

Report of the Strategic Director of Children's Services to the meeting of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee to be held on 22nd September 2021

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Subject:

Overview of the workforce development aspects of the Improvement Journey in Children's Services

Summary statement:

This report updates the Committee on key aspects related to the workforce in Children's Services in the last quarter.

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Overview & Scrutiny Area:
Children's Services

1. SUMMARY

This report updates the Committee on workforce data and improvement progress in Children’s Services. The general time period covered is May – July 2021, however, some data will cover a wider time period but will be referenced.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 This report follows a request from the Committee to be appraised on wider workforce data and developments to include: recruitment, retention and sickness information.
- 2.2 The last report was in November 2020 where focus was primarily on sickness data. The subsequent planned update was scheduled in the pre-election period April 2021 so did not take place according to Council rules and protocols.
- 2.3 In the time since the last update, a number of key actions have been completed. This report will update the Committee on those actions.
- 2.4 In the previous report, focus was on sickness absence. Current sickness data shows the following trends across key social work localities:

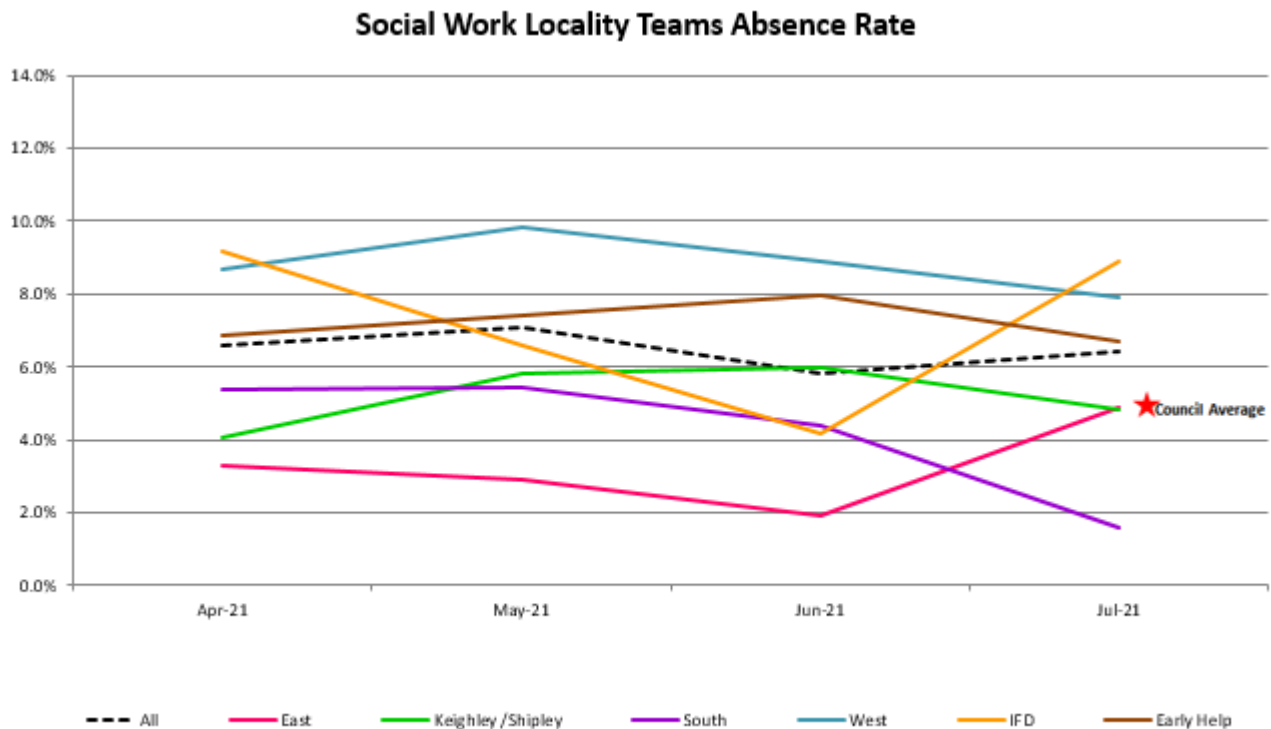


TABLE A

2.5 In the November 2020 report, key reasons for sickness were noted as follows:

Top 3 Sickness Reasons
 Social Work Services, rolling 12 months to 1 Sept 2020

