

## Children's Scrutiny, Nov 24<sup>th</sup>, 2022

Question from Cllr Bernstein: Can an update on recruiting to the Children's Services restructure be given please?

### **Introduction**

There has been purposeful and significant consultation with staff groups, and this is right to ensure that we retain our talent and maintain confidence in the leadership group. Although this has been lengthy, and in some areas longer than anticipated, it has been a critical exercise and will pay dividends as we continue to reset our culture and build faith and confidence in our front-line social care workforce.

Whilst this has imposed some limits to what can be achieved, it has not meant that recruitment has been paused or stalled, whilst awaiting the final sign off for the re-structure.

### **Systems supporting change**

Some key technical points are important to note as we now look to moving into the full recruitment phase:

- The new structure is now formally signed off as of 15<sup>th</sup> November
- New structures have been built on the current HR system and are in the process of being populated
- Mapping exercise completed by Social Care to align existing workforce to new operational teams
- Appointments and transfers of staff between different parts of the structure (e.g. staff transferring from Early Help to Education) being progressed now, subject to operational handovers.

### **Progress**

There has been significant progress in the last month whereby no permanent staff resigned or left the authority. This is considerable and has been rare in the preceding year and is hoped can be the sea change required to build a more permanent staff group with less reliance on agency.

As mentioned, recruitment has not completely paused as part of the re-structure process and roles that are not changed as part of the re-structure have continued to be advertised. This has been particularly successful with Team Manager in our social work services with 4 managers appointed as part of this recent process and further applications received. This is another sign that staff looking to progress are interested in Bury and this needs to be sustained.

Furthermore, the Scrutiny Committee will be aware that the leadership team is now almost fully recruited to, with one post to be advertised very shortly, the Fostering Head of Service.

In addition, intensive work has been carried out by the Principal Social Worker and Director of Practice to target key agency staff to convert to permanent staff with some success.

### **Next Steps**

A full programme has been designed with key timescales and deadlines, held jointly with HR and CSC senior leadership to ensure we stay on track for our next phase and new roles that have been amended during consultation are currently being progressed through final grading processes prior to advert. The programme includes work with Communications team to highlight the development, innovation and offer a new staff member will receive when joining us in Bury and we intend to be more assertive

in the market, demonstrating how Bury are leading the way in GM regarding the Family Safeguarding Model, where others are now following.

The sequencing of internal advertisement has begun, where more senior roles are required to be filled first. The initial round of adverts for some key roles are already live on the recruitment system for applications including Service Managers in Early Help and Family Group Conference Manager. Further rounds of adverts will follow shortly to recruit to those key posts in Early Help/Early Years.

Expressions of interest for internal vacancies in Social Work teams are currently in progress, commencing with Team Managers, with very short timescales to allow for remaining vacancies to be identified and proceed to external advert in early December. The informal groundwork, preparation and development for these key posts has already taken place, enabling the short timescale. The proactive recruitment to social work posts prior to sign off of the restructure has created a small bank of appointable candidates for the roles, whom we are now onboarding following the establishment of additional positions. It is critical that our HR colleagues continue to process the onboarding at pace.

Finally, we have now finalised and commissioned a service to recruit overseas with a trip planned in the second week of January to interview and appoint up to 20 candidates which we hope will be able to join us in late spring of 2023.