

Divisions Affected – All

PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 10 November 2022

Children and Adults' Social Care Workforce

Report by:

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RECOMMENDATION

1. **People Overview Scrutiny Committee is RECOMMENDED to** note the current and anticipated demand and funding challenges in relation to service sustainability, workforce recruitment and retention; and the opportunities detailed in this report.

Executive Summary

2. This report provides an overview of the children and adults' social care workforce (both internal and external), recruitment and retention challenges and opportunities. It discusses the factors influencing current and anticipated demand, funding, and related service sustainability.

Overview of the Oxfordshire workforce

3. The social care workforce in Oxfordshire is made up of a combination of people who are directly employed by the Council (referred to throughout this paper as "internal workforce"), and those who are employed by our care providers (referred to throughout this paper as "external workforce").
4. The social care workforce is made up of a diverse range of roles. Professional roles include social workers, registered managers of social care settings and occupational therapists. Non-professional roles include commissioners, care workers, project managers, cleaners, co-ordinators, and administrators.
5. The Council directly employs 935 (811.21fte) people in Adult Social Care and 1,157 (1,012.35fte) people in Children's Social Care.

6. In Oxfordshire the independent (private and voluntary) sector employs 14,500 workers in residential homes, homecare agencies, and day centres. (Skills for Care data).
7. An estimated 1,300 are Personal Assistants, providing care, ranging from personal care through to help with cooking and social activities. (This includes Personal Assistants who provide care to children and provide care on behalf of the NHS).
8. It is important to recognise that many carers are unpaid and also contribute their skills, time, and compassion to loved ones. Estimates vary, but it is likely that around 11.1 million people in the UK provide unpaid care to another person, (adult or child), with additional health needs.
9. Social Care and its skilled workforce add £50.3 billion per year to the national economy, Skills for Care also found in 2021 that monetising the value of adult social care adds a further £7.9 billion to this figure.

Council Wide Challenges and Activity

10. The cost of purchased and rented accommodation remains high making Oxfordshire an expensive place for key workers to settle. The council is refreshing its information to support Key Workers to find affordable housing, but it should be noted that the Government's Help to Buy Equity Loan Scheme ends in March 2023.
11. As part of the Delivering the Future Together Programme an enhanced Employee Value Proposition is being developed aimed at making Oxfordshire County Council the employer of choice within the local market, through delivering excellent learning opportunities to new and existing staff members as part of an enhanced wellbeing, recognition, and support offer. A key part of this offer is the recently launched Vivup app, available to all council staff, providing a way for staff to recognise the achievements of peers as well as a range of offers and discounts with local and national retailers across all sectors.

Recruitment and Retention Challenges in Adult Social Care

12. The recruitment and retention challenges that exist in Oxfordshire are also widely reported at national level.
13. Nationally the number of vacant posts across social care provision has increased by 52% in the last year, with 165,000 positions vacant nationally ([Skills for Care Workforce Intelligence Report 2021/2022](#)).
14. Skills for Care also model the additional pressure of estimated 480,000 new posts required nationally by 2035 to meet the projected 26% increase in people over 65, whose life is either significantly impacted by limiting long term illness or who have moderate learning disability ([Projecting Older people Population Information](#) and [Projecting Adults Needs and Service Information](#)).
15. The challenges faced in the social care sector have been the subject of heightened focus in the wake of the pandemic. A recent report by the [Migration Advisory Committee](#) (MAC, 2022) provides a thorough review of the issues recognised as contributing to this vacancy rate at a national level.

