

Update on 2022 Social Work and Workforce Health Check Actions – Adult Social Care

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What is the Health Check?

- Undertaken annually, via an online survey, as part of the City of Wolverhampton Council's (CWC) ongoing self-assessment
- Helps to identify areas of strength and areas requiring greater focus
- Informs workforce development planning and supports the continuous improvement of Adult Social Care practice in Wolverhampton
- An action plan was developed and is overseen by Adult Leadership Team--this plan is reviewed quarterly and updated as required
- Updates on actions have been shared during Social Work (SW) and Workforce Briefings and Team Managers have been asked to share these within their team meetings
- The Health Check is sent to Social Workers as well as wider workforce from 12 September—21 October 2022—a report was produced and presented to Scrutiny Panel on 12 March 2023
- Scrutiny Panel requested a mid-year update on actions and an updated report with actual numbers alongside percentages

Update on key actions

Response rates

In 2022, the Social Work survey had a **54%** response rate (70 of 129) and the Wider Workforce Survey had a **26%** response rate (89 of 340)

Actions to increase responses in 2023

- Consultation during Social Work and Workforce briefings
- Visiting manager and team meetings to answer questions and get ideas
- Prize draw for those who wish to enter after completing 2023 survey
- Team managers to give protected time to complete during team meetings
- Time to complete during Social Work and Workforce briefings (Sept/Oct 2023)
- Promotion, reminders, comms through Teams channel as well as e-mail
- Use of City People throughout time surveys are open to act as a reminder
- Option for people to print surveys to complete by hand and return to drop boxes placed in various locations where people work

Update on 2023 Survey Responses:

- The 2023 Social Work Survey was live from 6 September-17 October 2023
 - 53.4% response rate (78/146)—similar to 2022
- The 2023 Wider Workforce Survey was live from 6 September -19 October 2023
 - 38.3% response rate (137/358)—12% increase from 2022

Workload	Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 72.8% (51) of social workers and 91% (81) of the workforce said that their workloads are manageable • 63% (44) of social workers and 90% (80) of the workforce feel that they are given work through fair process, considering workloads, skills, etc. • 56% (39) of social workers and 87.7% (78) of the workforce never, rarely or occasionally experience unmanageable stress due to work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Test and Learn projects as part of redesign in order to review ways of working across Adult Social Care (ASC) taking into account demand, skill mix, etc.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Front door (from May 2023): Established an ASC Front Door team to have strengths-based initial conversations early, meaning people are not waiting for a social worker unnecessarily and connections can often happen much more quickly (and often without the need for a social worker). During Phase 1 and 2 of this Test and Learn (May-August 2023), 300 contacts were recorded, of which 125 were to request a conversation. Of the 125 requests for a conversation, only 53 (42%) were required to be connected to a locality team. ○ Maximising independence for 18-64s (from June 2023): Established a virtual team to connect with people 18-64 to explore early intervention, ensuring people get the right support at the right time and building on the disability transformation model work. From June-September 2023, the team completed 63 connections with adults aged 18-64. 36 of 63 were captured in the Test and Learn Impact Log - of which 15 (42%) were signposted to alternatives to long-term support*, including to Housing teams, Carer Support, Telecare and Community Pathways. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Alternative to a package of care / placement etc ○ Other activity underway includes new test and learns (Early intervention and prevention, ASC Online Offer and Keeping in Touch)

Workloads, Action cont'd

- Recruitment and retention strategy and action plan for social workers which will continue to support stability within social work teams and ensure succession planning
 - Rebranding to position Wolverhampton as an employer of choice
 - Reimbursement for Social Work England Registration fees and Blue Light card
 - Formalising career pathway for Social Work apprentices—supporting recruitment
 - Robust training offer and progression opportunities, such as practice educator and introduction of advanced practitioner role in adults
 - Attendance at Compass recruitment fair
 - Expecting to support 28 final year student placements in 2023-2024 compared to 26 in 2022-2023 with a view to encourage more to apply for newly qualified social work positions
- Robust actions to recruit and retain Occupational Therapy (OT) and Sensory Services staff
 - OT Service joined the Midlands Allied Health Professionals Placement Forum to look at opportunities for OT students to work in Wolverhampton
 - OT now have two apprentices (an increase from only 1 previously)
 - Sensory Service has recruited through agency to increase staffing

