

SOCIAL AND HEALTH CARE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Thursday 2 nd March, 2023
Report Subject	Cultivating social work and occupational therapy students 'growing our own'
Cabinet Member	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Social Services and Wellbeing
Report Author	Chief Officer (Social Services)
Type of Report	Information only

EXECUTIVE SUMMAR

Social care is becoming more challenging as people have more complex, demanding social, health and care needs. It's therefore important that Flintshire Social Services have a strong and stable workforce which is key to delivering high quality, effective and consistent practice to our children, adults and families in our community.

Identifying the potential in our current workforce and investing in their development helps make employees feel valued. This in turn increases motivation, improves job satisfaction, nurtures a greater sense of loyalty and most importantly, supports improvement in practice and outcomes for the people we support.

Our managers are keen to spot and support motivated people to reach their full potential and will work in partnership with the Workforce Development Team to design a learning route appropriate to that individual.

Using supervision and staff appraisal additional training opportunities are available to support employees to meet the entry requirement for ongoing professional training.

We want our practitioners to remain in the sector and who are dedicated to supporting and improving the everyday lives of the people and families they work with.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That the committee acknowledge and support the efforts being made to cultivate and develop social work and occupational therapy students within the council.
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE CULTIVATING SOCIAL WORK AND OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY STUDENTS 'GROWING OUR OWN'
1.01	<p>The Social Care Wales Workforce Development Programme (SCWWDP) has recently been reviewed and has increased the social work offer to local authorities. This includes increasing the ability to “grow our own”.</p> <p>We have therefore been in a position to increase our social work traineeship numbers. In 2021 we offered 4 places on traineeships across adults and children’s services. In 2022, due to additional funding we increased this number to 10 places.</p> <p>Additionally, Flintshire hosts 13 students a year from Glyndwr university. At present we have: -</p> <p>1st years x 10 2nd years x11 3rd years x 8</p> <p>Currently we have 3 members of staff training to become qualified occupational health therapists with one person qualifying with a first-class honour degree last year.</p> <p>It is anticipated that once completing their traineeships and graduating, these individuals will remain at Flintshire County Council therefore creating more stability in our workforce.</p> <p>We encourage employees to remain in the employment of FCC for a minimum of 3 years post qualification. Employees are required to sign a Learning Agreement when commencing their traineeship, agreeing to this.</p>
1.02	<p>We also support staff to undertake ‘step up’ qualifications in order to progress their roles through the Open University. During 2021/22 we have been fortunate to be able to fund 10 places on these qualifications. These modules together, are equivalent to the first year of the social work traineeship and we hope that upon successful completion many of our staff will progress to their second- and third-year studies before going on to qualify.</p>
1.03	<p>Within Social Services, our teams are keen to offer shadowing opportunities for interested colleagues for them to gain experience and knowledge of what the social work and occupational therapy role can entail.</p>

	<p>Currently the situation regarding training opportunities for occupational therapy staff has undergone a change. These changes are part of wider issues relating to increased demand and capacity across Wales.</p>
1.04	<p>Flintshire County Council are committed to working with universities and Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) to develop and maintain a steady stream of opportunities for occupational therapy staff through training, mentoring, rotation, recruitment and retention.</p>
1.05	<p>Continuous Professional Development</p> <p>Social workers and occupational health therapists are required to maintain their knowledge and skills throughout their career to demonstrate that they continue to meet the professional standards. As part of their registration, all social workers record their continuing professional development (CPD) with Social Care Wales to demonstrate to them and the public that they remain fit to practice.</p> <p>Our Workforce Development Team based within Social Services, supports continuous professional development across our social care sector in order to deliver a motivated and skilled workforce, with an emphasis on supporting staff retention.</p> <p>Flintshire social work and occupational therapy practitioners have access to a range of opportunities that support their development. An annual training plan is developed that supports the consolidation and advancement of key skills and knowledge to strengthen the workforce and improve outcomes for children, adults and families.</p> <p>We offer a variety of methods of delivery in addition to formal training and workshops and through our links with the North Wales Safeguarding Board, Social Care Wales and partnership with the Wales Union Learning Fund (WULF).</p> <p>We aim to build on this work and continue to support the sector towards a profession that's valued, feels valued, and has all the support to thrive within a positive working culture.</p>
1.06	<p>Occupational therapy traineeship - application process</p> <p>Information is circulated with employees working in social care invited to submit expressions of interest for the OT traineeship.</p> <p>Candidates must have Maths and English GCSE or equivalent, 112 UCAS Tariff points and evidence of recent academic study (In the last 5 years) to apply for the course.</p> <p>Interviews are conducted with FCC and successful candidates are then offered a further interview with Glyndwr university then selected for a place on the course.</p>
1.07	<p>Social Work traineeship - application process</p> <p>SW traineeship applications are considered annually from our employees who wish to progress into social work. Again, information is circulated across adults and children's settings. Those interested need their manager</p>

	support in order to be released from their duties to go on placements during years 2 and 3 of the course. Interviews are then held internally, and successful candidates are selected and offered a place on the traineeship with the Open University.
1.08	<p>Moving on to permanent positions</p> <p>Working in partnership with a number of universities in the past three years we have employed 25 newly qualified social workers. 6 of these are our own trainees undertaking their qualification through the Open University but the other 19 studied with Glyndwr, Chester and Liverpool John Moores University. The students from Glyndwr University are hosted by Flintshire for the 3 years of their degree and undertake their 2 long placements within Flintshire services. We host 13 students each year from Glyndwr and work with them to encourage them to apply for available posts on their qualification. Having this connection with the counties and teams students will often go on to apply for jobs in the teams they were placed in or other posts within Flintshire.</p>

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	There are no resource applications.

3.00	IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT
3.01	N/A

4.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT
4.01	N/A

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix 1 - Flyer traineeship

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	N/A

7.00	CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS
7.01	<p>Contact Officer: Jackie Goundrey, Workforce Development Manager Telephone: 01352 702670 E-mail: Jackie.goundrey@flintshire.gov.uk</p>

8.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
8.01	None.