16. In Oxfordshire, we recognise many of the national issues cited in the MAC report including:
- i. Impact of Brexit. Although there is no universal dataset that links migrants' immigration status with their employment, anecdotal reports from industry experts suggest a significant proportion of frontline workforce was sourced from the EU, especially Portugal and Spain.
 - ii. Post-Brexit, international recruitment via the care worker visa programme is [expensive and complicated](#). An Oxfordshire provider delivering homecare and respite in Oxford City has reported that the cost per Senior Care worker they have recruited from the Philippines is £10,000. Since the end of Freedom of Movement, the immigration system has become more restrictive for European Economic Area (EEA) workers, who no longer have unrestricted access to jobs in the sector; but it has become more liberal for non-EEA workers, who can now work in a wider range of social care roles. The Skilled Worker route – called the [Health & Care Worker visa](#) for the subset of occupations in health and social care – is the most direct route into the social care workforce. Applicants to the Skilled Worker route must be sponsored by an eligible employer, speak English to a required level, and work in a job that is categorised to be skilled to at least RQF level 3 (NVQ3, A-level or equivalent). The annual salary threshold for this type of visa reduced in 2021 to £20,480, bringing more frontline care roles into scope for the scheme.
 - iii. The workforce reports feeling exhausted and demoralised after the Covid pandemic
 - iv. Shift patterns create barriers for part time workers e.g., working parents
 - v. Relatively low wages for what can be a challenging job (compared to retail, for example). Data provided by OxLEP in 2021 (Appendix 5) illustrates comparative wages per worker in Oxfordshire, broken down by sector.
 - vi. Conditions of employment such as pension and other benefits tend to be less attractive for the external workforce employed in the independent sector when compared to the internal workforce employed by the Council
 - vii. Social care roles are perceived to be unskilled jobs with little career progression.
17. Locally we find the additional issues also have an impact:
- i. Very high cost of living in Oxfordshire
 - ii. Rurality of county, so many roles require car/ability to drive which creates a barrier to entry
 - iii. Strong competition from other sectors in a buoyant local labour market. For example, in Oxfordshire in November 2022, ASDA are advertising for retail assistants at £10.70 per hour, and St Hugh's College Oxford are advertising for waiting staff at £10.50 per hour. Skills for Care data (Appendix 1) reports that the median hourly rate for a care worker in Oxfordshire in 2021/22 was £9.50.
18. Turnover in the internal workforce in adult social care is fairly consistent and for quarter 2 of the current year is 3.8%. This is lower than the Council turnover rate of 4% for that quarter. Across the rolling calendar year turnover is 13.9%, compared to 13.4% across the council. Reasons for leaving are equally split between alternative employment and personal reasons. Average length of service is almost 10 years.

Whilst turnover has not seen any significant change, recruitment to vacancies has become more challenging.

19. Adult Social Care provides up to three Social Work apprenticeships per year and is working to provide clearer 'professional pathways' to attract applicants and to offer career progression opportunities in specialist fields. This is backed up by a robust ASYE (Assessed and Supported Year in Employment) programme for newly qualified social workers. Adult Social Care also currently employs three Occupational Therapist apprentices and is actively exploring how the programme can be widened to include other apprenticeship pathways. We have strong relationships with universities. This includes offering work placements during students' study periods and supports our success in recruiting newly qualified staff.

Recruitment and Retention Challenges in Children's Social Care

20. There is significant financial pressure across children's social care services, with total national spending now in excess of £10.5 billion in 2019/20. The Local Government Association (LGA) estimated in 2019, based on funding levels at the time, that children's social care would face a £3 billion funding gap by 2025 just to maintain existing levels of support.
21. The impact of these financial pressures is compounded by the harmful effects that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on children and families. The increased spending pressures are driven, in large part, by increased pressures at the most acute end of the system. Whilst the number of Children in Need has remained relatively stable, at around 4200, the number of more intensive interventions has increased.
22. Against this background of increasing service demand, the latest workforce data issued Department for Education (DfE) shows the number of social workers leaving their roles in 2021 increased by 16% on the previous year. The number of vacancies is also at its highest in five years – with 6,522 positions nationally available as of 30 September 2021, climbing 7% from the year before.

Workforce Demand Pressures - National Context

23. Child protection workers are particularly vulnerable to burnout. This group report:
 - High workloads, high levels of stress, and that they are asked to fulfil too many different roles.
 - Overwork and dislike of workplace culture were also cited by almost a quarter of those considering leaving social work.
 - Overall, three-quarters (75%) of social workers reported working more than their contracted hours either 'all the time' or 'most weeks' and worked with an average of more than 16 children.
24. Nationally, the full time equivalent (FTE) agency worker rate remains at around 15%. In the course of just one year, DfE's recent small scale longitudinal surveys of social workers showed two per cent of social workers moving from direct employment with a local authority to agency work or self-employment. The main motivations for this move were:
 - Pay (a factor for 50% and the main reason for one-third (33%); and

- increased flexibility of working hours (a factor for 44% and the main reason for over one quarter (27%).

