

**LEWISHAM CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE
WORKFORCE STRATEGY
2016-18**

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Foreword

Lewisham has a clear vision for our children and young people and a relentless focus on improving outcomes and making a difference to the well-being of children and young people. Together with families we will improve the lives and life chances of children and young people.

We recognise the crucial impact our workforce has in achieving this vision. The aim of our workforce strategy is to have a competent, motivated and highly skilled workforce working together to deliver relevant, responsive, high quality, child centred services.

Good social workers keep children safe and help them thrive. We know that good social work can help parents understand what they need to do to improve the care they give their children. Our objective is to have a qualified and experienced permanent workforce so that children experience stability and where good practice and excellence is paramount.

This strategy sets out our commitment to the children and young people's social care workforce, ensuring that we recruit and retain suitably qualified and experienced staff and that staff have the support, development and information they need to deliver highly effective services.

In line with the above the strategy has been updated in 2016 as part of an annual review cycle to ensure responsiveness to the changing internal and external environment for Children's Social Care in Lewisham.

Our Vision

All agencies across Lewisham who work for our children and young share a single vision

Together with families we will improve the lives and life chances of children and young people in Lewisham

Our Values

We will put children and young people first every time

We will have the highest aspirations and ambitions for all our children and young people

We will make a positive Difference to the lives of Children and young people

Our Culture

Together with our partners we constantly strive to improve services for our children, young people and families to improve lives and life chances. Our culture is underpinned by the following across all partners:

- We all work for children
- All Lewisham's children are all of our concern
- All money is children's money – we will make every penny count
- We intervene early and target children and families at risk of poor outcomes – including siblings
- We all have personal responsibility to integrate and share information

- There can be no resignation from the Team Around the Child – we do not just refer on
- We have no wrong door

Our Community

Lewisham is the fifth largest inner London borough and the thirteenth largest in London. The borough was home to 292,000 people in 2014 – an increase of 17,000 since 2011 (office for national statistics). Lewisham has a slightly younger age profile than the rest of the UK; children and young people aged 0-19 years make up 24.5% of our residents, compared to 22.4% for inner London and 23.8% nationally. Lewisham has 38,805 pupils within its 90 schools.

Whilst 40% of our residents are from black and minority ethnic backgrounds, this rises to 77% within our school population, where over 170 different languages are spoken by our pupils.

Deprivation is increasing in Lewisham. The 2010 Index of Multiple Deprivation ranked Lewisham 31st out of 354 local authorities in England compared to a rank of 39 in 2007. It is estimated that 20,355 children (ages 0-18) live in poverty in Lewisham.

The National Context

There have been considerable national changes over the past 5 years which have impacted on workforce planning and development for the children's social care workforce.

1. *The Munro Review*

The Munro Review of Child Protection published in 2010 looked to realign the social work system away from a compliance focussed, bureaucratic system, to one which values and develops professional expertise and which is focussed on the safety and welfare of children and young people. A system where 'doing the right thing' is as important as 'doing things right'. Social workers should be able to exercise professional judgement which relies on greater capability and competence from initial training through to programmes of continuous professional development.

2. *The Social Work Reform Board*

Following the Munro Review, the Social Work Task Force set up to identify changes that needed to happen, led to the establishment of the Social Work Reform Board to take forward the 15 recommendations made by the Task Force. These recommendations focus on the 'education and training, development, regulation and working conditions of social workers'

(Building a safe and confident future: maintaining momentum progress report from the SWRB, June 2012)

3. *Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF)*

The work of the SWRB led to the development of the PCF which:

- Sets out consistent expectations of social workers at every stage in their career;
- Provides a backdrop to both initial social work education and post qualifying continuing professional development;

- Informs the design and implementation of a national career structure;
- Gives social workers a framework around which to plan their careers and professional development.

4. The Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE)

The ASYE was implemented alongside the PCF which sets out the expectations of newly qualified social workers (NQSW) and Skills for Care worked with employers to develop an ASYE for NQSWs during their first year of practice. The ASYE was introduced in 2012. With appropriate support, reduced caseloads and regular supervision, NQSWs are able to gain confidence in their judgements and practice in a safe environment, whilst employers can be confident that social workers new to the profession are able to meet the expected high standards of practice.

