

ISLE OF ANGLESEY COUNTY COUNCIL	
Report to:	The Executive
Date:	21 st May 2018
Subject:	Request approval to recruit additional agency staff in Children and Families Services
Portfolio Holder(s):	Councillor Llinos Medi
Head of Service:	Fôn Roberts, Head of Children and Families Services
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Local Members:	Relevant to all Members

A –Recommendation/s and reason/s
<p><u>Background</u></p> <p>Ynys Môn Children and Families Services were inspected by CIW during October and November 2016. The inspection focused on how children and families are empowered to access help and care & support services and on the quality of outcomes achieved for children in need of help, care & support and/or protection, including children who have recently become looked after by the local authority. The inspection also evaluated the quality of leadership, management and governance arrangements in place to develop and support service delivery. The Final CIW report was published on 7th March 2017. The report had 14 recommendations, seven recommendations as a priority and seven to be implemented by March 2018.</p> <p>In response to the findings and recommendations, the authority has put the following arrangements in place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A revised Service Improvement Plan (SIP), incorporating all of the Recommendations made in CIW’s Inspection Report against the 5 themes. • Put new Project Management arrangements in place, with an internal Improvement Group of officials meeting on a monthly basis, and reporting to the Senior Management Team and to the Executive. • Established a Panel of Elected Members following the local authority elections in May 2017, which reports to the Corporate Scrutiny Committee on a quarterly basis. <p>In addition to this, the Chief Executive holds monthly meetings with the Director of Social Services, the Head of Children and Families Services and the Head of Human Resources, to</p>

oversee the development and implementation of the Workforce Strategy, and to ensure that there was appropriate pace in making key appointments to the posts of Service Manager and Practice Leaders.

Being able to recruit and retain staff who are committed to making a difference to the lives of children and young people in Anglesey is crucial if we are to deliver on the obligations placed upon us by legislation. An unstable workforce in recent years, combined with a significant increase in the number of children and young people who are Looked After and who are on the Child Protection Register, has placed significant strain on our services.

Addressing this is a key element of our Service Improvement Plan, and we've continued to focus on the following elements in recent months:

- **Service Re-structure** – this was implemented on the 4th of October 2017 where the 8 Practice Leaders took responsibility for their Practice Groups. 4 of the Practice Leaders were recruited from outside the organisation and they bring high level of knowledge and skill in the areas noted in the Service Improvement Plan that require further development. The other 4 Practice Leaders appointed were experienced practitioners working within Children and Families Services who were ready for promotion. They manage smaller groups across Early Intervention and Intensive Intervention, with each Practice Leader responsible for three or four Social Workers. This means that each Social Worker has more access to their manager, enabling them to have early advice on dealing with individual cases and adequate support and supervision. There is further work to be undertaken to complete the restructuring, including reviewing the arrangements for the Child Placement Team, making the best use of Support Workers to support families, as well as ensuring that administrative support is appropriate for Practice Groups to effectively carry out their statutory responsibilities.
- We recruited **7 new Social Workers** over the last few months who are local and, apart from 1 Social Worker, all are fluent Welsh speakers which will ensure we are able to meet the linguistic needs of children and families coming into contact with the Service; this also enables us to comply with *Mwy na Geiriau*, the Welsh Government's Welsh Language strategy for Health and Social Care.
- We have appointed **2.5 Engagement Officers for Teulu Môn** and a further 1.5 additional posts through **Families First Grant**. This has significantly strengthened our Information, Advice and Assistance capacity that all local authorities have been required to establish with the implementation of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014.
- The **Resilient Families Team** is now fully staffed and working with families to prevent family breakdown, to support children living at home. The Practice Leader for this Team has recently won a national award by the **British Association of Social Worker's** (BASW) on her work in developing support for care leavers and arrangements to support foster carers to prevent placement breakdown.

- We have recently recruited for a number of other additional posts within the Service which will continue to strengthen our family support services. They include recruiting:

3 x additional Support Workers posts within the Team Around the Family, funded from Families First Grant

Additional Personal Advisor post funded with **St David’s Day Welsh Government Grant** to provide practical and emotional support to young people who leave care when they are 18 years old.