Opportunities for reflection	Action
<p>While the majority of social workers said that they are given opportunities for reflection within supervision, 14% (10) said that they did not, and that supervision was more task/process focussed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Advanced Practitioners started in April/May 2023 and began facilitating regular formal reflective sessions within social work teams in June 2023—topics covered to date include:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Social Graces, the power of language, recording sense of the person and relationship-based practice and capturing the person’s voice○ Each team has had 3 or 4 reflective sessions, to date—immediate feedback generally positive as this is seen to be helpful and workers like the space for reflection• Reflective supervision training offered 2022-2023
Agency staff	Action
<p>Some agency staff said that they do not always have access to the same updates permanent members of staff have</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Quality and Improvement Team review distribution lists monthly and ensure agency staff are included on all emails sent from the team, including the monthly newsletter and policy briefings• Agency staff are included in many of the same training opportunities as permanent members of staff, CQC inspection preparation and information sessions as well as social work and workforce briefings

Communication/ consultation

Actions

Although the majority felt that communication (SW: 62—88.6%, Workforce: 86—96.6%) and consultation around proposed changes (SW: 49—70%, Workforce: 77—86.5%) was positive, some said they would like more information around the adult social care redesign

- Regular updates through the monthly newsletter and other means as appropriate
- Update provided to the wider workforce during the July 2023 workforce briefing
- Exploring regular video updates by Director of Adult Social Care

Emotional demands of Social Work

Actions

While the majority of social workers felt that CWC supports the emotional demands and nature of their work, 15.7% (11) did not feel the same

- Training for managers has been commissioned on trauma informed supervision taking place October-November 2023 to support secondary trauma and wellbeing for frontline social workers—60 managers are undertaking the training and feedback so far is very positive.
- Plans underway to embed trauma informed practice across the Families Directorate, e.g. consideration of how we are more trauma responsive as an organisation as well as with people

Observations of practice

While 68% (45) of the wider workforce said that they had an observation of practice in the previous 12 months, only 31% (22) of social workers said the same

Actions

- As this is not applicable for everyone within the wider workforce, an option of “not applicable” has been added for the 2023 survey
- In order to increase this for Social Workers and social care workers within social work teams, Practice weeks have changed to ensure that every practice lead will carry out observations as part of practice weeks 3x’s/year, ensuring more opportunities for direct observations of practice

Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE)

Adult newly qualified social workers (NQSW’s) within their ASYE said that they felt the training programme generally catered more to the needs of Children’s practitioners

Actions

- The ASYE programme has been reviewed and revised in consultation with NQSW’s to ensure their needs are met, for example with a focus on Care Act and Mental Capacity Act
- Introduction of Advanced Practitioner posts to support Newly Qualified Social Workers from April 2023 and is consistent with the offer in Children’s
- Regular feedback to be gathered from NQSW’s to review training and offer

Targeted training

Actions

When asked what training people felt they needed for the following year, comments included:

- Mental Capacity Act
- Safeguarding Training
- Learning Disabilities
- Human Rights Act Assessment Training

- We have commissioned 3 sessions on S42 Safeguarding Enquiry, 60 places in total and fully booked
- Human Rights Act Assessment training – Sept and Oct 2023 – 40 places – fully booked with further sessions planned for 2024-2025
- Carrying out best interest decision making in person centred way offered early 2024
- Mental Capacity training for managers January-March 2024
- Supporting autistic people in Care Act Conversations—dates to be confirmed, planned for early 2024
- Plans to roll out National mandatory training for those supporting people with LD/Autism (Oliver McGowan)
- Training provided as part of Disability workstream: 3 Disability Development days were held in July 2022

Research/articles

While almost all respondents across both surveys access research and articles to support their practice at least occasionally, some have said that they do this in their own time as they struggled to find the time to do this during work hours

Actions

- Advanced Practitioners are identifying and sharing relevant research and resources with social workers in order to support evidence-based practice
- Research Circles with the University of Wolverhampton are in the process of being developed--aiming to start roll out January 2024
 - As teams identify areas of practice where more knowledge around research is needed, an academic will come into the team to talk about this, bringing research into practice and improving knowledge and understanding around specific areas of practice
- Research in Practice attended the October 2023 Adult Workforce Briefing to better explain what is available to workers and how they can access the resources on offer
 - Since the date of this briefing, an additional 118 accounts have been created with Research in Practice from CWC employees

Next steps

- Updates on actions have been provided to the social work workforce during the September 2023 Social Work Briefing
- Updates on actions have been provided to the wider workforce during the 18 October 2023 Workforce Briefing
- The 2023 surveys launched on 6 September 2023 and are now closed—updates on responses have been discussed earlier in this presentation
- Findings from the 2023 survey will be presented to Scrutiny Panel in March 2024

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