5. Knowledge and Skills Statements (KSS)

Recent guidance on the knowledge and skills statements provide more detail on what a children and family social worker should be able to do and was introduced in November 2014 at ASYE level. The new set of standards for supervisors and leaders of social workers sets out in one place what practice supervisors and practice leaders need to know and be able to do in order to deliver top quality front-line social work for vulnerable children and families.

6. Demand and supply

One of the most significant challenges facing employers across the country is social worker sufficiency and capability, with the subsequent impact on workforce stability and services to children and young people.

Whilst there are generally sufficient numbers of NQSWs available in the market place, the challenge is the ability to recruit and retain more experienced social workers. The general lack of experienced social workers across the sector

suggests that social workers are leaving the profession. Pay drift as employers vie to attract those who are available has also been affected by permanent staff moving to the agency workforce where agencies can demand higher rates to fill the gaps in the experienced workforce.

7. Memorandum of Cooperation

Initiated by Chief Executives in London, Heads of HR, together with Directors of Children's Social Care are seeking to address the migration to agencies by establishing a joint response to containing agency pay rates. As at January 2016, twenty-nine of the thirty-two London Boroughs (including Lewisham) have signed a Memorandum of Cooperation, committing to abide by a maximum agency pay rate. It is hoped that this joint approach will provide some control over escalating agency pay rates.¹

The Lewisham Context

1. The Social Care Workforce

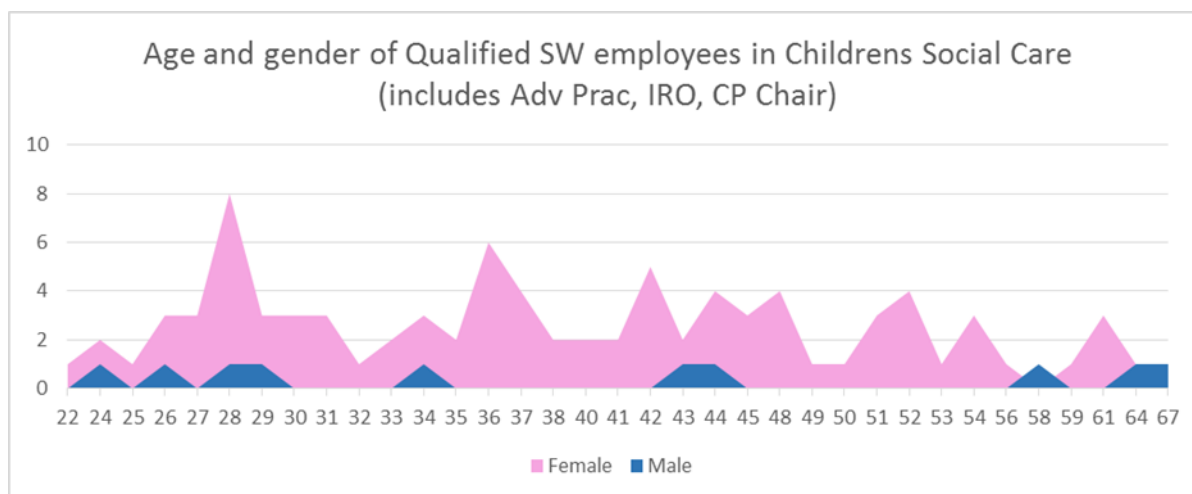
The Division is made up of five services areas – Family Social Work; Referral & Assessment; Adoption & looked After Children; Business Strategy, Fostering & Placements and Quality Assurance. The Director of Children's Social Care also has an aligned responsibility for the social work aspects of the Children with Complex Needs service in the Targeted Services & Joint Commissioning Division.

