

CITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON COUNCIL	Cabinet 5 June 2019
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Report title	Principal Social Worker Annual Report 2018-2019	
Decision designation	AMBER	
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor John Reynolds, Children and Young People Councillor Linda Leach, Adults	
Key decision	No	
In forward plan	Yes	
Wards affected	All Wards	
Accountable Director	David Watts, Director of Adult Services Emma Bennet, Director of Children's Services	
Originating service	Adult Social Care/Children and Young People	
Accountable employee	Louise Haughton	Principal Social Worker
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Report to be/has been considered by	Directorate Leadership Team	16 May 2019
	Strategic Executive Board	21 May 2019

Recommendation for decision:

The Cabinet is recommended to:

Approve the main priorities for the Principal Social Worker identified for 2019-2020.

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 To provide a progress report on the work of the Principal Social Worker to promote and improve the quality of social work practice and outline priority areas of work to be undertaken in 2019-2020.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 Designated Principal Social Workers (PSW) were first proposed by Professor Eileen Munro in her review of child protection in 2011, which identified the importance of better communication and understanding between social workers and senior management. Munro stated that Principal Social Workers should:

- Create a clear line of communication between frontline staff and senior management
- Champion best practice
- Encourage a “reflective approach” to social work
- Help to reduce bureaucracy and the amount of time spent on process-driven activities
- Support social workers to use their core skills and interventions which make a real difference to people.

- 2.2 Following this, the College of Social Work championed the extension of the role to include adult social work. As with the Children’s PSW, the role of the PSW for adults also takes a professional lead across the organisation.

- 2.3 The Care and Support Statutory Guidance update May 2016 provided further clarification around the role of the PSW for Adults. The Guidance states that the PSW should be visible across the organisation, from elected members and senior management, through to frontline social workers, people who use services and carers. PSW’s should also have a broad knowledge base on safeguarding and Making Safeguarding Personal. It also states that Local Authorities should make arrangements to have a qualified and registered social work professional practice lead in place to:

- Lead and oversee excellent social work practice
- Support and develop arrangements for excellent practice
- Lead the development of excellent social workers
- Support effective social work supervision and decision making
- Oversee quality assurance and improvement of social work practice
- Advise the Director of Adult Social Services (DASS) and/or wider Council in complex or controversial cases and on cases or other law relating to social work practice
- Function at the strategic level of the “Professional Capabilities Framework”

- 2.4 The PSW for both Adults and Children and Young People was appointed in March 2016.

- 2.5 The decision to appoint one PSW for Adult's and Children's Services was informed by a commitment to promote and embed a whole family approach in Wolverhampton. A key function of the PSW role is to promote a "think whole family approach" that will enable better working together across services, inspire greater aspirations for children, families and adult's with additional needs as well as ensuring the concept of wellbeing features in all work undertaken by Social Care.
- 2.6 The PSW reports directly to a Director as per best practice guidance. The work of the PSW is overseen and prioritised by the Social Work Development Board supported by a wider Workforce Development Board for Children and Young People and for Adults that also informs the work of the PSW.
- 2.7 A degree of independence is required of the role in order to provide challenge within the organisation. Effectiveness is then supported by having a direct line of access to the Director of Adult Services and the Director of Children's Services.
- 2.8 The regional and national networks of PSWs also provide information to the Chief Social Workers for adults and children and regular consultations are held in respect of issues such as social worker health checks, knowledge and skill statements, accreditation, legislation, practice and learning developments.
- 2.9 In accordance with best practice an annual report is prepared and formally presented within the Council's governance arrangements.

