

Report of the Strategic Director to the meeting of the Children's Overview & Scrutiny Committee to be held on 9th February 2022

Subject:

R

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

Summary statement:

This report updates the Committee on Workforce Data and Improvement Progress in Children's Services

EQUALITY & DIVERSITY:

All work that relates to our workforce must support the Council objectives on Equality and Diversity. The work on recruitment, retention and succession has inclusion at its core.

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Portfolio:

Children & Families

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Overview & Scrutiny Area:

Children & Families

1. SUMMARY

1.1 This report updates the Committee on workforce data and improvement progress in Children’s Services.

2. BACKGROUND

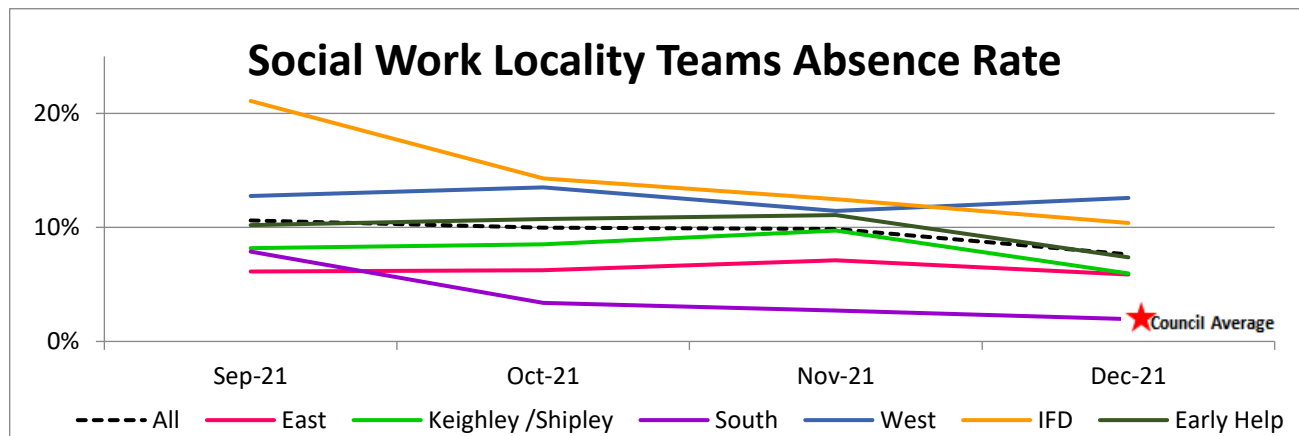
2.1 Workforce

2.2 This report provides and appraisal on wider workforce data and developments to include: recruitment, retention and sickness information.

2.3 Overall sick absence is declining across the Social Work locality teams. West locality team has shown an increase in sick absence and is the second highest area behind the Integrated Front Door where sick absence has reduced nearly 7% since peaking in September 2021.

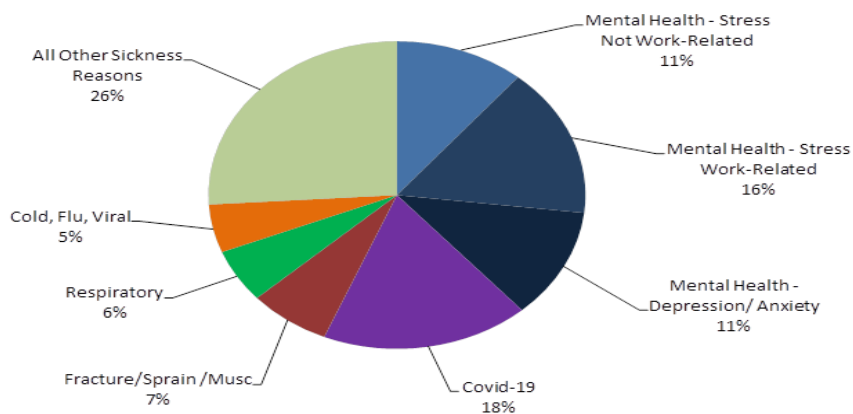
2.4 For the 12 months ending 1 December 2021, Covid sickness absence and self-isolation accounted for 14% of all social work locality team absence.