As at 1 April 2016, the 250 posts in Children's Social Care (not including Director) are:

¹ <http://www.communitycare.co.uk/2016/02/11/london-childrens-services-leaders-collaborate-drive-agency-pay/>

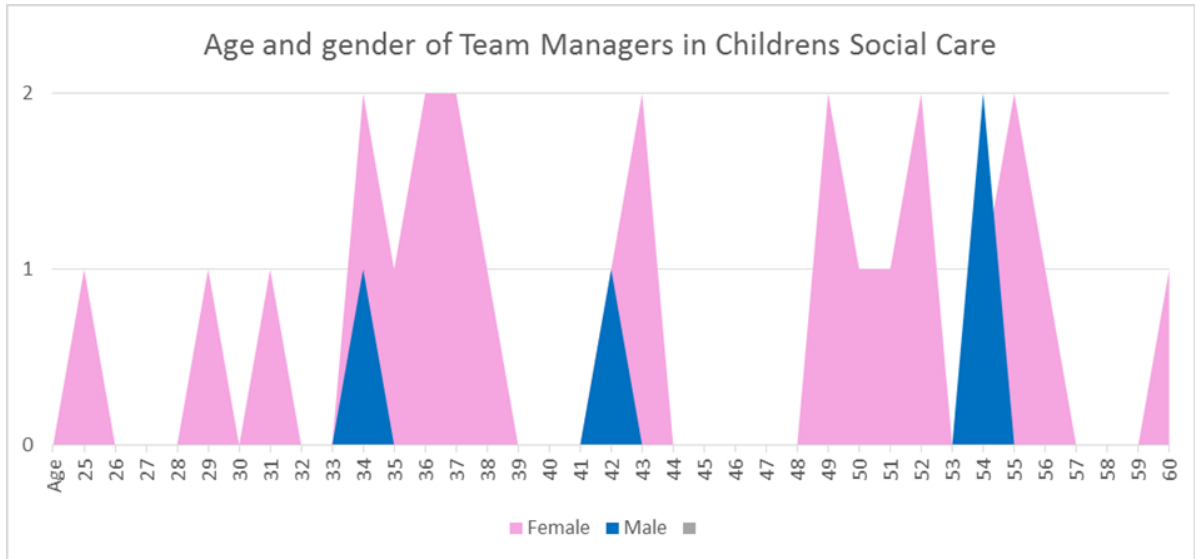
Posts in Childrens Social Care - not inc Director									
	SW	SSW	AP	IRO	CPC	TMgr	SMgr	Others	Total
F&P	12	4				4	1	4	25
FSW	46	13	3			9	1	7	79
LAC	34	11	1			8	1	10	65
R&A	19	17	1			7	1	6	51
Q&A				7	5	2	1	7	22
EI							1	7	8
Total	111	45	5	7	5	30	6	41	250

The age and gender of 'qualified' social work roles as at April 2016 are set out in the table below.

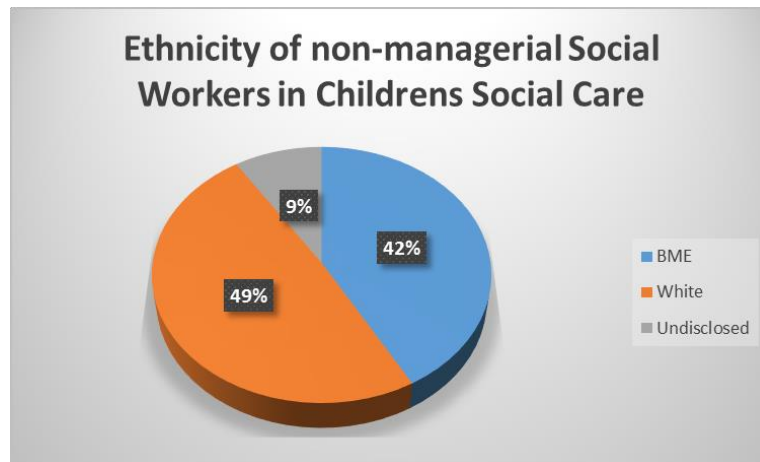


Whilst there is a balanced distribution across the age ranges, succession planning in areas such as Quality Assurance and at Team Manager level where there are more staff who can choose to retire if they wish, needs to be given consideration.

There are significantly more women in the division at all grades than there are men in post.



