

Report title	Principal Social Worker Annual Report	
Decision designation	AMBER	
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor Linda Leach Adults	Councillor John Reynolds Children and Young People
Key decision	Yes	
In forward plan	Yes	
Wards affected	All Wards	
Accountable Director	David Watts, Director for Adult Services Emma Bennett, Director of Children's Services	
Originating service	Adult Social Care/Children and Young People	
Accountable employee	Louise Haughton Tel Email	Principal Social Worker 01902 555534 Louise.haughton@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Report to be/has been considered by	Directorate Leadership Teams Strategic Executive Board	23 October 2020 27 October 2020 28 October 2020

Recommendations for decision:

The Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Endorse the work of the Principal Social Worker and the continued impact it has on social care practice across children's and adults' services or something like that.
2. Approve the main priorities for the Principal Social Worker identified for 2020-2021.

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 2020-2021.

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 Principal Social Worker (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 Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 states that Children and Families Principal Social Workers have a key role in developing the practice and the practice methodology that underpins direct work with children and families.

- 2.5 The PSW for both Adults and Children and Young People was appointed in March 2016.
- 2.6 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 of the work undertaken by Social Care.
- 2.7 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.
- 2.8 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 for Adults Services and the Director for Children's' Services.
- 2.9 The regional and national networks of PSWs also provide information to the Chief Social Workers for adults and children's 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.
- 2.10 In accordance with best practice an annual report will be 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 2019 is outlined below:

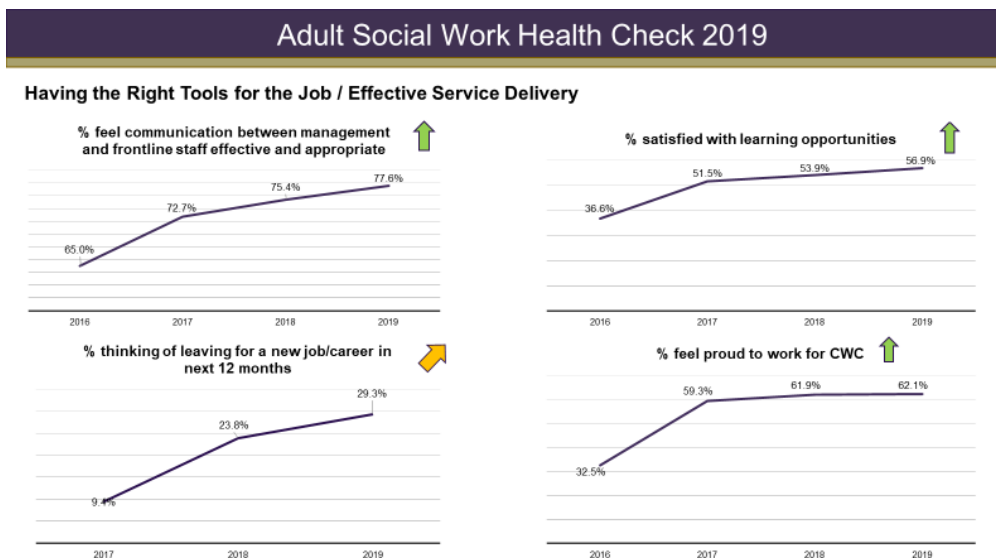
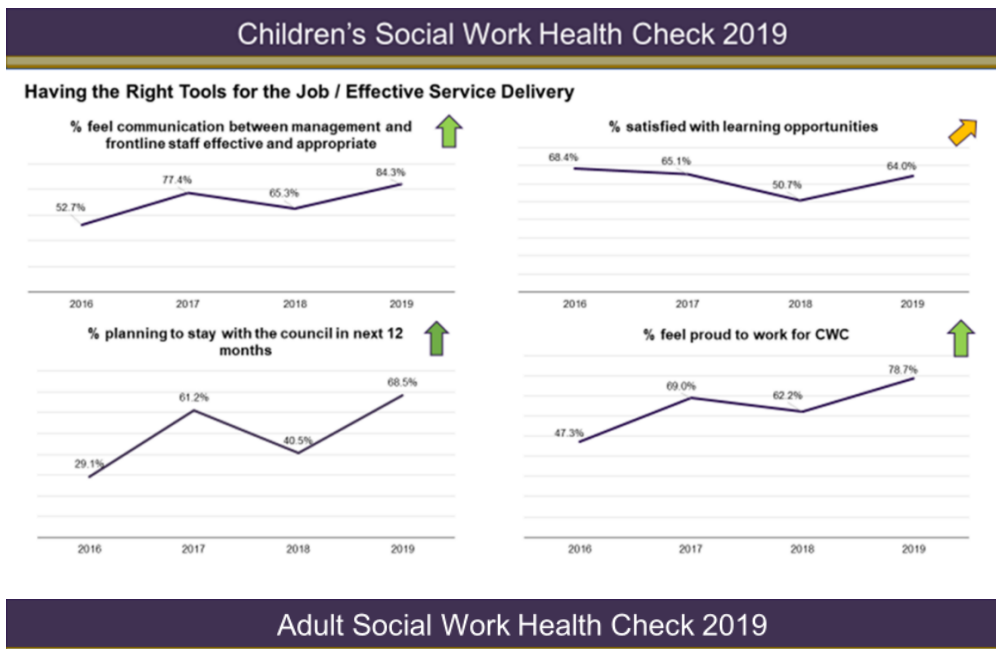
3.3 Workforce

