

Health and Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date of Meeting	Thursday 5 December 2024
Report Subject	Social Services Workforce Development Report
Cabinet Member	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Social Services and Wellbeing
Report Author	Chief Officer (Social Services)
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Social Care Wales Workforce Development Programme (SCWWDP) provides annual funding to help with the development of the social care sector in Wales. This grant helps the Flintshire Workforce Development Team fund a range of work programmes, including learning, development and professional qualifications.

It is both essential and in many cases a requirement of professional registration that those working in social care are equipped with the right skills, knowledge and learning to provide high quality care and support to individuals and families using our services.

Investment in training and development helps lead to a confident and competent workforce, which ultimately improves the lives of those who need care and support. It also supports staff retention, as staff feel valued because of the investment made.

Each year the service aims to build on this and continue to support a sector that is both valuable and valued and has the support to thrive within a positive working culture.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That Members acknowledge and support the work being undertaken to support the social care workforce through learning and development opportunities.
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING SOCIAL SERVICES WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT REPORT
1.01	<p>The Workforce Development Team support pre and post graduate learning, vocational learning and offer training programmes to support the statutory functions of Social Services. This report provides a summary of this activity over the past 12 months, together with information relating to work undertaken to support workforce recruitment and retention.</p>
1.02	<p>Learning and Development</p> <p>The Workforce Development Team support paid and unpaid staff working within the social care sector across Flintshire to develop the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes required to provide person-centred, high quality support for our service users; through providing expert advice and consultancy which promotes and maintains best working practice. The training plan and directory of courses are developed each year, based on analysis of team's Training Needs Assessment. It is then shared across Social Services and with our Independent and Third Sector partners. Each year the Workforce Development Team work collaboratively with partners including BCUHB and the North Wales Safeguarding Board to ensure the work meets local needs and is aligned to regional and national workforce priorities.</p>
1.03	<p>Whilst the team are pro-active in their approach to planning and development, they also remain reactive in responding to new legislation and Child and Adult Practice Reviews, to ensure that necessary recommendations are implemented on a local level.</p> <p>Throughout last year, our training courses continued to be delivered through both internal and external providers and we supported the needs of our learners by providing flexible learning via online, out of hours and face to face delivery.</p>
1.04	<p>During 2023 the team delivered in excess of 300 training courses to almost 4,000 paid and unpaid staff working in adult and children's settings. During this period, bespoke training programmes were developed for Flintshire Microcarers and our in-house Children's residential service. From courses delivered, 1,220 evaluation forms were completed and returned, 88% said that the course had improved their knowledge.</p>
1.05	<p>Practice Workshops</p> <p>Our Practice workshops have been developed using in-house expertise to support practice developments and local priorities and are facilitated with an experienced inhouse practitioner. These workshops have been incredibly helpful in ensuring our social work teams embed learning from training, local/national reviews and CIW Inspections into internal processes and day to day practice.</p>

1.06	<p>Examples of topics delivered include Chronologies, Child Protection Case Conferences and Core Groups.</p> <p>The latter is delivered to a multi-agency audience which includes our Education and Health partners. Teaching staff in particular, have been positive in their feedback stating that their understanding and confidence on their role has improved, as well as being better informed on expectations in relation to their contribution at those Groups and in the child protection process overall.</p>
1.07	<p>Occupational Therapy</p> <p>Working with Wrexham University, each year we continue to support our employees to complete qualifications to support progression into Occupational Therapy (OT). Those who aren't eligible to apply for the traineeship are supported to complete a foundation course with the university, so they are better placed to apply the following year. We currently have 5 members of staff undertaking the traineeship. One of our recent graduates is now working full time with Flintshire as an OT.</p>
1.08	<p>Direct Care staff – Qualifications</p> <p>In addition to mandatory training, it is a requirement for Direct Care staff in Wales to hold relevant qualifications in Health & Social Care, in order for them to be registered with Social Care Wales and carry out their roles.</p> <p>Our Health & Social Care Assessment team continue their partnership work with Coleg Cambria, City & Guilds and WJEC, managing and assessing cohorts of staff undertaking these qualifications.</p>
1.09	<p>Since May 2023, 40 learners have completed both Core and Practice qualifications, and one learner has completed level 3. Currently we have 31 learners undertaking Level 2 Core and Practice and 2 on Level 3. Increasingly more of our care staff are being identified with Additional Learning Needs (ALN) and some staff are anxious about completing the qualifications, despite often having the necessary skills and experience in their role.</p> <p>Having an inhouse service has been integral to ensuring we have competent and confident care home staff. Offering one to one support and flexibility within our service has resulted in many staff who had previously considered leaving the sector, completing their qualifications and remaining in employment. This therefore directly links to improving staff retention.</p>
1.10	<p>Direct Care – Training</p> <p>In addition to the necessary qualifications, staff must complete training across core subjects, including Medication, Moving & Handling of People, Food Safety. Without completing the required courses, staff are unable to carry out their roles.</p>