3.0 Progress

- 3.1 The PSW for Adults and Children in Wolverhampton has a key responsibility for Policies and Procedures and the Quality Assurance and Improvement team. The function of this unit is to implement and further develop the Quality Assurance Frameworks for Adult Social Care and Children and Young People, to support inspections and peer review work and support the sector led improvement programmes.
- 3.2 Highlights of the work undertaken by the PSW since April 2018 is outlined below:

Generic Work

- 3.3 This year issues around how children and adults with additional needs who might be at risk of gang related exploitation, trafficking, female genital mutilation and forced marriage are safeguarded have risen on the national agenda. These are all issues that often cut across generations and affect both children and adults. The fourth Annual Children and Adult's Social Work Conference took place in March 2019 with a theme of Human Rights and Exploitation. Adults and Children's social workers came together to increase their knowledge and improve their practice in relation to working with people affected by gang related activity, forced marriage, child sexual exploitation and people affected by drug and substance misuse.

- 3.4 Social workers heard a powerful keynote speech by Jasvinder Sanghera CBE, a survivor of forced marriage and the founder of Karma Nirvana, the award-winning charity that supports both men and women affected by honour-based abuse and forced marriage.
- 3.5 Chris Fox from West Midlands Police then spoke about County Lines and the crime of cuckooing, where drug dealers take over the home of a vulnerable person to use it as a base for drug dealing, before a series of workshops focused on child sexual exploitation, gangs and youth violence, substance misuse and modern slavery.
- 3.6 There was also the opportunity for social workers to share individual success stories about the work of the council's Children and Young People's (CYP) and Adult Social Care (ASC) services.
- 3.7 Many social workers stated in feedback that this was the best conference they had attended, they felt their knowledge around these issues had risen significantly, they found it helpful to hear more detail about the work undertaken by partner agencies in the City and felt inspired to continue their work in what can be a challenging profession.
- 3.8 The PSW arranges quarterly children's social work briefings and bi-annual adult's social work briefings that provide critical space for social workers to share their views with senior leaders and ensure important information is shared face to face with frontline social workers. The sessions also have a learning and development focus often chosen by social workers themselves. These have proved to be highly successful with social workers reporting that they are able to apply their learning to practice and generally state in feedback that everything presented is of use to their practice.
- 3.9 Nationally, children's social work is facing workforce challenges due to a range of pressures. Child and family social work is challenged by high turnover and vacancy rates and a heavy reliance on agency staff. The demand for permanent, experienced workers significantly outstrips supply (children's social work is on the national occupational shortage list).
- 3.10 A key function of the PSW role is to support the training of new social workers. There are now many routes into social work and it is important that the City of Wolverhampton Council (CWC) takes a mixed economy approach to supporting the training of social workers in order to not only meet its own sufficiency needs but also contribute to the needs of the region. Developments that have taken place this year will mean that over the next two years the CWC will support the training of approximately 36 social workers per year. This is above the Council's usual annual turnover and therefore will make a contribution to the regional shortage of qualified social workers.
- 3.11 There are now five main workstreams that contributed to this; the West Midlands Teaching Partnership, Step up to Social Work, Frontline and Degree social work Apprenticeships.