- 3.4 Nationally, social work is facing workforce challenges due to a range of pressures. 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 (social work is on the national occupational shortage list).

- 3.5 The Principal Social Worker has led on the development and delivery of a Recruitment and Retention plan with colleagues from Human Resources, Organisational Development and the Communications Team.
- 3.6 The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) state that good local authorities have a "workforce that is sufficient, stable, suitably qualified and competent to deliver high-quality services to children and their families". Ofsted 2016
- 3.7 The plan delivers a rolling recruitment campaign for children services, the development of promotional material including videos for both Adult's and Children's Social Care and retention activity focused on good communication between senior leaders and frontline employees, delivering a good workforce development offer including a clear career development pathway.
- 3.8 The Social Work Development Plan outlines training opportunities for the social work workforce in line with service priorities. In the year 22 different training programmes were offered to social workers including subjects that help social workers build effective working relationships and promote strength-based approaches like Restorative Practice, Coaching Skills and facilitating Family Meetings. As well as this training has focused on the technical skills that are required through the delivery of courses like Assessment Skills, Mental Capacity Assessments, Legal Literacy and Court Skills.
- 3.9 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, 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. This year subjects have included dementia awareness, domestic abuse and coercive control, and Trauma informed practice when working with teenagers.
- 3.10 Due to the Covid 19 pandemic the joint Adult's and Children's Social Work Conference was postponed. The Conference was later translated to a virtual platform and will be reported in next year's annual report.
- 3.11 The Principal Social Worker's 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 Social Care. Employees have reported that they enjoy receiving the update and find the information useful.
- 3.12 Experimental statistics published by the Department for Education (DfE) for the year ending April 2019 showed the national agency rate was 16%. It is argued that turnover (the frequency at which workers are leaving) is the more accurate indicator of the stability

of a workforce and hence of retention. The national data found the average turnover rate for child and family social workers was 16%.

- 3.13 The social work workforce in adults social care in the City of Wolverhampton has consistently had lower or similar turnover rates than national comparators (13.5%). In Children's services agency rates and turnover rates were above the national average in 2016 and 2017 but have now reduced to below the national average. The City of Wolverhampton's overall agency rate in Children's Social Work was 11.7% in March 2019 and Turnover rate was 12.1%
- 3.14 The health check which will be discussed in more detail below asks social workers for their views on working conditions. The graphs below demonstrate that most social workers are planning to stay within the council for the next 12 months and generally feel positive about the workforce offer. Work will continue to further improve workforce recruitment and retention.