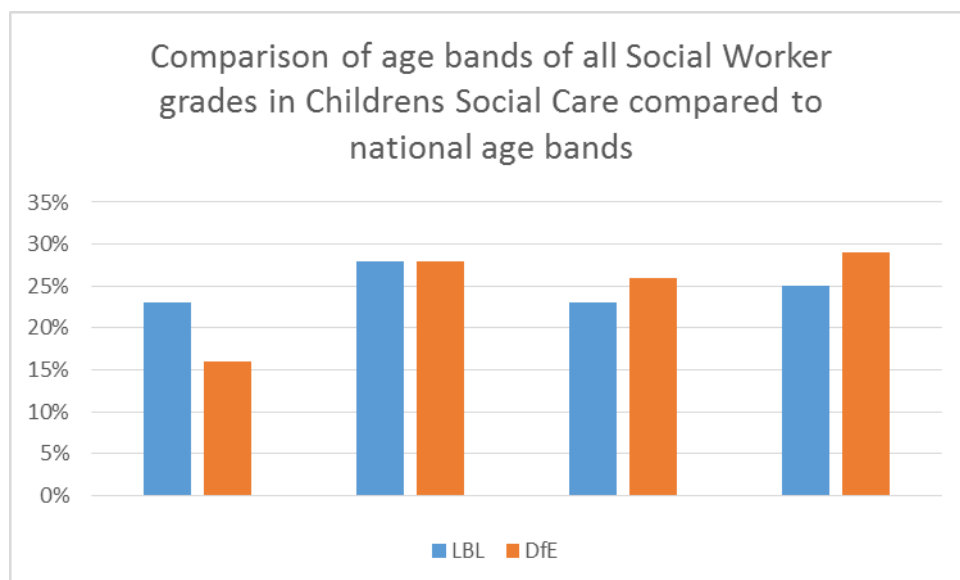
At 42% the percentage of BME SW's in the Division as at April 2016 is higher than the BME percentage of all Council employees (38.2%) and the economically active makeup of the Borough (38.8%) ensuring that the workforce positively reflects the community.



At Team Manager level 27% of staff are BME. By comparison, 20% of Council employees in the grade band PO6 to PO7 are BME. Through CPD and leadership development opportunities, the Division would expect to see more BME staff progressing their careers in the Council.



The chart below outlines the age of all grades of Social Workers in Children’s Social Care (including managers and Service managers) compared to national figures (DfE survey)² . Social Workers in the age band ‘20 to 29’ comprise 23% of the Service, compared to the national level rate of 16% in this age band. The percentages of social workers in the age band ‘30 to 29’ are similar, whilst the percentage of Lewisham social workers in the age bands ‘40 – 49’ (23%) and also ‘50+’(25%) are both lower than the national levels of 26% and 29% respectively in these two age bands.



²https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/503071/SFR07_2016_Main_Text.pdf

2. Our Workforce Priorities

- A sufficient and stable workforce who are appropriately skilled and competent to deliver excellent services and outcomes for children and young people within our diverse community
- A range of effective marketing and recruitment and retention strategies that increase the number of good quality staff who apply and are appointed with the commitment to deliver our vision
- An organisation that supports succession planning by encouraging and supporting post qualifying learning and personal and professional continuous development within a career pathway
- Quality social work practice which captures the views and feedback of children, families and staff and uses this information to inform continuous improvement supported by effective learning development, supervision and management
- Working with partners in other boroughs and HEIs to support the effective education of the future local workforce