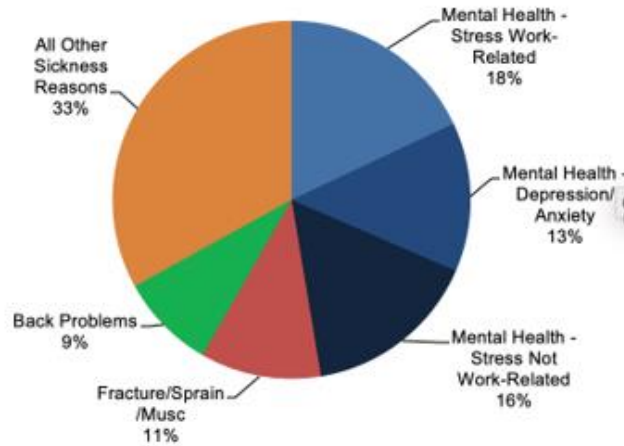


TABLE B

2.6 By comparison, current reasons for sickness as reported in the July Vital Signs are:

Top Sickness Reasons - Social Work Services
 Rolling 12 months to 1 August 2021

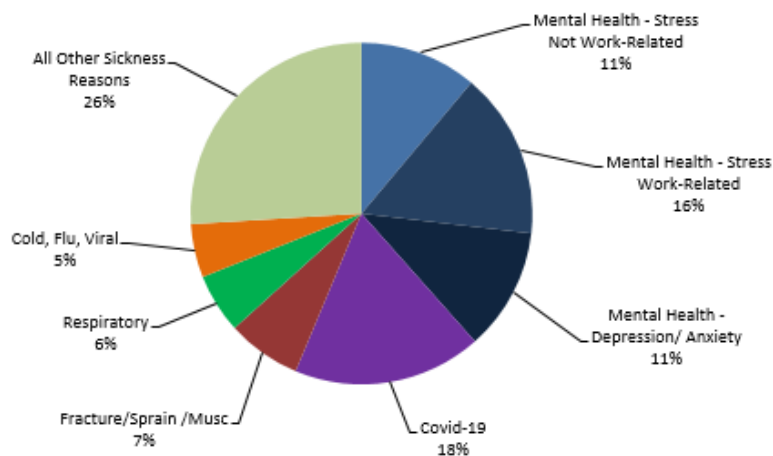


TABLE C

2.7 Of note, COVID related sickness accounts for 18% of all sickness in the rolling 12 months to 1 August 2021.

2.8 Mental health issues (both work and non-work related) continue and the increase in non-work related stress is not surprising given the challenges caused throughout the pandemic.

2.9 Recruitment in the period May – July 2021 is shown in Table D below:

Starters by Month

Position Title	05/May	06/Jun	07/Jul	Total
Business Support Officer (Recruitment)		1		1
Business Support Officer		1	1	2
Child Protection Coordinator		1		1
E Practice Supervisor		2		2
E Social Worker ASYE		1		1
Family Respite Support Worker		1		1
Family Support Resource Worker		1		1
Family Support Respite Worker (Nights)		1	1	2
Family Support Worker	1			1
Independent Reviewing Officer - Fosterin	1			1
IRO - Fostering	1			1
K Social Worker ASYE		1		1
K Social Worker L3		2		2
LADO		1		1
Learning & Development Manager			1	1
Learning & Development Officer	1			1
Outreach Worker			1	1
Residential / Outreach Practitioner		1		1
Residential Practitioner	1	1	2	4
Residential Practitioner (Days)		2		2
Residential Practitioner (Nights)		1		1
S Social Worker ASYE	1			1
Senior Contact Supervisor	1			1
Senior Residential Practitioner		1		1
Social Worker		1		1
Specialist Behaviour & Inclusion Keywork			1	1
Specialist Minute Taker			2	2
W Service Manager		1		1
W Social Worker ASYE	1	1		2
W Social Worker L2			1	1
W Social Worker L3		1	1	2
W Team Manager			1	1
Total	8	23	12	43

