



# Children's Services Recruitment Strategy

Date: 17 June 2015



## Document summary

East Sussex County Council has had an effective recruitment strategy resulting in a lower than the national average vacancy rate. Reliance on agency recruitment has been significantly reduced and the workforce is stable with low staff turnover. Recruitment of NQSWs is successful. However, recruitment of experienced staff remains low. This strategy outlines how Children Services will continue to strengthen our recruitment activity ensuring continued recruitment of newly qualified and experienced staff. The strategy will be implemented by the Recruitment and Retention working groups and overseen and by the Employer Standards Strategic Group.

## Contents

<b>Purpose of the strategy</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Who do we want to recruit?</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>What are we focused on?</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>How will we achieve this?</b> .....	<b>4</b>
Recruiting the right social workers: .....	4
Retaining the right social workers: .....	4
<b>What will help achieve this?</b> .....	<b>5</b>
1. Media Strategy .....	5
2. Workforce planning .....	5
3. Recruitment process .....	6
4. Career Pathway Progression: .....	6

## About this document:

<b>Enquiries:</b> Principal Social Worker Author: <span style="background-color: black; color: black;">[REDACTED]</span> Telephone: <span style="background-color: black; color: black;">[REDACTED]</span> Email: <span style="background-color: black; color: black;">[REDACTED]</span> <b>Download this document</b> From: [Enter download location]	<b>Version number:</b> 4 <sup>th</sup> draft <b>Related information</b>
<b>Accessibility help</b> Zoom in or out by holding down the Control key and turning the mouse wheel. CTRL and click on the table of contents to navigate. Press CTRL and Home key to return to the top of the document Press Alt-left arrow to return to your previous location.	

## Purpose of the strategy

This strategy details how we recruit and retain the right number of social workers with the right level of skills and experience so that we are able to meet current and future service demands (Employer Standards 2). It also looks at how we continue to ensure the workforce is stable and supported resulting in social work practice that makes a difference for children and families.

Our strategy to achieve this focuses on 2 key strands:

1. Having a modern and coherent recruitment and retention process. This needs to be based on the pro-active promotion of ESCC as being **the** place to work (offering a clear social work model of practice, intensive management support, exceptional practice development opportunities, flexible working and other benefits). This promotion is achieved through innovative advertising and development of a media presence by using all media channels (social media, internet, and trade publications).
2. Ensure the strengthening of our reputation and retention through the ongoing development of our service. This will be achieved through continuing to provide outstanding social work student placements, continuing to develop and promote our relationship based model of practice, as well as the ongoing investment in our CPD offer for practitioners and managers, and investment in worker wellbeing (mindfulness and staff benefits).

## Who do we want to recruit?

1. Newly Qualified Social Workers
2. Social Workers
3. Senior Social Workers
4. Manager positions as required

## What are we focused on?

Our most vulnerable children and families live in very complex situations. In order to make a difference to their lives we need to recruit the best and most able practitioners who are hard working and highly motivated. We need to make sure that once recruited that practitioners remain working with us for the long term.

## How will we achieve this?

### Recruiting the right social workers:

- Take advantage of our effective partnerships with local HEIs ensuring that the message is delivered to students that ESCC provides outstanding support and development opportunities for Newly Qualified Social Workers
- Ensure that we provide the necessary quality and quantity of social work student placements so that we identify the best students to apply for posts in East Sussex
- Establish and promote SW academy for our ASYE programme to SW students in local HEIs
- Recruitment website and adverts to be branded reflecting our progressive vision, model of practice, outstanding practice development, manageable caseloads and extensive support, as well as effective promotion of competitive pay rates and rewards (e.g. relocation allowance, career breaks, flexible working hours, payment of HCPC fees, mobile phones, child care vouchers, and flexible working technology)
- ESCC representation at university and career fairs with updated promotional material reflecting above branding

### Retaining the right social workers:

- Promote clear career progression including practice based career pathways (Advanced Practitioner and Principal Social Worker posts)
- Ensure continued effective practitioner support with regular reflective supervision and an open door policy by line managers and high visibility of senior management (supported through management development programme)
- Ensure a working culture of supportive teams and colleagues providing advice, expertise and emotional support (modelled by managers throughout the organisation)
- Recruit the right levels of administrative support to each team
- Provide a rolling programme supporting the introduction of new devices through the AGILE programme ensuring SWs have the skills to use the technology to support their practice
- Developing and updating resources to support practice (e.g. communication toolkit, apps toolkit, Single Source)
- Ensuring a good balance of newly qualified and experienced social workers in each team
- Manageable workloads for all SWs and managers
- Promoting and developing the worker wellbeing package (mindfulness, i-resilience, Single Source, health checks, counselling, physiotherapy, fitness, travel and leisure benefits, childcare vouchers and flexible working)

## What will help achieve this?

### 1. Media Strategy

East Sussex County Council currently has a good reputation as a social work employer. This has been achieved largely through word of mouth, and the positive experience that students have on placement. This reputation needs to be sustained and strengthened through a strong presence in the local and trade media.

#### **A positive media presence/campaign will:**

- Promote the things we get right and demonstrate that social workers make a real difference. This has many benefits and will help to keep parents, carers and children and the wider public better informed, raise the status of the profession, highlight the need for more social workers, attract new people to the profession, help to build trust in the sector and boost internal morale.

#### **How will we achieve this?**

- Developing a marketing strategy and brand that encapsulates what we do best and is threaded throughout all recruitment and promotional activity
- Have a consistent media presence with a long term plan of positive news stories to be provided to local media and trade magazines/on line at regular intervals
- Effectively integrate social media into recruitment activity i.e. regular twitter feeds, use of SW blog, and Facebook.

See attached communication strategy.

### 2. Workforce planning

Regular analysis of workforce development data (sickness, staff movement and exit interviews) at recruitment group will inform prioritisation for recruitment and if warranted focused recruitment campaign

#### **How will we achieve this?**

- Continued review of supply and demand with the HEIs to ensure that there are enough students coming through the system to meet our recruitment needs.
- Constant review of recruitment packages for hard to recruit to teams and posts including promotion of relocation allowances, car lease schemes, and review of salary scales (taking into account cost and benefit analysis)

### 3. Recruitment process

Our recruitment activity needs to be up to date, planned and co-ordinated across the service allowing for the right social workers to be placed in the right positions.

#### How will we achieve this?

- Ensure all managers are aware of the centralised recruitment process which occurs at staged intervals (3 times a year)
- Continue with one round of NQSW recruitment activity a year ensuring all recruited NQSW start at the same time (September)
- Ensure our NQSW recruitment activity begins before the neighbouring authorities
- Current selection and recruitment activity to be reviewed and different recruitment models considered and best practice adopted (NSPCC resilience model etc.)
- Review internal expression of interest process and promote across the service

See attached recruitment process documentation including NQSW selection process, Senior Social Worker selection process including moderation panel.

### 4. Career Pathway Progression:

In order to attract potential employees and to retain practitioners we need to offer a clear learning pathway from NQSW to our most experienced manager. We also need to provide a practice and managerial based career pathway that is clearly connected to the learning offer.

#### How will we achieve this?

Deliver the following programme:

- Assessed and Supported First Year in Employment
- Compass Career Development Programme (experienced staff)
- Practice Managers Development Programme
- Senior Managers Development Programme
- Practice Lead / Champion model (experienced staff supported to be practice lead in domestic abuse, learning disability, mental health, sexual abuse, substance abuse)

Recruited to the following positions:

- Practice Managers
- Professional Educators (Social Work Education Team)
- Advanced Practitioners (SWIFT, Children Disability Service)
- Principal Social Worker