3. Delivering our Workforce Priorities

3.1 Recruitment and Retention

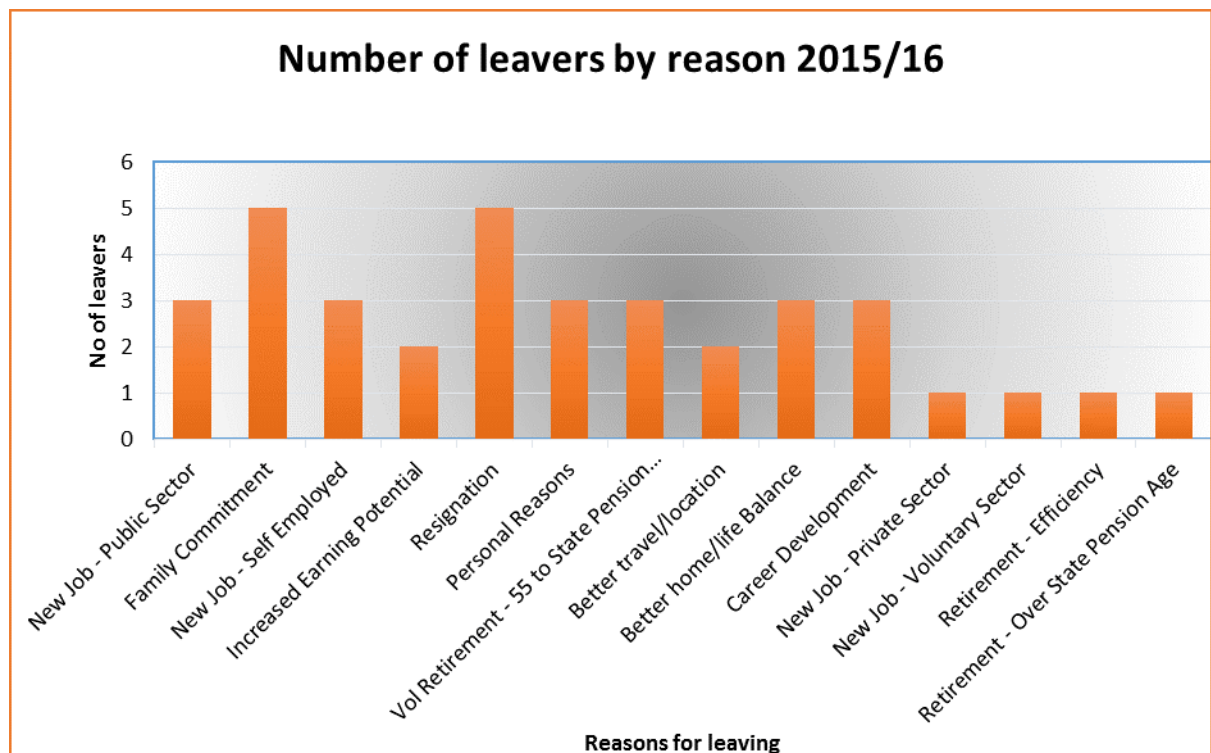
The biggest national challenge facing the children's social care workforce, is an insufficient number of available experienced social workers. In Lewisham we are able to recruit good newly qualified social workers (NQSW), but recruiting and retaining experienced social workers is a key priority.

Although the sufficient number of NQSWs in the market place should help with future demand for more experienced social workers provided these social workers remain in the profession.

An annual analysis report of recruitment and retention activity is undertaken in April which helps inform any specific areas or issues

that need to be monitored or addressed.

Whilst most social workers leaving the Council appear to have enjoyed working for the Council, the main reasons for leaving during the financial year 2014/15 were “family commitment” and “resignation” with numbers of leavers and reasons for leaving outlined in the chart below.



There are a range of very positive reasons why social workers would want to work for Lewisham, including:

- Supportive management/supervision
- Small teams
- Low/managed caseloads
- Excellent post qualifying/CPD opportunities including Twilight workshops on latest research based practice as part of Education Partnership with Goldsmiths
- Innovative approaches such as Theraplay, ADAM, Secure Base
- Excellent ASYE programme
- Career pathway
- Administrative support

- Childcare vouchers
- Paid parking on site

Most staff are motivated by having a positive and supportive working environment, where they are developed and valued. In line with this our annual staff survey indicated that key retention factors are a supportive team and manager. Whilst financial remuneration is usually less important, the upward drift of pay across London and agency pay rates for experienced social workers would appear to be having some impact on recruitment and retention in Lewisham and this is being closely monitored.

A range of options and strategies are kept under review. We are proposing to launch our workforce transformation programme, with the focus over the next 2 years on :

- A clear programme of change management to encourage, develop and support our workforce to deliver excellent social work to children and their families.
- Reviewing models of social work intervention and the introduction of a Lewisham branded model to further improve practice
- Marketing of the benefits of working for Lewisham
- Agency cost control and retaining and attracting permanent workers
- Continuing and expanding learning and development opportunities; including opportunities arising out of the Teaching Partnership
- Review of induction arrangements
- Provide a clear post qualifying framework aligned to career pathways
- Reviewing our recruitment process
- Keeping remuneration under review

3.1.1 Practice Education

Recruitment and retention of NQSWs is a key part of our strategy to provide our experienced social workers of the future. Lewisham is one of 3 boroughs Teaching Partnership with Goldsmith's College, University of London (the other boroughs being Southwark and Greenwich). Working closely with Goldsmiths we will not only continue to provide high quality student placements, but our staff will provide input to the education of students, as 'Teaching Consultants,' through delivery of various sessions to bring practice into the classroom. Lecturers will also be provided with opportunities to undertake activities within the Division to support their own currency and to ensure that employer pressures and priorities in practice inform the delivery of education in the classroom.