TABLE D

- 3.0 Recruitment to qualified Level 3 Social Worker posts continues to be a challenge both nationally and for Bradford Council. This continues to be an area of priority focus with a number of initiatives commencing e.g. social media and detailed programmatic work to target and inform social workers about jobs opportunities. A new microsite will be also be ready for end October 2021. Other considerations around working patterns, employee referral schemes and the benefits of group supervision are also being scoped.
- 3.1 In the period May – July 2021, eight social workers resigned and left the service. This is the lowest number of social work leavers since January 2021.
- 3.2 Focus continues on recruiting newly qualified social workers, commonly referred to as ASYE's. We currently have 38 ASYE's in the service and a further four are set to join us by October 2021.
- 3.3 Progression through the levels since March 2021 is shown in the table below:

Month	No of ASYEs progressed to level 2	No of level 2 progressed to level 3
March	6	1
April	1	0
May	1	1
June	3	1
July	2	1
August	4	0
TOTAL	17	4

TABLE E

- 3.4 Nine further ASYE's are due at Level 2 progression panel in September 2021. Three Level 2 Social Workers will be at Level 3 progression panel also. There are currently 28 Level 2 Social Workers who are eligible for progression and focussed work is happening in the service areas to prepare them to attend panel.
- 3.5 Project work continues to complete and implement the Business Support and Improvement team restructure.
- 3.6 The fixed term social work teams have been extended to December 2021 due to the essential capacity that they provide for locality teams.

3. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

None.

4. FINANCIAL & RESOURCE APPRAISAL

The finance monitoring reports have consistently reported upon budget overspend arising, in part, from the number of agency workers. The 2021/22 Quarter 1 financial monitoring report to the Executive in July 2021 reported "the amounts incurred on Agency staff have increased significantly over recent years (£4.3m in 2018-19, £11.7m in 2019-20, and £17.4m in 2020-21) and are currently running at approximately £1.5m per month."

And

"Children's Social Care are having a recruitment drive to increase the number of permanent Social Workers to improve the service and reduce the number of Agency staff."

This report outlines activities and progress being made on increasing the number of salaried employees and reduce the requirement upon agency workers.

Positive progress will mitigate future overspends and provide the internal capacity and a stable workforce to best support our Children.

The financial impact will be reported in future financial monitoring reports to the Executive.

5. RISK MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE ISSUES

Budget management and positive progress remain areas of focus, both of which are being managed and mitigated through internal governance and reporting arrangements involving a range of stakeholders across the service, office of the chief executive, and corporate resources.

6. LEGAL APPRAISAL

There are currently no legal issues arising as a result of this report.

7. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

None.

7.1 EQUALITY & DIVERSITY

All work that relates to our workforce must support the Council objectives on Equality and Diversity.

7.2 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

None.

7.3 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS IMPACTS

Not applicable.

7.4 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

None.

7.5 HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

N/A.

7.6 TRADE UNION

None.

7.7 WARD IMPLICATIONS

The data presented shows information on social work localities which support wards across the Bradford District.

7.8 AREA COMMITTEE ACTION PLAN IMPLICATIONS (for reports to Area Committees only)

None.

7.9 IMPLICATIONS FOR CORPORATE PARENTING

None.

7.10 ISSUES ARISING FROM PRIVACY IMPACT ASSESMENT

None.

8. NOT FOR PUBLICATION DOCUMENTS

None.

9. OPTIONS

This report is for information and discussion. Options are not outlined on this occasion.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Committee reviews, discusses and notes this report.

11. APPENDICES

N/A.

12. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

N/A.