2.5 Current sickness data shows the following trends across key social work localities:

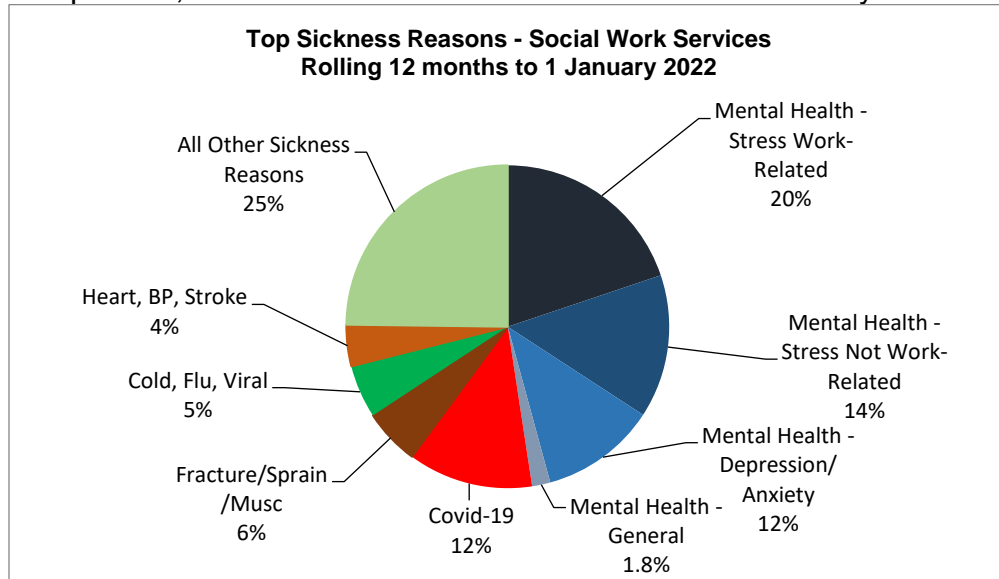


2.6 In July 2021, the top reasons for sickness were as follows:

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



2.7 By comparison, the current reasons for sickness as at 1 January 2022 are:



2.8 The top three absence reasons across the Council are; Mental Health related absence which accounts for 35.3% of Council sick absence, followed by Fracture/Sprain/Musculoskeletal at 11.9%, Covid-19 at 11.4%. For Children’s Services, Social Work Services the top three absence reasons are: Mental Health related absence which accounts for 47.8% of sick absence, followed by ‘all other sickness at 25% and Covid-19 at 12%.

2.9 The long term/short term breakdown of sick absence for Children’s Services and the Council is included in the table below. The closure of Valley View in summer 2021 impacted on sickness absence. Manager’s are managing absence with support from Human Resources, as a result a number of absences have or are concluding with a return to work being supported. Absence management and support continues to be a key focus:

Area	Long Term Sickness	Short Term Sickness
Children’s Service	73.2%	26.8%
Council	71.8%	28.2%

2.10 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 progressing:

2.11 New ‘Bring Heart’ branding has been developed, signed off by our communications colleagues and has been used since the end of November for our social work job adverts.

2.12 A new microsite [Social Work isn't just a job - Bring Heart, Transform Lives](#)

bringheartbradford.co.uk went live on 8 December 2021. The microsite contains videos and art work from our staff and children from Laisterdyke, Star Academy, and information on our total reward and benefits package to provide those interested a real feel of working in Bradford.