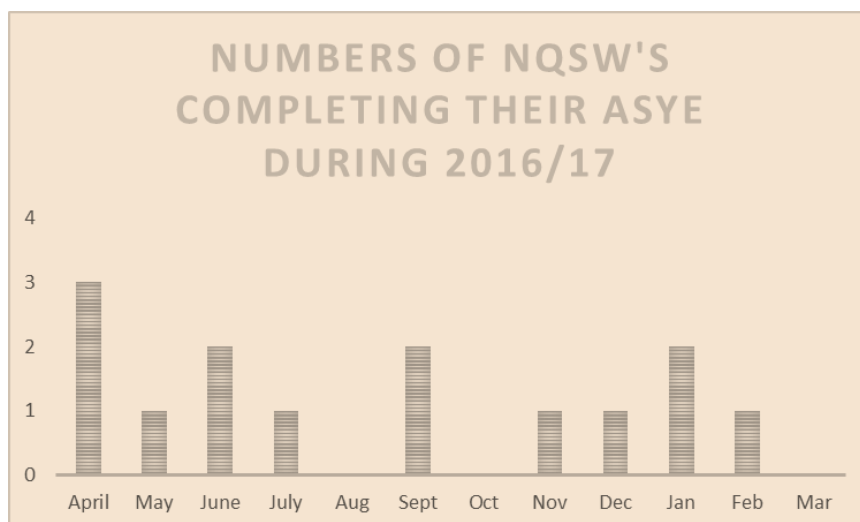
Although our objective is to recruit excellent NQSWs from across London and the South East, our involvement in the Partnership and relationship with Goldsmiths will provide great opportunities to recruit NQSWs who will have had experience of working in our locality through their placements within the partnership and where, as an employer, we will have had some input and influence on their course programme.

Staff are positively encouraged to become Practice Educators as part of their own continuous development and to provide opportunities for career progression.

3.1.2 ASYE

As part of our retention strategy all NQSWs in Lewisham are supported through an excellent ASYE (Assisted & Supported Year in Employment) programme to ensure a positive experience of starting in practice and to ensure that wherever possible NQSWs pass their ASYE and remain with Lewisham. Since the introduction of the ASYE in 2012, the Division has supported 39 NQSWs to successfully complete their ASYE with the Council (as at April 2016)

During the financial year 2015/16, 11 NQSW's completed their ASYE with a further 14 NQSW's scheduled to complete their ASYE in 2016/17 as outlined below.



It appears that the initiatives that the Council currently employs (ie working in Partnership with Goldsmiths University, Step up to Social Work, encouraging NQSW's to apply) is leading to a talent pipeline of younger Social Workers joining the Council. Developing staff through CPD and management development programmes needs to remain a priority to ensure effective succession planning.

Step Up to Social Work (Surrey and South East London partnership)

We have participated in the Step-Up programme for the last 3 years. Most of the Step-Up students placed with us have been appointed to posts in the Council. We will continue to support the programme should it continue.

3.1.4 Agency Pay rates

The last London Council's Children's social worker agency pay rates survey (April 2015) showed that the average rate of pay for an agency workers was:

Social Worker	
All London	28.17
Inner London	25.36
Outer London	29.20
Lewisham	26.50

Senior Social Worker

All London	29.90
Inner London	26.46
Outer London	32.14
Lewisham	29.02

London Chief Executives (led by Barry Quirk, Lewisham's Chief Executive), raised their concerns about the escalation of agency pay rates and its impact on permanent social worker recruitment and retention with the London Heads of HR Group early in 2015. As a result a Memorandum of Cooperation has been developed and signed up to by 29 of the 33 London boroughs as at January 2016. The MOC sets out an agreement between participating boroughs on parameters for agency rates and an understanding that boroughs will not 'poach' agency workers from each other. The Heads of HR Have developed and introduced guidance and protocols to assist boroughs in maintaining a united front in managing agency rates.

A common template for providing references for social worker placements was also introduced early in 2016 to ensure that good and safe practice is confirmed and that checks for the agency workforce have the same rigour as for the permanent workforce.