- 3.12 The West Midlands Teaching Partnership is in its first year of delivery following a strong recommendation from the Department for Education (DfE) and Department of Health and Social Care (DoH) that the region should have just one Teaching Partnership. The partnership is the largest in the country and is made up of 16 local authorities and trusts (this includes Cheshire East who were part of a previous teaching partnership in the north of the region) and nine Higher Education Institutes.
- 3.13 Social Work Teaching Partnerships (SWTPs) are a government funded initiative designed to: enhance partnership arrangements between Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and employers; attract more able students; embed the knowledge and skills (post qualifying standards) into academic curricula and continuing professional development (CPD) for existing workers; and overall raise the quality of social work practice. CWC offers approximately 18 placements each year to students completing traditional undergraduate and post graduate degrees.
- 3.14 The Principal Social Worker sits on the strategic board for the partnership and ensures the Council is represented in all three workstreams.
- 3.15 Step up to Social Work and Frontline are post graduate fast track social work programmes for people interested in the profession who have a 2.1 Honours Degree or above. Step up to Social Work is co-ordinated regionally and is delivered in partnership with the University of Birmingham. It is a 14-month condensed course. This year CWC has joined the partnership and will provide placements for four students.
- 3.16 Frontline is a fast-track training scheme for social workers in child protection, which aims to attract outstanding graduates who may not previously have considered a career in social work. Participants complete most of their theoretical training whilst in social work placements, this allows them to transfer their learning into practice immediately. Participants are supported by a dedicated consultant social worker and a tutor who delivers theoretical training within the work place. The PSW has worked collaboratively with Frontline to establish two Frontline units each having four participants, one consultant social worker and one deputy consultant social worker. As a result, CWC will have supported the training of eight social workers through this programme.
- 3.17 The new level six Degree Apprenticeship Social Work Standards were agreed in December 2018. This new award provides an exciting opportunity for existing social care employees to undertake a social work degree whilst remaining in full time employment. Two universities within the region made plans to deliver the programme, The University of Warwick was the first to go live and it is expected the University of Wolverhampton will begin delivery of the programme in September 2019. CWC agreed to offer six placements to social care workers from both Adult's and Children's Social Care. Three places on the Warwick programme which began March 2019 and three on the Wolverhampton programme due to start September 2019.

- 3.18 The Social Work Health Check completed in June 2018 identified a number of key themes:
- The survey had a response rate of 48% in CYP services and 67% in Adult Social Care (ASC).
 - In the Adults Health Check workforce development was rated highly and most people felt that there were good opportunities for continuous professional development within the City.
 - Social work is a notoriously demanding profession and this also came through in both the Adult's and Children's survey with a high proportion of staff reporting some level of stress although the number of people feeling stressed had decreased in adult social care.
 - Social workers generally felt well supported by their line manager.
 - The number of people who felt proud to work for CWC had increased on previous years.
 - The Children and Young People's Service had experienced unusually high employee turnover at the time of the report and therefore saw a decrease in satisfaction across a few areas including workforce development and workload management.
- 3.19 Action plans were developed for both CYP and ASC with most actions now being completed. Senior Managers have increased their visibility and provided more opportunities for social workers to share their views about services. Turnover in the CYP Service has returned to normal levels and is now in line with national averages.
- 3.20 The Principal Social Workers team now lead on the publication of monthly Adults Social Care and Children and Young People Updates. These are short articles that celebrate good practice and stories of success, provide information about up-coming training and share a message from the respective Directors of Children's and Adult's Services. Employees have reported that they enjoy receiving the update and find the information useful.
- 3.21 The regional and national networks of Principal Child and Family Social Workers also provide information to the Chief Social Workers for children and adults. There are regular consultations with the network in respect of issues such as social worker health checks, workload, employer standards, practice and learning developments and policy developments.

Adults

- 3.22 A key piece of work undertaken by the PSW with the support of the workforce development team was the procurement of coaching in a strength based model (Three Conversations) that will help to transform culture and enable frontline practitioners to undertake good quality social care practice and support people to achieve good outcomes.
- 3.23 The Three Conversations approach is a new way of working that replaces the default 'contact, divert, triage, reablement, assessment for services' process with a dynamic strength-based approach to listening to people, aimed at supporting independent lives, and reducing the need for dependence on formal services. It supports frontline employees to have three distinct and specific conversations. These conversations focus on helping people live what they feel is a good life, by utilising their own resource, resources within their local community and receiving formal support when required.
- 3.24 Three Conversations was rolled out in the City of Wolverhampton Council in May 2018 with the creation of three innovations sites in ASC, two in the East locality and one in the Mental Health team. A further site was created in July 2018 to specifically work with people on waiting lists in the West and North localities.
- 3.25 The evaluation of this first phase concluded that the new way of working had resulted in improved outcomes for people and families and had a positive impact on employee job satisfaction whilst also increasing their productiveness. The views of some people who had accessed support under three conversations were sought as part of the evaluation. Overwhelmingly people reported that they received a timely response, felt informed and found the approach of the employee to be supportive and helpful.
- 3.26 One of the greatest success of the model was the reduction of waiting lists within Three Conversation sites. This has led to a timelier response to needs and as a result it appears that more families are able to avoid crisis situations which may, for example have resulted in the premature admittance of loved ones into residential care homes.
- 3.27 A second phase of innovation began in November which embedded the learning from phase one as well as exploring opportunities that could increase collaborative working between internal services. The phase two evaluation has confirmed that by placing a range of services in the same building, CWC can ensure people receive the right level of support at the right time and support employees to work together in a much more creative way. For example, the integration of community workers within teams has supported employees to connect more people with additional needs to clubs and groups within their communities. It is known that building friendships within communities can reduce social isolation and increase fulfilment and overall wellbeing.
- 3.28 It is anticipated that all locality teams will be operating in this way by the end of summer 2019.

