

MEMBERS BRIEFING NOTE: 15th November 2017

FutureSocial

The Background

- ❖ We have many effective social workers and managers in the region, with good and outstanding practice in every council
- ❖ There is a persistent shortfall of capable frontline social workers and social work managers with a high reliance on agency workers - c700 at the last count which is c20% of the social work workforce.
- ❖ There are high levels of turnover of staff - often moving between councils in the region
- ❖ Because of instability in the workforce there is inconsistency in the way social work practice and management is undertaken.
- ❖ Costs are also rising as each council tries to outdo the other in terms of workforce reward.
- ❖ There is variable quality training available
- ❖ There is little succession planning for practice leadership.
- ❖ The underperformance in too many services translates into high cost, ineffective relationships and poor outcomes for children and families
- ❖ Children, young people and families that are struggling and need social care support are faced with over-assessment, having to tell their story too many times to new social workers. This creates a culture of poor relationships
- ❖ The cost difference between employing an agency worker and a permanent member of staff is at least £7 per hour.
- ❖ The Region has been awarded from the Innovation Fund up to £1.5m, subject to the proposed Business Plan being accepted.
- ❖ The model will be sustainable by 2019-2020 and enable early wins with savings re-invested maintaining and improving social work practice in all 14 Councils/Trusts.
- ❖ By 2020-2021 FutureSocial will become 'business as usual' replacing current practice with improved approaches that are operating locally, sub-regionally and regionally.
- ❖ Local Authorities won't spend more, they will spend differently. The reductions in agency staff, more cost effective approaches to retention and development will secure cost reductions.
- ❖ By creating a stable workforce where practice has improved and social workers have more time to focus on solving the issues that have brought families to the edge of care we aim to have reduced, by 300, children and young people going into care across the region. The average cost of a child in care is £40,000 per year. This is £12m saving over the 3 years.

The Solution

- ❖ All 14 Local Authorities and Children's Trusts in the West Midlands and the Teaching Partnerships being led by the Universities will work collaboratively.



- ❖ We intend to build the workforce capacity and quality by working together, pooling resources and capability as appropriate.
- ❖ We deliver high quality programmes of activity utilising best practice
- ❖ Coordination of programmes to develop new social workers
- ❖ We develop recruitment/retention programmes to get the best and keep the best
- ❖ We provide post-qualifying continuing professional development
- ❖ We develop leadership development programmes
- ❖ We have effective workforce planning to ensure the region and individual councils have the right shape and size of social work workforce
- ❖ We have significantly less reliance on agency staff whose agencies are also tied into a regional agreement regarding cost and quality of agency staff

The Vision

- ❖ We have only the best social workers and social work managers
- ❖ We deliver the highest standards of social work practice in England to achieve the very best outcomes for children across the region as a whole
- ❖ The West Midlands is seen to be the place to practice social work, with the best training, continuous learning and career development opportunities anywhere in England
- ❖ We are recognised nationally as having a consistently strong, capable, professionally confident cohort of frontline social workers and social work managers
- ❖ We are a driving force for good, stable social care leadership, with a strong voice locally and influencing national practice and policy decisions
- ❖ We create confidence at a national level that practice in the West Midlands is good with future “Partners in Practice” drawn from the region
- ❖ Fewer Children, young people and families needing intense interventions
- ❖ A high percentage of intense interventions result in families staying together due to the social worker’s professionalism
- ❖ We prevent more children and young people from coming into care, having enhanced their future chances with more stable home situations
- ❖ Commissioners are attracting best value contracts by commissioning together to develop the market utilising the strength of 14 Councils/Trusts working as one
- ❖ 90% of social work practice is delivered by highly motivated social workers on permanent contracts
- ❖ We have grown our next generation of leaders across all tiers of management.
- ❖ We have an agreed saving formula that gives a favourable return on investment for all 14 Local Authorities.