Workforce Demand Pressure - Local Context: Family Solutions Plus Service

25. The FSP service went live in November 2020 with 161 qualified Social Workers (Team Managers, Assistant Team Managers, Social Workers, and ASYEs) deployed across 17 teams, with 95% of Social Worker posts filled by permanent staff. By March 2022 the proportion of permanent positions filled by Social Workers and ASYEs had reduced to 66%.
26. During this period, the high number of assessments flowing into FSP combined with a reduced flow of casework out (both a consequence of the pandemic) has resulted in increased caseloads and staffing above the budgeted establishment (which by necessity is time limited).
27. The number of cases that social workers are allocated varies depending on numerous factors, for example: Contracted working hours; level of seniority/experience; team speciality; team capacity; and case complexity. Within FSP the target case holding capacity for an experienced social worker is between 15-18. ASYEs hold between 8-15 cases according to their experience. However, it is also important to note that the significant number of long distance placement visits that Social Workers are required to undertake significantly impacts case holding capacity and increase work pressure.
28. The DfE Longitudinal study of local authority child and family social workers (June 2021) reported a national mean caseload of 18. However, the report also reported that 68% of frontline practitioners and 69% of Team Managers felt that these caseload levels were too high, and that 55% of social Workers felt stressed by their job. It was also reported that Social Workers who agreed that they felt stressed by their job were also more likely than average to be aged 25-34 years (71%) or have worked in children's social care for 2-3 years (73%), and to work in a front line practitioner role (68%).

Staff turnover from FSP teams

29. FSP teams have seen the highest number of leavers in comparison to other social care teams.
30. Over the 12-month period (Mar 21-Feb 22):
 - Of the 77 leavers from Children's Social Care, 49 (63%) were from FSP;
 - Of the 49 staff who left FSP, 33 (67%) were social workers; and
 - Of the 33 social workers, 19 (58%) left the service with less than 2 years of employment.
31. The top reasons for leaving were:
 - Resignations to seek alternative employment / career break (71%)
 - Relocating / emigrating (6%)
 - Changing department (6%)
32. Whilst only a few of the total leavers from FSP completed the Exit Interview forms, all cited exhaustion and work-related stress due to higher caseloads as the main reasons for leaving. They either resigned or moved internally to other areas of OCC.

Children's Social Workers Recruitment & Retention Strategy - Employer of Choice

33. It is the ambition for the directorate to become an 'employer of choice' for social workers and the wider children's services workforce. Whilst there are no definitive criteria for being an employer of choice, top cited criteria, includes:
- Building trust and empowerment in teams across the organisation
 - Communicating with honesty and fairness
 - Passionate and engaging leaders
 - Providing clear career paths with opportunities for advancement
 - Possessing a clear vision of values, behaviours, and priorities
 - Providing strong training and development programmes
 - Providing flexible work conditions and good work-life balance
 - Demonstrable commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion
34. In 2022 a deep dive review of the issues impacting the recruitment & retention of children's social workers was undertaken, the findings from the review can be grouped around five themes:
- Workload;
 - staffing;
 - learning and development;
 - morale; and
 - pay and rewards.

Workload and staffing

35. The impact of high caseloads on social workers in FSP has been demonstrated – through focus groups, exit interviews, and staff sickness reporting. The findings are in line with those reported by the DfE Longitudinal study of local authority child and family social workers, and the national Social Worker Health Check.
36. There will need to be continued reliance upon agency workers until such time as work demand in FSP can be managed. Whilst there are a number of national factors that are driving demand pressures outside the control of the Council, work is progressing to reduce the demand flow into statutory Children's Services and caseloads are stabilising.

Grow Your Own Social Work Staffing

37. Oxfordshire has an established Social Work Academy (SWA) that supports the learning and development for students who wish to enter the social work profession and those who are newly qualified, to experienced practitioners and those aiming to become managers.
38. The reduced availability in the marketplace of experienced social work staff can be partially mitigated by a focus on 'growing our own' (GYO) social workers, through investing in the capacity to place increased numbers of staff supported by the SWA who are starting to establish a career in children's social care, such as:
- Social Work Undergraduates / postgraduates;
 - Frontline and Step Up to Social Work placements; and
 - Apprentices.