- 3.29 An audit process for adult social care has been embedded as part of the People Quality Assurance Framework. The quality assurance framework also includes observation of practice and brings together the critical reflections of frontline practitioners to help promote a learning culture. 129 file audits carried out in 2018-2019 and a further 51 files were dip sampled as part of Three Conversations work. This means that 5% of files for people who receive a service from adult social care in Wolverhampton have had some form of qualitative audit in 2018-2019.
- 3.30 Many pieces of development work have taken place as a direct result of information gathered through audits. These include: undertaking good reviews, Mental Capacity Act assessment forms have been re-designed to support more proportionate and focused assessments, recording with care training has been provided and employees have increased their awareness of local services and community resources.
- 3.31 This information is reported to the Transformation of Adult Social Care Board quarterly ensuring senior managers have oversight of the quality of frontline practice and are able to use this information to inform improvement actions. CWC has implemented a robust quality assurance framework that is not common place in adult social care.
- 3.32 As part of the development of Three Conversations model the relationship between performance and quality assurance has been strengthened. Performance information is more visible and accessible for frontline managers and practitioners. This enables managers to identify areas of poorer performance quickly, undertake quality assurance activity to better understand any issues and then implement development actions with team members to improve performance. Improvements can then be monitored weekly using the live performance information that is available.

Children and Young People

- 3.33 Restorative Practice was selected as the overarching practice framework for the Children and Young People's Service and implementation began in November 2016. It is a strengths-based approach that is fundamentally about building, maintaining and repairing relationships. It supports a strong relational way to delivering services, working with children and families, identifying strengths but also having the sound relationship for challenge; enabling a 'high support/high challenge' approach to work with children and families to affect necessary change. Whilst this approach is not new to most qualified social workers it is powerful to have a unified way of working and a developing shared language amongst colleagues.
- 3.34 Two independent reviews have confirmed that the approach is well understood by employees and most areas are beginning to embed the approach. Areas that have experienced higher staff turnover have however, struggled to show consistent evidence of embedding the approach. This is to be expected and as teams continue to stabilise it is anticipated that the restorative approach will be further established within teams. Restorative approaches are well integrated within the CYP induction programme and frequently discussed at social work briefings and service wide management meetings.

