

Report

Report to:	Social Work Resources Committee
Date of Meeting:	28 June 2023
Report by:	Director, Health and Social Care Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources)

Subject:	Locality Based Social Work Services Modernisation Programme
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1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- advise of proposals to update the model of delivery of services with a reconfiguration of front line posts, increased Senior Practitioner posts and development of additional Operations Manager posts and Fieldwork Managers across localities
- update the committee in relation to recruitment and retention challenges across localities primarily with Qualified Social Worker posts

2. Recommendation(s)

2.1. The Committee is asked to approve the following recommendation(s):-

- (1) note the contents of the report;
- (2) approve the resource's proposals to progress changes to the operational structure across social work services;
- (3) approve the amendments to the establishment in the posts identified in section 7 of the report.

3. Background

3.1. The Social Work teams operating within the four localities are the essential core of the Social Work Service. They undertake the Council's statutory duties relating to Assessment and Care Management, Mental Health and Public Protection. The primary workforce comprises Social Workers and Mental Health Officers who are regulated by the Scottish Social Services council (SSSC). This workforce is managed by Team Leaders who are also registered Social Workers who provide the professional support and leadership that is vital to delivering services and protecting the most vulnerable of South Lanarkshire's citizens. The workforce is deployed in:

- Children
- Justice
- Adult and Older People
- Hospitals Social Work Team
- CARes
- Mental Health

- 3.2. In Adult and Older people teams, this workforce is supplemented by a cohort Occupational Therapists (OT) who are registered with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC). Similar to the Social Workers, registered OT Team Leaders manage them. These OT's are therefore also in scope in this report. There is currently a gap in the service delivery model within Adult and Older People, where there is no Grade 4 Operations Manager in the structure.
- 3.3. In Children and Justice Services there is currently a Grade 4 Operations Manager role in part of the structure, but not within Fieldwork Services.
- 3.4. Team Leaders, manage Social Workers and also assign work to Senior Practitioners, who are also managed by the Fieldwork Managers in a professional development capacity (this is a matrix management arrangement). The Team Leaders also oversee a group of para professional Social Work Assistant/Family Support Worker and similar roles. This para professional workforce is similarly responsible for care managing and safeguarding vulnerable people.
- 3.5. Recruitment and staff retention has been challenging across social work services over a number of years. This is not solely a South Lanarkshire issue but a national concern.
- 3.6. Within the Social Work Risk Register, Service Demand Pressures and Workforce Availability have been reported as Very High Risk since the pandemic started and the recruitment and retention pressures for Qualified Social Workers (QSW) has not abated.
- At May 2023, there was a 25% vacancy rate in QSW's, this is primarily within locality offices.
 - In some offices, the vacancy rate in QSW is at 50%.
- 3.7. Within Localities, some of the key front line services that are provided are to undertake the public protection duties such as child protection adult protection and managing high risk offenders. In addition, there has been an increase in referrals in relation to public protection. There is a significant risk that public protection duties will be compromised due to recruitment and retention issues. In addition, the knock on effect is that other statutory duties such as assessment and care management for all other duties are being reprioritised in order to ensure statutory public protection responsibilities are being met.
- 3.8. Social Work has developed a Sustainability and Value Option Appraisal Screening Scale (Appendix 1), to provide oversight and ensure that public protection duties are a priority. Currently within Services and localities work is routinely being redistributed and reprioritised in order to meet the staffing challenges, however this is not sustainable. It is also important to note that across the service in terms of retention that there needs to be a balance of experienced and newly qualified social workers to ensure the correct skill set is in place and staff are trained and capable of undertaking the public protection duties. The current recruitment and retention issues are impacting on this balance.

- 3.9. In terms of the current service model, the Social Work Committee of 7 September 2022 approved the report entitled “Enhancing Social Work Fieldwork Capacity” which begun to address emergent issues in respect of Social Worker capacity in Adult services. That paper approved funding to support the extension of Senior Practitioner roles and an intent supported by approved funding for a “review of the current delivery model and structure to support workforce development, recruitment and retention and staff/management ratios.”
- 3.10. There have been identified service model improvements that are required in relation to:
- Staff and management ratios
 - The gap in a Grade 4 management post in some areas of the structure
 - The matrix management of the Social Worker Senior Practitioner role
 - The impact of the current structure on service demand and delivery
 - Staff and caseload ratios
- 3.11. Previously reported to Committee in September 2022, was funding to improve Adult Fieldwork Capacity and Adult Services. Following on from this there are proposed changes in relation to Commissioning, Quality and Assurance and Planning and Performance.