The Council currently operates an approved supplier arrangement under the umbrella management of Reed. There are currently 15 agencies supplying social workers for Children's social care. Over the last financial year to 31 March 2016, there have been 162 agency qualified social work placements at all levels (SW/SSW/Advanced Practitioner/ IRO/CPC and Team Managers – not just SW placements) at a cost of around £3.4 million. At a micro level this arrangement has helped to avoid increasing hourly rates as agencies compete with each other (maintaining a Lewisham agency rate of around £29 an hour). The managed service arrangement also ensures robust clearance processes are in place and are audited. The cost to the Council of using Reed (and being part of the ESPO) to manage the 162 placements during the 2015/16 year was £9,871 of the total £3.4 million spend.

The current arrangement needs to be kept under review, particularly in light of the MOC and whether or not that will help with standardising agency pay rates in London. It is hoped that

greater control of agency rates in London will encourage fewer permanent staff to leave to pursue agency work and will encourage agency workers to seek permanent employment.

Over reliance on agency workers does not provide consistency and stability for children and young people and impacts financially on the Division.

We will continue to monitor the number of agency placements, recruiting promptly where possible to vacancies.

3.1.6 Social Worker pay

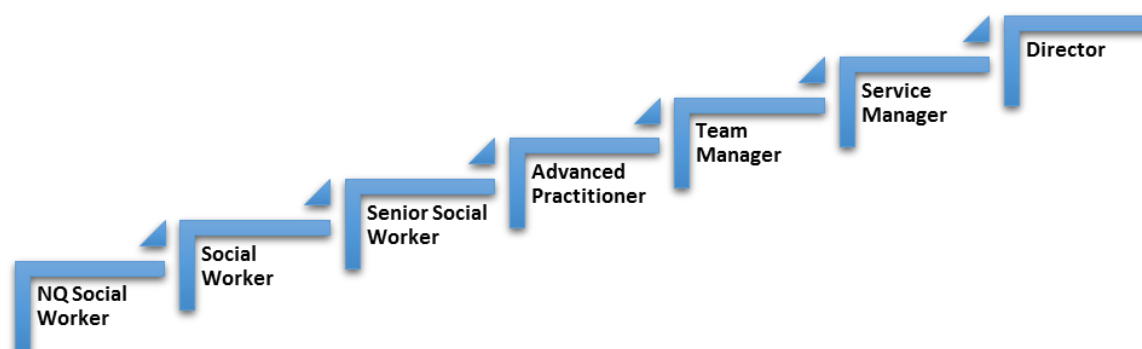
Social Workers in Lewisham are paid well in comparison to other public professionals, and until recently were paid well in comparison to other London boroughs:

However, the problems arising out of the supply and demand of experienced social workers. Pay across London has been steadily rising in a 'leap frog' effect as boroughs strive to compete with each other. A national pay framework for social workers (similar to that for teachers), is not currently being pursued. Without regulation of some sort, pay will continue to be an issue until the supply of experienced social workers meets demand.

3.1.7 Career Pathways

A suggested career pathway was one of the recommendations coming out of the Social Work Reform Board. Lewisham introduced a new role of Advanced Practitioner (AP) 3 years ago. These posts are paid above the Senior Social Worker rate, but below Team Manager and provide an opportunity to take on more of a coaching/mentoring/education role either as a preferred career option, or to develop skills to step into management. The role plays a key part in working with NQSWs during their ASYE, whilst also providing advice for social workers and senior social workers on more complex case work. AP' also carry a small caseload to maintain their own practice. The Advanced Practitioner role provides a career route for those either wanting to specialise in Practice Education, or as a step into management and leadership.

The Lewisham structure is therefore:



We are also looking at management development opportunities for senior social workers looking to move into management. Our participation in the Teaching Partnership provides an opportunity to look at leadership development for both senior social workers and Team Managers. Management development for Senior Social Workers and Advanced Practitioners will help the organisation with succession planning for future Team Manager roles. A clear career pathway supports both recruitment and retention and a number of current Team Managers have been promoted internally from AP roles.

The Principle Social Worker role is currently part of the responsibilities of one of the Service Managers. This will be reviewed to consider whether or not a specific post should be created.