- 3.35 The PSW has convened a multi-agency restorative steering group. The wider partnership has now committed to training all frontline practitioners within the City in the restorative approach. This is an exciting development as it will allow practitioners from a range of disciplines to develop a shared language and approach to the way in which CWC works with Children and Families across the City. Over 250 practitioners participated in a multi-agency launch event in October 2018. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive, and all agencies have nominated staff to become train the trainers in the approach.
- 3.36 Ofsted highlighted five areas of practice that required further improvement during their Focused Visit in September 2018. These related to the quality of assessment and planning, supervision, reducing caseloads and compliance in relation to quality assurance/audit. The Principal Social Worker has led a variety of work designed to improve these areas of practice;
- A new supervision tool has been designed which incorporates Restorative Practice into supervision.
 - New assessment, analysis and planning training has been procured and learning will be embedded through reflective practice sessions in teams.
 - The audit process has been overhauled with the introduction of Practice Weeks (see below).
- 3.37 Practice Weeks are an innovative approach to audit and quality assurance that can ensure senior managers know what practice looks like and have regular contact with frontline practitioners. They were introduced in CWC in November 2018 following a smaller scale pilot in September 2018. During Practice Weeks the Director of Children's services along with all Heads of Service, The PSW and Service Managers spend four days undertaking audits alongside practitioners, observing practice and sitting in teams. The advantages of this approach include being able to see practice rather than just read about it, being able to see and feel how teams are functioning and being able to offer social workers immediate feedback on their practice. Practice Weeks have been received well and employees report enjoying the immediate feedback and opportunity to talk about their work with senior managers.
- 3.38 Practice Weeks have enabled the senior management team to be assured around thresholds and management of risk whilst highlighting areas for improved practice like consistent use of direct work tools and activities with children and young people, and better engagement with fathers where issues of domestic violence are present. Action plans are developed following each practice week and improvements are monitored in subsequent audits.
- 3.39 The PSW has continued to provide leadership, mentoring and coaching to six full time equivalent advanced practitioners appointed in the CYP Service. Meetings have taken place fortnightly to monitor progression of action plans, share learning and good practice

and develop a shared understanding of what good social work practice looks like. Advanced practitioners are then able to model a consistent approach within teams.

- 3.40 Advanced practitioners have provided practical support to newly qualified social workers by attending complex meetings with them, modelling good practice and helping them write good assessment and plans. Advanced practitioners also run fortnightly drops in's, where support on a range of topics is available including pre-birth assessments, managing risk, sibling assessments and planning for permanence. Advanced practitioners have also delivered training on key themes linked to our improvement plan and strategic aims like understanding private and regulated family and friend's placements and annual workshops designed to build practitioner confidence at facilitating family meetings. This a key tool to help us embed restorative practice and help practitioners engage and work with families.
- 3.41 Ofsted noted that where assessments had been recently updated with the support of advanced practitioners, they were of good quality, there were clear insights into the lived experience of children, strengths and areas of concern were identified, they involved parents and used the local authority's restorative practice approach. These assessments were also informed by powerful use of direct work and very strong evidence from children about relationships and their emotional status.
- 3.42 FutureSocial is a regional DfE funded programme that has been created to develop an alternative delivery approach that transforms recruitment, retention, workforce development, quality and cost to create an autonomous, flexible, skilled and supported children's social care workforce within the region. The post holder has represented the regional Principal Social Work Network on the project group and contributed to all work undertaken by the team, most significantly the development of the detailed delivery plan.
- 3.43 Locally the recruitment and retention of social workers has been another key priority. The postholder leads a recruitment and retention group that incorporates Organisational Development, Human Resources and Communications. The group delivers a local recruitment and retention plan that is overseen by the Social Work Development Board.
- 3.44 The recruitment process has been strengthened and now includes a pre-interview assessment of candidate's abilities to work with children and young people, and the candidate's assessment and report writing skills. This helps to ensure that candidates employed by the CWC have sufficient skills and potential to become excellent social work practitioners.
- 3.45 The PSW has worked closely with the Director of Children's Services and Heads of Service to deliver a range of actions designed to support the retention of social workers. This has included creating opportunities for greater visibility of senior managers, improved comms around what is working well in the service and a restructure that has strengthened the role of the team manager and created more opportunities for progression. Turnover has halved in the period between November- March 2019 when compared with June - October 2018.