- 3.15 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 Councils usual annual turnover and therefore will make a contribution to the regional shortage of qualified social workers.
- 3.16 There are now four main workstreams that contributed to this; the West Midlands Teaching Partnership, Step up to Social Work, Frontline, the Degree social work Apprenticeships.
- 3.17 The West Midlands Teaching Partnership is in its second year of delivery following a strong recommendation from the DfE and 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 include Cheshire East who were part of a previous teaching partnership in the north of the region) and nine Higher Education Institutes.
- 3.18 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. The CWC offers approximately 18 placements each year to students completing traditional undergraduate and post graduate degrees.
- 3.19 The Principal Social Worker sits on the strategic board for the partnership and ensures the Council is represented in all three workstreams.
- 3.20 Step up to Social Work and Frontline are post graduate fast track social work programmes for people interested in the profession who have a 2.2 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 the CWC has joined the partnership and will provide placements for four students.
- 3.21 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 workplace. 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, the CWC will have supported the training of eight social workers through this programme.

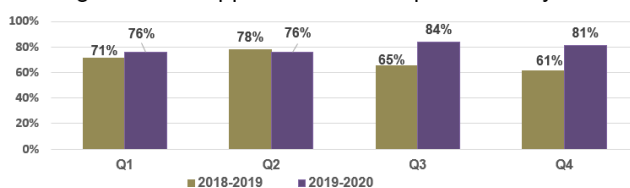
- 3.22 The new level 6 Degree Apprenticeship Social Work Standards were agreed in December 2018. This new award provides an exciting opportunity for existing social care employees to undertake a social work degree whilst remaining in full time employment. Two universities within the region made plans 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. The 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 four started the University of Wolverhampton programme that started in September 2019.
- 3.23 The social work Health Check completed June 2019 identified a number of key themes:
- The survey had a response rate of 60% in CYP services and 65% in Adult Social Care (ASC).
 - In the both the Adult's and Children's 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 came through in both the Adult's and Children's survey with a high proportion of staff reporting some level of stress.
 - Social workers generally felt well supported by their line manager.
 - The number of people who felt proud to work the CWC had increased on previous years
- 3.24 Action plans were developed for both CYP and ASC and engagement sessions were undertaken to explore how the services could further improve the offer to employees and reduce the feeling of stress. In adult social care some administrative but time-consuming duties have been moved to more appropriate teams and within Children's Services caseloads have reduced due to a small increase in social work positions.

Adults

- 3.25 A key piece of work undertaken by the PSW and her team has been embedding the Three Conversations model across Adult Social Care.
- 3.26 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.

- 3.27 Three Conversations was rolled out in the City of Wolverhampton Council in May 2018 with the creation of three innovations sites in Adult Social Care, 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 and the model was then rolled out in the remaining areas in August 2019.
- 3.28 The evaluation has concluded that the new way of working had resulted in improved outcomes for people and families and has increased 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.
- 3.29 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.
- 3.30 Further success included a reduction in the amount of time to complete a Care Act assessment by 25 days. Practitioners have also supported more adults with care and support needs to remain at home where this has been their wish by acting quickly, connecting people with services that offer support and being more creative about how identified needs could be met within the community. This resulted in a slight reduction in the number of people who moved to residential placements.
- 3.31 Quality Assurance activity has also evidenced improvements in practice 2019-20. 91 standard file audits were undertaken up to end of January 2020), as well as other thematic and dip samples were completed. This meant that by the end of March 2020 almost 4% of the files of people who receive a service from adult social care in Wolverhampton had been audited.
- 3.32 Many areas of strengths were evidenced including; evidence of personalised approaches and interventions which support the person to live the life they want, focusing on outcomes, the use of advocacy (there was improved performance at the end of Q4 2018-19, which has been sustained this year) and Effective multi-agency working and appropriate contributions by partners to planning and service delivery
- 3.33 One area of clear improvement over the year was the use of strength-based approaches.

Use of strengths based approaches has improved this year:



- 3.34 A quality assurance report is presented 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. The City of Wolverhampton have implemented a robust quality assurance framework that is not common place in adult social care.

