

Children & Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee

27 September 2022

Children and Families Social Worker Health Check (2021)

Recommendation(s)

That the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee considers and comments upon the Social Work Health Check annual report presented to DLT on 10th August 2022.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The LGA evaluation of performance against the standards for employers of social workers ('social work health check') found that overall Warwickshire children and families service perform well both in absolute terms and also in comparison to regional and national employers.
- 1.2 The conclusion of the report outlines the following findings:
 - As a whole local authority, (i.e. looking at both Children's and Adults Services) we were placed 26th (33rd in 2020) in the Country and 5th (3rd in 2020) in the Region.
 - For Children's Social Work, the majority of standards were in the 'good' range. No areas were graded as requiring clear steps to improve, a small number had moderate scores, i.e. were capable of improvement.
 - Staff overwhelmingly appreciate and acknowledge that we have a strong and clear social work framework.
- 1.3 Our key strengths from the Survey in 2021 included:
 - 89% agreed with a Strong and Clear Social Work Framework
 - 88% felt cared for by their supervisor/manager and encouraged/motivated development
 - 87% reported supervision with skilled supervisor, with 84% receiving coaching in professional judgement, creativity and autonomy, with 89% identifying their CPD needs
 - 85% know where to get help in the organisation if concerned about their wellbeing in respect of amount or nature of work expected to do
 - 82% agreed that they have been supported to work safely and effectively within a clear social work practice framework and raise any concerns around quality of supervision

- 1.4 Comparing outcomes against the 2020 health check the area showing the highest increase in scoring was Supervision with a jump from 77% to 84% followed by Strong and Clear Social Work Framework.
- 1.5 However, although our score increased there is work to do across all teams, following the comments from Ofsted that:
Supervision varies in quality. Social workers themselves find supervision and group team discussions helpful, enabling them to reflect on their practice. In teams where supervision is stronger, social workers benefit from reflective discussions, with actions from previous sessions followed up. In other teams, supervision records indicate limited discussion, and actions on casework do not align sufficiently with the child's plan. Leaders are already taking action to improve the quality of supervision.
- 1.6 Areas for Improvement from the Survey in 2021 continue to be in respect of workload and CPD:
- 68% felt they had a satisfactory level of control over workload
 - 62% found the programme they completed for their ASYE was effective.
- 1.7 Before this annual survey we had sought more detailed feedback on these areas and incorporated into our Academy planning, feedback is now more positive now from the participants.
- 68% felt that they had the time, resources, and opportunity to carry out CPD workload
 - 72% felt that they had an effective induction
 - 72% felt encouraged & empowered to make time for wellbeing and selfcare activities
 - 73% felt that allocation of work was a fair process taking account of workload, capability, health and wellbeing
 - 77% felt satisfied with their Continuous Professional Development
- All learning has been incorporated into our strategic review and our Action Plan.
- 1.8 Further information is provided in Appendix 1. This includes the Warwickshire Children and Families workforce strategy annual review, dated July 2022.
- 1.9 Previously the Overview and Scrutiny Committee enjoyed the opportunity to meet some social workers in person to discuss their experiences. We continue to offer this opportunity to the committee.

2. Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.. However, the findings of the review do reference to the ongoing financial pressures of recruitment for children's social workers. These increasing costs are managed within the cost centres of recruiting managers.

3. Environmental Implications

None

4. Supporting Information

None

5. Timescales associated with the decision and next steps

5.1 None

Appendices

1. **Children and Families Social Work Health Check Report - DLT on 10/08/2022**

Background Papers - None

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