4. Current Challenges

- 4.1. The Setting the Bar report (Social Work Scotland, 2022), “found that the size of the social work workforce in Scotland has remained relatively unchanged in recent years, and now faces retention and recruitment challenges”. It notes factors such as poor management of caseloads, shortcomings in support for front line workers, loss of administrative support and consequent task acquisition as being material factors in workforce attraction and retention in a profession where, “within six years, 75% remain registered, meaning 1 in 4 staff will leave the profession. This report proposes measures which will improve South Lanarkshire’s position as an employer of this workforce by strengthening the management and support capacity.
- 4.2. It is evident that the Council faces ongoing challenges in recruiting and retaining Social Workers and their Team Leaders in a very competitive labour force market. Their qualifications and skills are highly sought after and there are extensive opportunities for those working at this level to secure employment in neighbouring authorities in similar or more specific roles. In addition, a few neighbouring authorities offer a higher salary level and may secure applications from the most experienced workforce in their adjacent authorities.
- 4.3. A previous report to the Social Work Committee detailed an implementation of the Social Worker Senior Practitioner grade that had been previously primarily progressed with the Mental Health Officers (MHO’S) in recognition of the more advanced skill set. The definition of Senior Practitioner role has been extended in consultation with the trade unions and enabled Social Workers and potentially OTs with additional training, and established skills in undertaking more complex work, to advance through the Senior Practitioner Grade. This provides a stronger career pathway for Registered practitioners and creates the facility to offer more specialist roles akin to the MHO such as coaching, mentoring and complex work as an additional accountability. This in turn will support retention, succession planning and service demand.

- 4.4. However, the clarification for the criteria for the Senior Practitioner role requires appropriate management arrangements to be put in place. The delivery model will work better with the Senior Practitioner reporting to an Operations Manager for both work being assigned and for professional practice and development. This management arrangement will support opportunities for progression and career pathways.
- 4.5. Due to the challenges known locally and described in this section, the service requires to modernise its approach to service delivery and create a service model to mitigate the risks that have been ongoing in recruitment and with retention particularly in local offices.

5. Employee Engagement and Consultation

- 5.1. Consultation and engagement events took place in March 2023 across Children and Justice Services. Attached at Appendix 2 is a report that highlights the feedback from the events and this demonstrated that there is a clear need to modernise redesign and demonstrate a commitment to recruitment and with retention for our workforce. It also recognised that the biggest area of risk for the service was in locality settings and settings primarily responsible for delivering public protection arrangements i.e. child protection and adult support and protection. It is in the delivery of public protection responsibilities primarily within localities that the service see the biggest turnover of staff that creates a risk in the service. These issues and challenges are also reflected across adult and older people's services.

6. Three Horizons Redesign Proposal

- 6.1. As a result of Service demands and the Service Model improvement requirements that have emerged, it is proposed that:
- The current role of Operations Manager within Social Work is expanded into locality structures
 - The Operations Manager already exists across Social Work. The tasks in this job profile of both managing an operational service and contributing to more strategic and governance activity would provide the role the service requires within its structure.
 - This Operations Manager would report into the Fieldwork Manager and hence provide a clear career pathway.
 - This report proposes a remodelling of the line management arrangements for the posts in scope that would involve the deletion of a number of Team Leader posts and the creation of Operations Manager posts. The proposal takes account of the need to ensure appropriate spans of responsibility for the post holder.
- 6.2. The establishment of Operations Manager posts will increase capacity with the new Operations Managers assuming wider public protection responsibilities in chairing Adult Protection Child Protection and high risk Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA). It is envisaged that the implementation will be phased in over a period of around 12 months. See Appendix 3 for an illustration of current structure and proposed structure.