- 3.35 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

- 3.36 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 being able to effectively challenge where necessary. Whilst this approach is not new to most qualified social workers it is powerful to have a unified way of working and language around intervention and support that is shared amongst colleagues.
- 3.37 Two independent reviews have confirmed that the approach is well understood by employees and most areas are beginning to embed the approach.
- 3.38 This year significant progress has been made with embedding the approach. The new supervision tool uses the restorative model to understand the lived experience of the child, to consider what difference is being made by the social work intervention and to plan future actions and support for families. Restorative tools are also being used systematically within team meetings and reflective practice sessions to help social workers draw on the skills and knowledge of others to help them achieve good outcomes for Children.
- 3.39 The Principal Social Worker 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. 12 practitioners from Education, Health, Housing and the voluntary sector have been trained to deliver Restorative Practice training. This will enable Restorative Practice training to be delivered in a multi-agency setting going forward. Unfortunately, the multi-agency training was postponed due to the Covid 19 pandemic but ways to deliver this training virtually are now being explored.
- 3.40 The Principal Social Worker has been responsible for implementing the National Assessment and Accreditation Process (NAAS). The Children and Social Work Act 2017 gives 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 Skill 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.

3.41 The Council was asked to enable between 20% and 30% of Children and Families Social workers to undertake the assessment in the first year. This equated to between 31 and 47 social workers. Unfortunately, assessments centres were closed before the end of the project due to the Covid 19 pandemic. It is however positive that 41 social workers had already completed the assessment, which meant that the 20% target was successfully met.

3.42 The National Chief Social Worker for Child and Family Social Workers has identified Wolverhampton Children’s Services as having exemplary performance in relation to the NAAS. 40 of the candidates met the standards on their first attempt.

3.43 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.

3.44 The work of the Principal Social Worker to improve these areas were reported in the 2018/19 report.

- 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 imbedded through reflective practice sessions in teams.
- the audit process has been overhauled with the introduction of Practice Weeks (see below).

3.45 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 the 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.

- 3.46 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 actives with children and young people and better engagement with father where issues of domestic violence are present. Action plans are developed following each practice week and improvements are monitored in subsequent audits.
- 3.47 Advanced practitioners play a key role in embedding good practice across the service. 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.
- 3.48 They 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.
- 3.49 Advanced practitioners have also delivered training to all social workers on key themes linked to our Practice Improvement Plan including;
- how to write/create meaningful chronologies and genograms, these are powerful tools that help social workers understand the lived experience of the children and young people they are working with
 - How to chair effective family meetings, this is an important restorative tool that puts children and families at the centre of finding solutions to the concerns that have been raised by professionals.
 - Direct Work world cafes, these have enabled social workers to explore a range of direct work tools and approaches in order to improve the way in which engage and gain the views of children and young people.
- 3.50 Quality assurance activity has shown a steady improvement in the quality of practice being delivered by social workers. In 2019-20, 91 standard audits were completed. As well as this thematic audits, dip samples and observations of practice were also undertaken.

3.51 This activity has evidenced an increase of 45% in the number of audits being judged to be good or outstanding.

Audit Period	O	G	Total	RI	I	Total
2018-2019	3	37	40 (40%)	43	17	60 (60%)
Sept 2019 (audits)	2	9	11 (40%)	15	1	16 (60%)
Dec 2019 (audits)	5	19	24 (64%)	12	1	13 (36%)
Feb 2020 (audits)	1	22	23 (85%)	4	0	4 (15%)

4.0 Priorities for work plan 2020-2021

Workforce

- 4.1 Given the impact of the Covid 19 pandemic a key role of the Principal Social Worker will be to ensure that there are mechanisms in place to support social workers wellbeing and safety whilst they carry out their critical role with the residents of Wolverhampton.
- 4.2 A particular role that will be undertaken by the PSW is to continue to ensure that the Social Work Development plan incorporates a good development offer for social workers that enables them to continue to develop their practice whilst not being able to access face to face training. 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.
- 4.3 The PSW will ensure that issues relating to tackling inequality for all groups of people with protected characteristics is well incorporated into the development plan. This will include training that relates to anti-racist and anti-discriminatory practice as well as raising awareness about issues that relate to gender reassignment and sexual orientation.
- 4.4 The post holder will be responsible for continuing the local delivery of the National Assessment and Accreditation Process (NAAS).
- 4.5 Embedding 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.
- 4.6 The post holder will continue to play a key role in the embedding of restorative approaches within the Children and young People's Service and across the children's partnership. This will include Adult Social care where restorative approaches will be

embedded in order to further equip employees with strength-based skills that will compliment the Three Conversations model.