3.2 Learning and Development

Continuous professional development is a key workforce priority for the Division. It is essential that our workforce is highly competent and skilled, both in the interests of our children and young people and to support retention.

During 2016 a post qualifying framework linked to the career pathway will be developed to clarify expectations for both staff and the service on prioritisation of post qualifying training opportunities.

On an annual basis the Director, Senior Management Team (SMT) and the HR Children's Learning & Development Officer identify learning and development priorities for the Division, which inform the divisional *Learning and Development Plan*. This includes

access to a comprehensive range of safeguarding training provided by the Local Children's Safeguarding Board (LCSB). Staff have access to a range of learning activities and management development programmes provided on a corporate basis. The division subscribes to Making Research Count and Research in Practice evidence based practice development (via the Teaching partnership), this includes current research, a book club, seminars, practice workshops and internal sessions facilitated by Kings College London. The Teaching Partnership also provides opportunities for staff to attend Twilight Sessions.

Key areas of the current *Learning and Development Plan 2016-17* include:

- Induction
- ASYE support programme
- Safeguarding, including Child Sexual Exploitation
- Court Skills
- Service specific development activities
- Research & Practice Guidance
- Leadership & Management
- CPD through PQ, PE and specialist routes
- Electronic Learning methods – MeLearning and Learning Pool

Our workforce development requirements will be achieved through:

- Access to an on line system (LMS) which enables staff to take responsibility for their own continuous learning, quality improvement and effectiveness
- Commissioning (both internally and externally) and implementing learning programmes and opportunities which meet identified needs and ensure staff are equipped to provide high quality practice
- Maximising opportunities through the Teaching Partnership



4. Models of practice

During 2016 consideration will be given to the Division's approach to social work to ensure this reflects best current practice. Research on models used effectively by other local authorities will inform discussion on what model would work best in the Lewisham context. A consistent and cohesive approach that improves outcomes for children and young people also provides the opportunity for staff to reflect on practice and continue to develop approaches and strategies that can support them in undertaking their challenging role. A refocussing on the Council's approach and expectations can provide a new and creative opportunity for staff to engage with.

5. Resources & Support

5.1 ICT

Effective ICT is key to enabling social care staff across the division to work efficiently, and to ensure accurate recording and monitoring.

All staff have access to a work station and are provided with relevant training to use both corporate systems and the Division's Electronic Recording System. Recently the Department has upgraded to the latest version of the Liquidlogic system and enhanced capabilities of this will be rolled out within 2016-17.

The Council has recently updated its ICT strategy and entered into a shared service arrangement with Brent Council to improve ICT resources and systems across the Council. The digital strategy has included the roll out of i-pad and i-phones to all practitioners and managers. Mobile working enhancements will be piloted and rolled out throughout 2016-17. A business process review is planned to complement this and ensure that social work processes are supported and IT is aligned with service needs.

5.2 Business Support

Effective business support for those working in the Children's Social Care Division is essential in ensuring that social work professionals can focus on their core activities. Business Support is provided centrally in the Council and there is a team focussing on children & young people. Managers within the hub and in the Children's Social Care Division work closely together to ensure that support is aligned to the needs of the Division.

6. Performance management

Managing performance effectively is an essential management function within the division. Managers within the division are supported by a number of functions to help them do this including the Finance Division, Performance Team and the HR Division.

Effective staff performance is managed through supervision, where professional practice, attendance and capability matters can be raised and measures put in place to support staff to meet the standards expected. Poor performance, including poor attendance impacts on our services to children and young people, and colleagues. Effective staff management is therefore a key expectation of managers. The Council has a range of employment policies to support fair and consistent staff management, and advice and support can be provided through the HR Division should this be necessary.

The Directorate Management Team are provided with a HR performance monitoring report on a monthly basis, and the Director of Children's Social Care is also provided with a monthly Management Information report for the Division.

A review of the current supervision policy and effective use of reflective supervision forms part of action for 2016.

7. Monitoring and review of the Workforce Strategy

This strategy covers the period 2015 – 2018 and is subject to a full review in 2018. The strategy will be reviewed annually. Implementation of the strategy is supported by the annual

recruitment and retention analysis report and the divisional Learning and Development Plan.

Action required for delivering the Workforce Strategy is tracked by a cross Departmental working group, chaired by the Director of Children's Social Care.