- As a Service, we have developed a **Social Work Traineeship** arrangement internally to enable 2 of our staff to train to become qualified Social Workers (2 year course). As we have seen a significant turnover of staff over the last 18 months the aim of this strategy of ‘*Grow your own*’ is to ensure we have qualified Social Workers who will be working for the Service for at least 2 years after the qualify.
- The **Workforce Strategy**, approved last summer, now focuses on ensuring that staff have the skills, training and support to enable them to do their jobs effectively, and provide the support that children, young people and families in Anglesey need. An action plan has been developed with the full support of HR and meetings are being held every 6 – 8 weeks, Chaired by the Head of Service to ensure the effective implementation of the Action Plan with the main elements being:
 - Developing a set of marketing materials detailing the benefits of working for the Authority presented on all media platforms.
 - Develop a recruitment plan for each vacancy immediately on resignation, jointly with Human Resources.
 - Establish effective methods of selection.
 - Ensure processes are focused on safe recruitment.
 - Minimise delay in the various stages in the recruitment process.
 - Development of a consistent and effective induction programme.
 - Creating a supportive culture, challenging poor performance by providing a clear direction, regular supervision, and developmental support to enable all of our employees to perform effectively.
 - Developing existing staff, and provide a safe working environment for all, combined with opportunities for developing new skills and progressing.

Current Position

Below is the current ‘status’ of each case holding Social Worker, in terms of how long they have qualified:

NQSW 0-1 Year	1 Môn 1
	1 Môn 2
	1 Môn 3
	1 Môn 4

	1 Môn 5
	1 Resilient Families
NQSW 2-3 Year	1 Môn 3
3+ years	2 Môn 1
	1 Môn 3
	2 Môn 6
Agency Staff x 8	2 Môn 2 (1 and Vacant)
	1 Môn 3
	2 Môn 4
	2 Môn 5
	1 Môn 6

The Service is currently on a journey of improvement. All vacant posts have been filled with agency Social Workers. Currently there are 7 vacant posts which means the department has 7 agency social workers against those posts; one vacancy is a temporary vacancy as a Social Worker has started in post acting up as a Practice Leader as the substantive Practice Leader is on maternity leave.

We have advertised for experienced Social Workers in the Guardian four times since November 2017; there is also a rolling advert on the Council's website. This has resulted in the recruitment of one very experienced Social Worker. The service continues to advertise for permanent social workers and during its latest round of recruitment has appointed 3 Social Work students who will qualify in October 2018 as Newly Qualified Social Workers (NQSW). We therefore need to retain 7 Agency Social Workers until the NQSW's have qualified.

Below is the cost of keeping the current agency staff arrangements until the end of October when 3 NQSW's will be able to take case-loads:

Agency Worker costs from April until the end of October 2018

Post	Cost per hour £	Total £	Budget empty posts for seven months Grade 7 Pt 40	Extra cost £
Vacant Social Work 1	39.00	42,712.80	27,241.67	15,471.13
Vacant Social Work 2	39.00	42,712.80	27,241.67	15,471.13
Vacant Social Work 3	39.00	42,712.80	27,241.67	15,471.13

Vacant Social Work 4	39.00	42,712.80	27,241.67	15,471.13
Vacant Social Work 5	39.00	42,712.80	27,241.67	15,471.13
Vacant Social Work 6	39.00	42,712.80	27,241.67	15,471.13
Vacant Social Work 7	39.00	42,712.80	27,241.67	15,471.13
Total		298,989.60	190,691.67	108,297.93

Agency staff budget available 2018-19 (DG020/A0500) **£ 51,640.00**

Additional cost including £51,640 (full year agency budget) **£56,657.93**

There were four other candidates who were appointable in the recent recruitment; however given that there is a 6 months gap from this date to when the students qualify, it was thought best to re-run the “experienced social worker” advert at least another 3 times in that period in the hope that we would be able to recruit experienced Social Workers.

However, current social work recruitment difficulties throughout England and Wales would suggest that this is not likely to happen. BBC News had an article titled *Children's social services in Wales 'near crisis'* that emphasizes the difficulty within Children and Families Services across Wales:

https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/amp/uk-wales-43951732?_twitter_impression=true

Given this, the Head of Service is considering the following option:

To appoint 7 NQSW to the Fieldwork teams in October 2018 (3 already appointed) and support these by going over establishment of 4 agency social workers for 12 months.

This is of course based on the assumption that no social work staff leave or are promoted within the service, and the service is not successful in recruiting experienced Social Workers. The Child Placement Team is due to be reviewed in terms of staffing. Formal consultation with staff will begin mid-May 2018. This may offer an option of some staff being moved to cover some vacant posts.

Should the department not be successful in recruiting experienced Social Workers, there will be a need to maintain agency Social Workers who would be “over establishment” to support NQSW’s at the cost below:

Agency Workers Costs from November 2018 until end of March 2019

Post	Cost per hour £	Total £	Budget empty posts for seven months Grade 7 Pt 40	Extra cost £
Vacant Social Work 1	39.00	30,921.43		30,921.43
Vacant Social Work 2	39.00	30,921.43		30,921.43
Vacant Social Work 3	39.00	30,921.43		30,921.43
Vacant Social Work 4	39.00	30,921.43		30,921.43
Total		123,685.71		123,685.71

Legacy Cases

The Head of Service has recently been made aware of cases which have either:

1. Cases that have had poor decision making historically
2. Cases that have drifted
3. Cases not on the right plan
4. Professional Tolerance in Neglect & Emotional Abuse
5. Lack in an Inquiring Mind Social Work approach

These are being referred to as "Legacy Cases".