- 6.3. The service recommends that a further element of Horizon one is the establishment of Planning and Performance roles in each of the Localities to support these new management arrangements. These new roles would assume responsibility for the management of data which is used to monitor, prioritise, report on and plan locality social work services and allocation of resources. In addition the Quality and Commissioning Service Manager is currently established on a fixed term basis and it is proposed this is a permanent arrangement. These additions would apply only for HSCP posts.
- 6.4. Horizons two and three will build upon this platform and can run in parallel. There is recognition within the service that there is an opportunity to modernise and integrate practice at the locality level. Children's services have already commenced this transition through the creation of Early Help Hubs (EEH) which are successfully developing a network of community partnership resources which can wrap around the household in need of support. The HSCP have also undertaken tests of change in using the Community Led Support model ([Community Led Support - NDTi](#)), which like the child and family hubs, promotes "good conversations" and early intervention to provide help and promote engagement with universal, local third sector or statutory services. There is an opportunity to progress this approach across all of the locality Social Work services once there is a stable base to support the work required. This redesign of existing resources and operational models would comprise Horizon two of this change programme.
- 6.5. Horizon three is also relevant for all of Social Work but has a particular resonance for the HSCP as it considers the integration of practice models in the localities. Whilst there are examples of integrated teams e.g. CAREs they tend to sit alongside rather than being embedded in locality team structures. Horizon three would involve further testing the opportunity to better integrate and embed these elements within the locality teams. By its nature, this work will take a little longer to mature than the more pressing matters which horizon one addresses.

7. Senior Practitioners

- 7.1. As advised at section 4.3 the extension of the Senior Practitioner role has previously been agreed. The redesign of the locality model of delivery will support the recruitment of Senior Practitioners who will report to the new Operations Managers. It is proposed that up to a third of the current front line Social Worker and Occupational Therapist posts can and should be advertised and recruited to as Senior Practitioner roles. This will not only support recruitment of experienced staff but also demonstrate and support a career pathway for existing staff to remain within South Lanarkshire.
- 7.2. It should be noted that progression to a Senior Practitioner post is not based on a recognition or reward for length of service but dependent on service needs and demands; post qualifying and training awards; a commitment to undertaking complex intensive work; coaching and mentoring and leadership qualities as part of a team. They will be practitioners who can work professionally and autonomously across partnership and wider stakeholder groups and should be the Operations Managers and Services Managers of the future within South Lanarkshire.

8. Employee Implications

8.1. The proposed changes on a permanent basis to the staffing establishment are set out in the tables below:

Table 1
HSCP Social Work

Post	Current No of posts	Proposed No of posts	Grade	SCP range	Hourly rate	Annual salary	Gross cost	Total cost
Operations Manager	0	32	G4 L2-L5	82 - 88	£25.37 - £27.76	£46,298 - £50,659	£60,330 - £66,013	£1,930,560 - £2,112,416
Team Leader	36	0	G3 L8	79 - 80	£24.28 - £24.64	£44,309 - £44,966	£57,738 - £58,590	(£2,078,568) - (£2,109,240)
Planning and Performance Officer	0	4	G3 L4	72 - 74	£22.07 - £22.53	£40,276 - £41,115	£52,480 - £53,573	£209,920 - £214,292

8.2. The changes proposed in the above as part of the redesign will be delivered within the existing budget provision. This includes a sum of £365,689 of the HSCP's funds previously set aside for this purpose at the Social Work Committee of 7 September 2022 from new ring fenced funding for improving capacity for Adult Social Workers.

Table 2
Commissioning and Quality Assurance Team

Post	Current No of posts	Proposed No of posts	Grade	SCP range	Hourly rate	Annual salary	Gross cost	Total cost
Service Manager	0	1	G5 L1-L5	96 - 103	£31.25 - £34.65	£57,028 - £63,233	£74,312 - £82,398	£74,312 - £82,398

8.3. The funding for the above post will come from continued reduced expenditure on commissioned areas. The Leadership role for this team has been central to its success. It is proposed that this leadership role is made substantive to support this essential activity on an ongoing basis. Budget will be realigned from identified budget lines in order to fund the post above.

