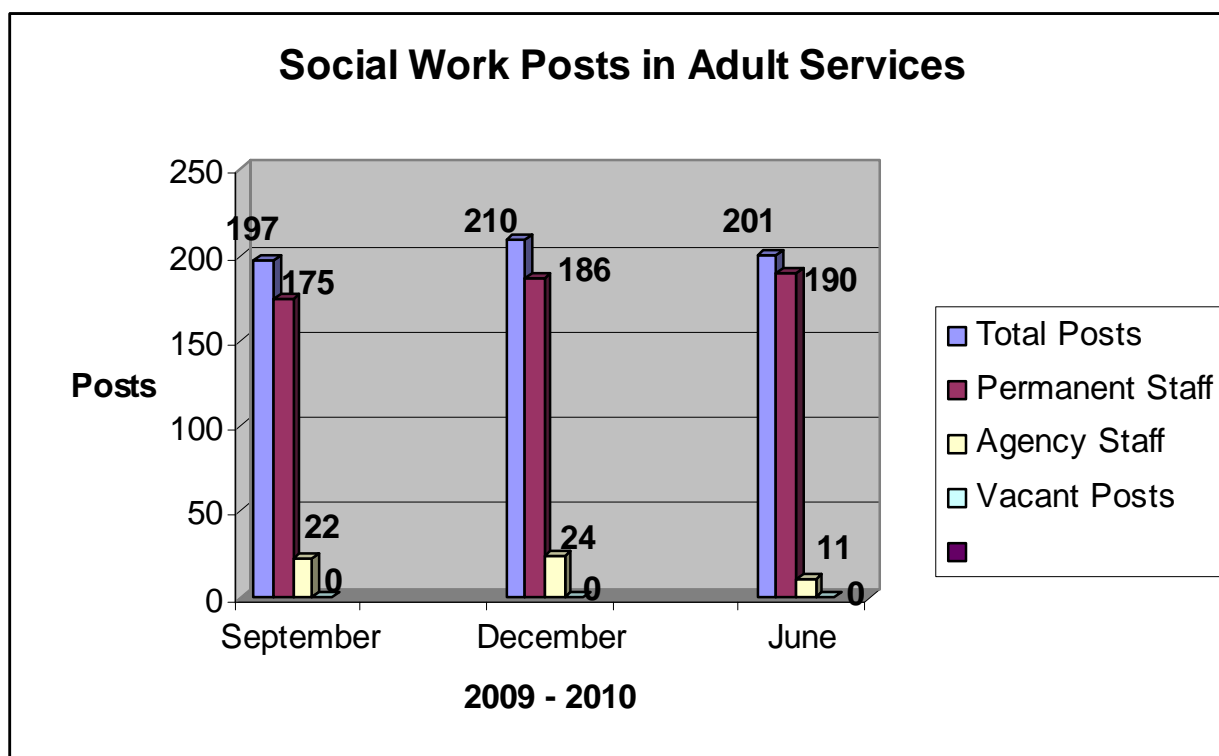
- Six external candidates on waiting list until they gain NQSW status in July.



**Appendix 2**

**SOCIAL WORKER ASSIGNMENTS FOR ADULT SERVICES  
 SEPTEMBER 2009 – DECEMBER 2009 - JUNE 2010**

	September 2009	December 2009	June 2010
Permanent Staff	175	186	190
Posts filled by agency staff while recruiting to posts	9	18	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>194</b>
Vacant	0	0	0
Long term sickness (agency covering)	0	0	1
Act Ups (agency covering)	0	4	4
Secondments (agency covering)	6	1	1
Additional Workload (agency covering)	7	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>



**Appendix 3**

**Recruitment Activity**

<b>Children's Recruitment Drive April 2010 Appointments Made</b>					
	<b>Applied</b>	<b>Unappointable</b>	<b>Appointable</b>	<b>Started in Post</b>	<b>Awaiting Start Date</b>
<b>Conversion of Agency to Permanent</b>	12	6	6	0	6
<b>External Candidates</b>	27	17	10*	0	10*
<b>Total</b>	39	23	16	0	16

\* Six of these external candidates are not qualified but due to gain NQSW status in July. They have been placed on a waiting list until they are able to start in post.



**Appendix 4**

<b>Adults' Recruitment Drive March 2010 Appointments Made</b>					
	<b>Applied</b>	<b>Unappointable</b>	<b>Appointable</b>	<b>Started in Post</b>	<b>Awaiting Start Date</b>
<b>Conversion of Agency to Permanent</b>	18	10	8	5	3
<b>External Candidates</b>	7	2	5	5	0
<b>Total</b>	25	12	13	10	3

## **Appendix 5**

### **Location of District and Locality Teams Directorate of Adults**

<b>Team</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Notes.</b>
North West Locality Team 1	Hexagon Towers	New location to accommodate wider team.
North West Locality Team 2	Harpurhey District Office	Refurbished to accommodate wider team
North East Locality Team 3	Varley Street Business Park	Refurbished temporary location to accommodate wider team
North East Locality team 4	Elizabeth House	New location to accommodate wider team.
Central West team 5	Moss Side District Office	Refurbished to accommodate wider team
Central West Team 6	Chorlton District Office	Refurbished to accommodate wider team
Central east Team 7	Gorton South neighbourhood office	Refurbished temporary location to accommodate wider team
Central East team 8	Gorton South neighbourhood office	Temporary location to accommodate wider team
South Team 9	Christie Fields	New location to accommodate wider team.
South Team 10	Christie Fields	New location to accommodate wider team.
Wythenshawe Team 11	Southmoor Centre	Refurbished temporary location to accommodate wider team
Wythenshawe Team 12	Southmoor Centre	Refurbished temporary location to accommodate wider team