39. There is also potential to increase the number of placements for Newly Qualified Social Workers who are looking for their first placement as a Social Worker (ASYE Social Workers)
40. There is generally no shortage of applicants for these placements and as such the implementation of increased numbers of GYO is a viable proposition.
41. The cost of living on Oxfordshire has been cited as a factor that detracts potential staff coming to work in the directorate –current staff, such as Children’s Practitioners or Youth Support Officers, who are passionate about children’s services and who already live in Oxfordshire and have established support networks, would be an ideal source for the directorate to support progression to become a Social Worker – either through the Step Up to Social Work programme, if they have an accredited degree, or through Apprenticeship.

Alternative sources of experienced social workers

42. As a consequence of the increasing difficulty in attracting experienced Social Workers, local authorities are increasing recruiting international Social Workers (ISWs). CEF has recently employed 6 ISWs and is expecting to recruit an additional 6 ISWs in 2022/23. A focus group of workers who had joined CEF as an ISW provided feedback in how the directorate can further strengthen the offer to ISWs to support ISW retention.

Learning and Development

43. Both CEF staff and national BASW feedback highlight the importance of a strong training and development programme for Social Workers. A strong training and development programme will be an incentive for both permanent recruitment and agency – permanent conversion. To support general improvements to the Social Worker Practice Framework and CPD opportunities it will be necessary to secure the necessary funding and support infrastructure to:
 - Further roll-out and embed evidence based social work practice – such as restorative practice, motivational interviewing, and trauma informed practice.
 - Offer individualised, creative and flexible CPD opportunities – potentially including individual learning budgets.
44. To implement this, it will be necessary to ensure that there is capacity within teams to enable staff to engage in CPD opportunities, and for managers to be able to discuss and implement plans for staff CPD and work experiences that support career progression ambitions.
45. Nationally, Government investment in the teaching partnerships scheme means 65% of higher education institutions offering social work courses are now participating in the scheme to improve the quality of initial social worker training. This has led to closer collaboration between local authorities and course providers that prepares student social workers for the workplace, including through embedding the Knowledge and Skills Statement for social workers from the start of their training.
46. A resilient organisation prioritises the wellbeing of its staff and takes a systemic approach to reducing stress and enhancing job satisfaction. The top two factors having the biggest impact on people’s desire to stay (Social Worker Health Check) are:
 - I have continued to have satisfactory one to one supervision: and

- I have uninterrupted, scheduled supervision at a suitable frequency with an appropriately skilled social work supervisor

47. Effective supervision relationships allow practitioners to develop personally and professionally through trust, honesty and empathy. When done well, supervision contributes to how staff performance is managed, and includes practice development and teaching and coaching. But, most importantly, supervision supports staff to achieve the best possible outcomes for children. As such, the importance and value of supervision must not be underestimated, and it is necessary to ensure that managers have the capacity to provide this support.

Morale

48. Social workers benefit from access to and support from line managers, supervisors, peers and colleagues. Staff feedback from exit interviews and national research highlights the importance of emotional support, consistent support by managers and morale.

49. The Delivering the Future Together programme aims to foster a workplace where staff can thrive. The 12.3.2 performance framework determines that managers should:

- Arrange 12 one-to-one conversations over the year with staff that may cover a wide range of topics such as recognising achievements, feedback, and wellbeing as well as current tasks.
- Arrange three extended one-to-ones over the year to discuss what is more important to staff in more depth – including the setting and reviewing of objectives as well as personal development and health and wellbeing.
- Hold two team meetings over the year to discuss how the team contributes to the Council's priorities and how the team works together to achieve objectives.

50. 20 senior managers completed the 12.3.2 training in 2021, and for phase 2 a further 77 managers have either completed the training or are due to complete the programme in 2022

Pay and Rewards

51. Basic salaries for permanent staff are generally in line with neighbouring local authorities. However, further attention may be warranted in regard to the provision of additional benefits, such as market supplements for hard to recruit to posts, and lump sum long-service payments.