4.0 Priorities for work plan 2019-2020

Workforce Development

- 4.1 A particular role that will be undertaken by the PSW is to continue to ensure that the Children and Adult's Social Work Development plan incorporates a good development offer for social workers. It is imperative that social workers are highly skilled as it is known that good social work intervention can reduce the risk of children needing to be received into care and can enable adults with additional needs to remain or become as independent as possible. These are outcomes that are desirable for the children, families and adults who are in receipt of social care services. They also ensure that Council resources are being used appropriately and effectively.
- 4.2 The post holder will be responsible for the local delivery of the National Assessment and Accreditation Process (NAAS). The Children and Social Work Act 2017 gave the Education Secretary powers to set and assess practitioners against improvement standards. The NAAS is the primary programme linked to this section of the Children and Social Work Act 2017. It involves the assessment of social workers against a set of standards set out in the Knowledge and Skills Statements for Children and Family Practitioners and The Knowledge and Skills Statement for Practice Supervisors and Practice Leaders (these are now known as the post qualifying standards). The assessments will take place at a local assessment centre and the test include three elements;
- Employee endorsement – the employer's assessment of the social worker or practice supervisor's skills.
 - A digital assessment based on the [child and family practitioner knowledge and skills statement](#) produced by the Chief Social Worker for Children.
 - A simulated practice observation using role play scenarios with actors. This will include a written assessment component.
- 4.3 The DfE met with the Directors of Children's Services within the region in November 2018 and asked directors to give consideration partnering with them to deliver the NAAS within the West Midlands region. There is a consensus amongst directors within the region that the NAAS could help to deliver improvements to the frontline practice of social workers. It is felt that taking a regional approach to the preparation of social workers will deliver an opportunity to increase consistency of practice across all Councils. The delivery of NAAS also aligns with the ambitions of FutureSocial
- 4.4 Implementing the Three Conversations model across ASC continues to be a significant priority for the service area. It must deliver the cultural change around strength based and relational practice resulting in improved customer experience. The post holder is the senior reporting officer for the project and will work closely with the project team and frontline practitioners to ensure the outcomes of the project are achieved.

- 4.5 The post holder will continue to play a key role in the embedding of restorative approaches within the CYP Service and across the children's partnership. All practitioners in ASC will also receive training in restorative approaches in order to further equip employees with strength-based skills that will compliment the Three Conversations model.
- 4.6 Working with regional partners to deliver the FutureSocial agenda will also continue to be a significant priority for the PSW. There are 14 councils within the region and most of them are in close proximity to one another. The workforce therefore naturally moves between councils for career progression opportunities or to experience different ways of working. It is therefore crucial that the region grasp this opportunity to take a regional approach to workforce planning for the future.
- 4.7 The PSW will continue to provide leadership, mentoring and coaching to the six (FTE) advanced social work practitioners to be appointed in the CYP Service. The focus of this work will be to support the ongoing transformation of children's services through the ongoing improvement of frontline social work practice. Advanced practitioners will assist with the establishment of consistently "Good" and "Outstanding" practice across CYP services.
- 4.8 The new Liberty Protection Safeguards (LPS) is now awaiting royal assent and will replace the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards Legislation (DOLS). Implementation of the LPS's will require a whole workforce approach that will include a training update for those currently qualified to undertake DOLS work and a plan to ensure more social workers receive training in order to be able to undertake LPS assessments.

Recruitment and Retention

- 4.9 The post holder will continue to take a lead responsibility along with Human Resources and Workforce Development for the implementation of the recruitment and retention plan. This will include setting up a social work education steering group. The steering group will provide strategic governance for the five workstreams, provide strategic challenge and support to ensure social work education within the Council is of a good quality and ensure all work is effectively co-ordinated and aligned. As a result of this more highly skilled and knowledgeable social workers will be trained in order to help meet the local and regional demand for good quality social workers.

Social Work Voice at Strategic Level

- 4.10 Undertaking and analysing the annual Social Work Health Check is key to improving social work recruitment and retention. The Quality and Improvement team will continue to support a greater level of engagement with social workers about the findings and associated actions in order to ensure social workers know their feedback is welcomed and taken seriously by senior managers.

- 4.11 The post holder will continue to support a range of engagement activities between the Directors of Adult and Children's Services and the workforce by hosting social work briefings, facilitating face to face inductions, facilitating the Adults Social Care and Children and Young Peoples Update and arranging employee engagement sessions as and when required.
- 4.12 Attendance will continue by the PSW at the Children and Young People's and the Adults management team meetings on at least a monthly basis ensures operational engagement and oversight.