The Service has failed to respond appropriately to cases, some going back 14 years, and only this month the Director of Social Services was ordered by a Judge to explain why the Authority had worked with a family on and off for 14 years (since 2004) and not commenced care proceedings earlier to remove children from a position of risk.

There are other cases such as this that are open to the Service and plans need to progress appropriately. Another concern is that there are cases not known to the Service currently as they have been closed possibly prematurely or the threshold of accepting cases may have been too high. There needs to be a strategic plan in place to re- assess such cases without there having to be a trigger point. Therefor the proposed plan is:

To recruit 3 agency Social Workers and 1 Practice Leader over establishment to be managed directly by the Head of Service in order to audit, assess and progress these cases to the correct plan or to the Courts.

Below is the cost of bringing in an additional 'Practice Group' to manage this work:

Agency Worker costs from May until the end of November 2018

Post	Cost per hour £	Total £	Budget empty posts for seven months Grade 7 Pt 40	Extra cost £
Vacant Social Work 1	39.00	42,712.80		42,712.80
Vacant Social Work 2	39.00	42,712.80		42,712.80
Vacant Social Work 3	39.00	42,712.80		42,712.80
Interim Practice Leader	47.00	49,735.40		49,735.40
Total		177,873.80	-	177,873.80

Given that it is difficult to provide an accurate figure in relation to the amount of cases which will proceed into Public Law Outline or into Care Proceedings the Service would need to estimate and provide additional capacity within its legal services to meet this demand. Children and Families Services are currently supported by 1.5 FTE Solicitors within the Council which is currently at its capacity.

Therefore it is proposed that the additional capacity is extended to 2.5 FTE for a period of 12 months. **The cost of this is £54,527.**

Financial considerations:

There is a reserve of £144,737 within the Service for staffing costs. Therefore the amount requested is as follows:

	£
Vacancy 7 Agency workers April - Sept	56,658
Over establishment 4 Agency worker Oct - March	123,686
Over establishment "Legacy"	177,874
Legal Services	54,527
Total	412,745
Reserve	-144,737
Total	268,008

Recommendations

- The Executive is asked to agree for Children and Families Services to recruit 7 NQSW to the fieldwork teams from October 2018 (3 already appointed) and support these by

going over establishment by 4 agency social workers for 12 months.

- The Executive is asked also to agree for the Service to extend the legal capacity within the Service by 2.5 FTE for a period of 12 months.
- The Executive to agree to release £268,008 additional funding from the Council reserves to fund the additional requirements outlined in this paper.

B – What other options did you consider and why did you reject them and/or opt for this option?

One of the options considered was to appoint the other 4 candidates who are currently students who had been interviewed, which were appointable; however given that there is a 6 months gap from this date to when the students qualify, it was thought best to re run the “experienced Social Worker” advert at least another 3 times in that period in the hope that we would be able to recruit experienced Social Workers.

C – Why is this a decision for the Executive?

The decision is for the Executive as approval is needed to release additional funding from the Council’s reserves to pay for the agency staff posts required.

CH – Is this decision consistent with policy approved by the full Council?

Yes.

D – Is this decision within the budget approved by the Council?

Yes.

DD – Who did you consult?

What did they say?

1	Chief Executive / Senior Leadership Team (SLT) (mandatory)	This has been discussed at the Children and Families Services Human Resources Matters meeting that was held on the 01.05.18. This meeting agreed to this in principle but recommended that this be taken to the Executive for approval.
2	Finance / Section 151 (mandatory)	Section 151 was present at the Children and Families Services Human Resources Matters meeting held on the 01.05.18.
3	Legal / Monitoring Officer	Discussed.

	(mandatory)	
4	Human Resources (HR)	Head of Profession, HR and Transformation was present at the Children's Service Human Resources Matters meeting held on the 01.05.18.
5	Property	N/A
6	Information Communication Technology (ICT)	N/A
7	Procurement	N/A
8	Scrutiny	N/A
9	Local Members	N/A
10	Any external bodies / other/s	N/A

E – Risks and any mitigation (if relevant)		
1	Economic	N/A
2	Anti-poverty	N/A
3	Crime and Disorder	N/A
4	Environmental	N/A
5	Equalities	N/A
6	Outcome Agreements	N/A
7	Other	N/A

F - Appendices:
N/A
FF - Background papers (please contact the author of the Report for any further information):