- 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 Children and Young People 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 In July 2018, the government published a Mental Capacity (Amendment) Bill, which passed into law in May 2019. It replaces the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) with a scheme known as the Liberty Protection Safeguards (LPS). Prior to the pandemic councils had been working towards a start date for implementation of October 2020. Work on LPS stopped during Covid and the Department for Health and Social Care asked councils not to prioritise it.
- 4.9 On 16 July 2020 Helen Whately (Minister for Care) issued a statement confirming that full implementation of LPS will take place by April 2022 with some provisions coming into force earlier. The Department for Health and Social Care Policy team produced a timeline for implementation in their September newsletter. The PSW will be responsible for ensuring the Council is structurally ready to implement the changes in April 2022 and the workforce have received appropriate training and preparation.

Recruitment and Retention

- 4.10 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.
- 4.11 The PSW will work with Human Resource, Organisational Development and Heads of Service to implement plans that will begin to reduce the payment gap for BAME employees within the service. Work will be undertaken to ensure BAME employees have access to career development and support that will enable more to successfully progress within eth service areas.

Social Work Voice at Strategic Level

- 4.12 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

- 4.13 The post holder will continue to support a range of engagement activities between the Directors for Adults 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.
- 4.14 Attendance by the PSW at the Children and Young People's and the Adults management team meetings on at least a monthly basis to ensure operational engagement and oversight.

Quality Assurance

- 4.15 The PSW will review and refresh the Quality Assurance Framework to ensure it incorporates analysis of all data and information relating to performance including compliments and complaints, Child Safeguarding Practice reviews, Adults Safeguarding reviews and all quality assurance activity.

Local and Regional and National leadership

- 4.16 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.
- 4.17 The PSW also attends regional network meeting 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.
- 4.18 The post holder also sits on the strategic board for the Regional Teaching Partnership and the project team for Future Social.

5.0 Evaluation of alternative options

- 5.1 The priorities outlined within this report will contribute to the transformation of ASC and CYP Services.

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 its spend on agency. 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 The table below shows for Adults and Children's services how agency costs, of which social workers will be a large proportion, have reduced over the past three years. These figures are at today's prices and have not been adjusted for inflation, pay award etc.

Adults Services	2017-2018	2018-2018	2019-2020
	£m	£m	£m
Total Staffing costs not including agency staff	19.1	19.1	18.6
Agency Staff costs	1.6	1.7	1.3
Childrens Services	2017-2018	2018-2018	2019-2020
	£m	£m	£m
Total Staffing costs not including agency staff	22.2	23.4	24.2
Agency Staff costs	3.5	2.7	2.0

[JB/29102020/D]

8.0 Legal implications

- 8.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report. The relevant legislation and guidance is incorporated in the body of the report.
- [TC/26102020/A]

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.

- 9.2 The PSW will ensure that issues relating to tackling inequality for all groups of people with protected characteristics is well incorporated into the development plan 2020/2021.

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. 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.

14.0 Covid implications

- 14.1 The service adapted quickly and has been able to continue to recruit social workers using virtual methods.
- 14.2 This service has successfully been able to continue to offer placements to social workers in training. There are currently a total 27 students placed within the City.
- 14.3 Organisational Development has successfully moved all key training opportunities for social workers to a virtual platform.
- 14.4 It is important that social workers undertake good quality direct work face to face work during the Covid 19 pandemic. This ensures that statutory duties are undertaken and children in need of help and protection continue to be safeguarded.

15.0 Schedule of background papers

- 15.1 There are no background papers.