Local, Regional and National leadership

- 4.13 The PSW attends quarterly national principal social work network days facilitated by the Association of Directors of Children's Services. These meetings are learning and development opportunities. It provides opportunity for the national Chief Social Workers for adults and children to share the direction of travel, answer questions and receive feedback from PSW's. These events also provide opportunity for the sharing of good practice. Notes are shared with the appropriate leadership team following attendance at these events.
- 4.14 The PSW also attends regional network meetings on a bi-monthly basis. This allows regional work to take place as directed by the regional West Midlands Association of Directors of Children's Services and the Association of Directors of Adults Services.
- 4.15 The post holder also sits on the strategic board for the Regional Teaching Partnership and the project team for FutureSocial.
- 4.16 The PSW was successful in gaining a place on the Practice Leaders Development Programme. The programme is funded by the DfE and is a unique opportunity to develop the skills and knowledge needed within a practice leader role within children's social care. It focusses on the challenging nature of this role and offers support and assistance through a network of development coaches and colleagues within children's social care. As such the PSW is now invited to contribute to discussions about national policy with the Chief Social Worker for Children and Families and participate in ongoing development opportunities provided through the Programme.

5.0 Evaluation of alternative options

- 5.1 This is an annual report produced in line with good practice as agreed by Cabinet at the time the role was created. As such no other options have been considered.

6.0 Reasons for decision

- 6.1 The role of the PSW contributes to a number of key priorities across CYP and ASC Services. The post holder is the senior reporting officer leading the culture change programmes in ASC and CYP Services. Restorative Practice in CYP and Three Conversations in ASC are approaches and models that enable social workers to build professional relationships with people who need services that help and promote a

strength based approach to their practice. These approaches will enable the workforce to strengthen families where children are at risk, promote the independence of older people and people with disabilities as well safeguarding people in vulnerable situations.

- 6.2 The PSW provides dedicated resource to the recruitment and retention strategy which in turn helps the Council reduce expenditure on agency staff. The role is also responsible for raising the profile of social work in the City which also contributes to making the City of Wolverhampton a social work employer of choice.
- 6.3 The role also provides the professional knowledge required to drive local and regional workforce development plan that will help develop good and outstanding

7.0 Financial implications

- 7.1 There are no direct financial implications arising directly from this report. Any costs arising from the actions in the workplan and priorities set by the PSW will be met from existing budgets.
- 7.2 Good social work reduces demand and costs. Relationship based social work is anticipated to reduce demand and whilst difficult to quantify could lead to potential efficiencies. The work currently being undertaken in the three ASC innovation sites may provide evidence of indicative financial efficiencies if the new ways of working was rolled out across the whole of the service.

[AJ/14052019/M]

8.0 Legal implications

- 8.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

[TC/17052019/P]

9.0 Equalities implications

- 9.1 The role of the Principal Social Work is a key one in our leadership arrangements to continually improve the quality of our social work practice. Social workers provide support to the whole community including the full range of diverse groups. Excellent quality social work practice will be more attuned to the equality issues experienced by individuals, families and communities. High quality social work will more competently deploy required skill in the practice situation. This annual report shows some of the ways being used to strengthen this aspect of social work practice e.g. updating and widening the influence of the social work Quality Assurance Framework.

10.0 Environmental implications

- 10.1 There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

11.0 Human resources implications

11.1 There are no human resources implications arising from this report. However, it is noted that close collaborative working has taken place over the last year on the implementation of the recruitment and retention strategy and action plan. This includes back office support and attendance at Social Worker interviews and recruitment campaigns.

12.0 Corporate landlord implications

12.1 There are no corporate landlord implications arising from this report.

13.0 Health and Wellbeing implications

13.1 Good social work practice will support the health and wellbeing of children, young people and adults who access services.