Table3
Children and Families

Post	Current No of posts	Proposed No of posts	Grade	SCP range	Hourly rate	Annual salary	Gross cost	Total cost
Operations Manager	0	20	G4 L2-L5	82 - 88	£25.37 - £27.76	£46,298 - £50,659	£60,330 - £66,013	£1,206,600 - £1,320,260
Team Leaders	22.5	0	G3 L8	79 - 80	£24.28 - £24.64	£44,309 - £44,966	£57,738 - £58,590	(£1,299,105 - £1,303,628)

- 8.4. The changes to the delivery model identified above come out as cost neutral in relation to the changes from Team Leaders to Operation Manager posts. In order to create additional Senior Practitioner posts for locality based staff that undertake public protection/child protection duties, this will result in a reduction of 3.5 FTE substantive posts from the current Children and Families establishment. This should however support a higher skilled and experienced workforce and address retention issues to support full recruitment and retention.

Table 4
Justice Services

Post	Current No of posts	Proposed No of posts	Grade	SCP range	Hourly rate	Annual salary	Gross cost	Total cost
Fieldwork Manager	0	2	G5 L1	96 - 97	£31.25 - £31.73	£57,028 - £57,904	£74,312 - £75,449	£148,624 - £150,898
Operations Manager	4	7	G4 L2-L5	82 - 88	£25.37 - £27.76	£46,298 - £50,659	£60,330 - £66,013	£180,990 - £198,039
Team Leader	4	0	G3 L8	79 - 80	£24.28 - £24.64	£44,309 - £44,966	£57,738 - £58,590	(£230,952) - (£234,360)

- 8.5. The changes in the above model of delivery will be delivered within the current Section 27 allocation to justice services to deliver statutory Justice services. these proposals are within the current budget allocation for staffing to deliver services.
- 8.6. Normal recruitment processes will be followed to provide access to these opportunities for all staff in a fair and reasonable way.

9. Financial Implications

- 9.1. The changes proposed in this report for HSCP staff will be delivered within the existing budget provision. This includes a sum of £365,689 of the HSCP's funds previously set aside for this purpose at the Social Work Committee of 7 September 2022 from new ring fenced funding for improving capacity for Adult Social Workers. The Service Manager post for Commissioning and Quality Assurance is self-funding from continued reduced expenditure on commissioned areas with budget being realigned as required.
- 9.2. The redesign within Children and Families will be within existing staff budget allocation. Whilst this will result in an overall reduction in front line staff (3.5 FTE QSW posts removed from establishment) with increased Senior Practitioner posts, it will promote better retention and recruitment of more experienced staff and build resilience in the system. There is no additional budget required to make the changes to establishment and roles.
- 9.3. The changes to the Justice Services are within existing budget allocation for Justice services and can be met within existing Section 27 Grant from Scottish Government for Justice services.

10. Climate Change, Sustainability and Environmental Implications

- 10.1. There are no implications in relation to climate change, sustainability and environmental implications contained within this report.

11. Other Implications

- 11.1. These proposals mitigate the existing risk that there is insufficient capacity in the registered workforce to meet statutory duties. By not addressing the current recruitment and retention challenges there is a risk that the council will not meet its statutory requirements for delivering public protection arrangements and wider social work services.

12. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements

- 12.1. Engagement and consultation has taken place across the service as identified in appendix 1. Also across management teams within Adult and Older People Services. This is not a change in policy so no Equality Impact Assessment is required.
- 12.2. The proposals set out in this report have been the subject of discussion with the trade unions.

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30 March 2023

Link(s) to Council Values/Priorities/Outcomes

- ◆ caring, connected, sustainable communities
- ◆ our children and young people thrive
- ◆ people live the healthiest lives possible

Previous References

- ◆ Enhancing Social Work Fieldwork Capacity, Social Work Resources Committee, September 2022
- ◆ Social Work Resources Workforce Plan, Social Work Committee, September 2022

List of Background Papers

- ◆ Appendix 1 Sustainability and Value Option Appraisal Screening Scale
- ◆ Appendix 2 Children and Justice Engagement Events
- ◆ Appendix 3 Structure Chart Illustration. Current and Proposed Structure

Contact for Further Information

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact:

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Proposed Value & Sustainability Option Appraisal Screening Scale