	<p>To assist with increased demand for this training, we were fortunate to receive grant funding for a temporary post which has enabled us to deliver these courses inhouse since 2023, thus reducing our commissioning costs, increasing provision and subsequently the numbers of staff who are able to carry out their roles.</p> <p>The post is flexible and able to provide support in the community for our Personal Assistants, Microcarers and Unpaid Carers, when needed. We have also utilised this role in assessing competency in relation to Medication and Moving & Handling of People across various care settings.</p>
1.11	<p>Many new training programmes are available to help care staff in their roles, for example recently a variety of Dementia related courses and an End-of-Life course have been developed.</p> <p>As we now have four qualified and accredited staff members working in our Learning Disability Service delivering Respect Training (a programme of training that is used in education, health and social care settings to prevent, de-escalate and safely support people who may display behaviours of concern).</p> <p>There is also a rolling programme in place for Learning Disability staff and continue to promote Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) and non-restrictive practice approaches.</p> <p>The Workforce Development Team have also offered information and awareness sessions to care staff to improve their confidence and competence and contribute to developing a digitally ready workforce. One of our officers is a member of Flintshire's Digital Squad.</p>
1.12	<p>Social Work</p> <p>Since 2022 we have increased our 'grow our own' numbers of social work trainees. Having an inhouse Practice Educator post has helped to support this. Our arrangement with Wrexham University continues in that we host 13 students each year from their social work degree course.</p> <p>These students are supported throughout the 3 years, with practice learning opportunities and varied placements for them to gain valuable experience as a social worker. Last year we hosted eleven first year students, ten second year and eleven third year, who were all provided with placements in statutory or voluntary sector services.</p>
1.13	<p>Each year, via the Open University we offer our workforce the opportunity to train as social workers. Last year we had four first year students, eleven second year, and three third year students.</p> <p>We are often asked by the Open University to provide practice learning opportunities for students who are self-funding or from the voluntary/private sector living locally. In 2023 we supported two students through this option.</p>

	<p>A total of 48 social work Practice learning opportunities and 2 AMHP (Approved Mental Health Professional) placements were allocated in the last year.</p>
1.14	<p>We remain grateful to our Third sector partners for offering us placements with such diversity, which have included The Resettlement Project, Save the Family, DASU, KIM Inspire, Age Connect, HFT and many more. Throughout 2023, there were a total of 50 qualifications gained which included the Practice Educator Award. We worked with 88 students during that time.</p>
1.15	<p>Continuous Professional Development</p> <p>Social Workers and Occupational 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, 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>Last year we supported eight newly qualified social workers in their first year of practice.</p> <p>We remain 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> <p>Our Practice Learning Coordinator role supports employees who are completing various university qualifications from pre-qualifying to post qualifying awards.</p>
1.16	<p>The Team Manager Development Programme (TMDP) was developed by Oxford Brooks University as a bespoke social work team manager programme. This qualification is an important feature of our management route and each year, decisions are made by the Senior Management Team on who to put forward, as places are subject to funding and availability.</p> <p>In addition to the above, via Oxford Brooks we offer staff the opportunity to undertake the Aspirant Middle Managers Programme (AMMP) and the Middle Manager Development Programme (MMDP). We have two staff on the AMMP and one individual on the MMDP currently.</p>
1.17	<p>In the last twelve months we have developed and rolled out Induction sessions and workshops for new managers, focussing on self-awareness and making the transition into a new role in terms of changing relationships with colleagues, understanding self and defining quality practice. Workshops have also been offered focussing on leadership and management, improving efficiency and effectiveness, providing a practical toolkit for leading and managing and support Flintshire in 'growing our own' leaders and managers of the future.</p>

1.18	<p>Recruitment</p> <p>Throughout 2023, we have supported Social Services at local recruitment events, participated in open days with schools and colleges, using those opportunities to share information about roles available, career development and progression in social care. Promoting the WeCare Wales website and available resources has been a positive experience, hearing from people who are interested in pursuing a career in social care and are keen to explore the possibilities available to them in Flintshire.</p> <p>In partnership with Coleg Cambria we have offered students undertaking the 2-year Health & Social Care qualification, short placement opportunities in our adult services to support practical experience and encourage them to consider working permanently in those roles once qualified.</p> <p>We have worked with Childrens and Adults Social Services team managers to review and strengthen our 12-week Induction Programme for Newly Qualified Social Workers.</p> <p>A new generic Induction rolling programme for new starters in Social Services has been developed and is in place.</p>
1.19	<p>Awards Ceremony</p> <p>We held our 13th Award Ceremony in October 2023, inviting over 80 staff members from across the social care workforce to join us. This event was an opportunity to say thank you to staff in recognition of the hard work in obtaining their professional qualifications, for them to take pride in their achievements and to acknowledge and appreciate the contributions which have been made to the quality of the Social Care workforce in Flintshire by undertaking these qualifications, which ultimately improves the level of care we provide to those who need our services.</p>

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	There are no resource applications as grant funded.
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	None.

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	N/A
7.00	CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS
7.01	Contact Officer: Jackie Goundrey, Workforce Development Manager Telephone: 01352 702670 E-mail: Jackie.goundrey@flintshire.gov.uk
8.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
8.01	None