- 2.13 A communications content plan is developed and will be signed off and implemented during January 2022, and makes best use of banners, case studies, adverts, social media (instagram, facebook, linkedin, twitter), and ambassadors programme launch with 12 week cycles, analysis and adjusted marketing.
- 2.14 Other considerations around an employee referral scheme is being scoped, and all new entrants spend their first week without holding cases to ensure they are inducted and supported into the Council.
- 2.15 Recruitment in the period September - November is shown in the table below. In this period 11 social workers resigned and left the service, an increase of 3 compared to the 3 months prior, which was the lowest number of social work leavers since January 2021.

Position Title	09/Sep	10/Oct	11/Nov	Total
Buisness Support Officer (Recruitment)	1			1
Business Support Finance Officer			1	1
Business Support Officer	1		1	2
E Early Help Gateway Officer		1		1
E Practice Supervisor		2		2
E Service Manager	1			1
E Social Worker ASYE	2	1	1	4
E Social Worker L3			1	1
Family Support Respite Worker		1		1
K Social Worker ASYE	1			1
Kickstart - Admin Assistant		1		1
Learning & Development Officer	1			1
Placement Coordination Team Manager		1		1
Programme Delivery Worker		1		1
Residential Outreach Practitioner	2			2
Residential Practitioner	1			1
Residential Practitioner (Nights)		1		1
Residential Practitioner Nights		1		1
Residential Practitioner Nights			1	1
S Practice Supervisor		1		1
W Social Worker ASYE	1		1	2
Total	11	11	6	28

- 2.16 Focus continues on recruiting newly qualified social workers, commonly referred to as ASYE's. We currently have 28 ASYE's in the service and a further 6 are set to join us by mid January 2022. We are developing our ASYE Academy and will bring large numbers through this year to ensure we can grow our pipeline of experienced social workers.

2.17 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
September	8	1
October	1	1
November	4	1
TOTAL	30	7

2.18 9 further ASYE's are due at Level 2 progression panel in February 2022. 5 Level 2 Social Workers will be at Level 3 progression panel also. There are currently 25 Level 2 Social Workers who are eligible for progression and focussed work is happening in the service areas to prepare them to attend panel.

2.19 Project work continues to complete and Business Support restructure is in implementation stage.

2.20 The fixed term social work teams have been extended to June 2022 due to the essential capacity that they provide for Locality teams.

3. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

N/A

4. FINANCIAL & RESOURCE APPRAISAL

4.1 The finance monitoring reports have consistently reported upon budget overspend arising, in part, from the number of agency workers. The 2021/22 Quarter 2 financial monitoring report to the Executive in November 2021 reported: "A £3.8m increase in the Children's Services forecast overspend to £11.6m due mainly to;

- A £2.4m increase in Purchased Placement overspend (to £7.4m) due mainly to increased Residential care costs due to increased placement numbers.
- The forecast overspend on Respite Care has also increased by £0.7m to £0.9m as a result of a very high care cost care package.
- Additionally, the forecast overspend on Social Work services has also increased by £0.4m to £2.9m mainly due to the setting up of an additional fixed term social work team to support the Care Leavers service.
- Children Services reserves of £1.0m have also been drawdown to cover pressures on Social Work services. The reported position of £11.6m overspend would have

been £1m higher without this one off drawdown.”

4.2 The proposed financial plan and budget proposal for 2022/23 approved by Executive in December 2021 for consultation outlines a number of investments in Children’s Services for 2022/23 to provide capacity, resilience and mitigate overspends.

5. RISK MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE ISSUES

5.1 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

7. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

7.1 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

N/A

7.2 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS IMPACTS

N/A

7.3 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

N/A

7.4 HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

N/A

7.5 TRADE UNION

Workforce is discussed regularly with trade unions.

7.6 WARD IMPLICATIONS

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

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

N/A

7.8 IMPLICATIONS FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

N/A

7.9 ISSUES ARISING FROM PRIVACY IMPACT ASSESMENT

N/A

8. NOT FOR PUBLICATION DOCUMENTS

N/A

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

The previous Overview and Scrutiny Workforce Report of 22 September 2021.