52. Non-pay additional benefits are provided by other local authorities but are by no means universal. The main non-pay benefits available elsewhere to social workers include career break opportunities (see sabbaticals below), flexible working hours; and payment of professional fees to qualified post holders.

Sabbaticals

53. Sabbaticals could offer staff who may otherwise be considering leaving due to stress or burnout the option to take time out to support their wellbeing. Furthermore, the South East Region Agency Worker Survey found that: The ability to schedule gaps between assignments was cited by 46% as being an important factor in their decision to be an agency worker, and 27% reporting that greater work flexibility could entice them to convert to a permanent role.

54. Whilst OCC does not presently offer sabbatical leave, it is notable that West Berkshire allows Social Workers 8 weeks leave after 3 years' service. Importantly, given the DfE evidence that 60% of social workers are in post for 4 years or less, then a timely sabbatical offer could provide a strong incentive to stay when most Social Workers are considering leaving the organisation. The council will explore the potential to offer sabbatical leave after 3 years of service for staff in hard to recruit teams.

Car Parking

55. OCC policies regarding parking permits have been in place for a number of years and the eligibility and criteria is detailed within legal orders. The policy entitles parking permits for carers, care professionals, and community based healthcare professionals. Presently this definition does not cover children's or adult social care workers.
56. Children's Services have a statutory responsibility to visit children subject to single or joint investigations with the police known as s47 (Statute Working Together 2018 and Children Act 1989). Once need and risk is assessed, children may require Child Protection (CP), Child In Need (CIN) or Early Help (EH) visiting.
- Children subject to CP planning must be seen alone and in their family homes on a fortnightly basis by their allocated worker.
 - Children assessed as being CIN require regular visits by their allocated worker.
57. There are also a number of children who require regular visits across the week by OCC staff and agency staff, in order to assess their safety on a regular basis and who are subject to child care proceedings overseen by the courts
58. The services conducting home visits are FSP (Children's Statutory Teams), YJES (Youth Justice Exploitation Service) and Disabled Children Service. Our Early Help Teams and EET (Education Employment and Training) also conduct vital home visiting in order to prevent increased need/risk and the involvement of statutory services.
59. Currently in Oxfordshire there are:
- 140+ assessments each week across the county - with a large portion being s47 and thus under investigation for significant harm.
 - Children Protection: 558 children requiring statutory visits fortnightly to assess their safety and progress intervention with parents/carers
 - Children in Need: 1333 children requiring regular visits to assess their wellbeing and to progress intervention with parents/carers
 - Early Help: 1337 children open to targeted Early Help, visit to assess children, undertake prevention and support parents with the care of their children.
60. This means that staff in children's social care are undertaking **over 1000 statutory visits each week** within the county.
61. The lack of parking permits increases the cost of service provision and reduces service efficiency – through car parking charges, car parking fines, and wasted time spent searching for car parking places. The wasted time directly reduces social worker case holding capacity and indirectly impacts health and wellbeing.

Adult Social Care Reform - Workforce impacts and opportunities

62. The Government published details of the major reform of Adult Social Care in autumn/winter 2021.
 - i. A plan for charging reform for Health and Social Care ([Build Back Better: Our Plan for Health and Social Care](#), September 2021) which included:
 - ii. Implementation of a “Care cap” of £86k on personal care costs, setting this as the maximum amount any individual can spend on their personal care over a lifetime.
 - iii. Allowing more of those who self-fund their care to ask the Local Authority to arrange their care for them (Section 18(3) of the Care Act).
 - iv. Making changes to the current means test which provides financial assistance to those with lower assets.
 - v. Further integration of health and social care systems.
 - vi. The introduction of Care Quality Commission (CQC) assurance for Local Authorities’ commissioning of adult social care.

63. A white paper for reforming the delivery of Adult Social Care ([People at the Heart of Care](#), December 2021) which sets out a 10-year vision and includes three objectives:
 - i. People have choice, control, and support to live independent lives
 - ii. People can access outstanding quality and tailored care and support
 - iii. People find adult social care fair and accessible.

64. In June 2022 Oxfordshire was approached by the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) and invited to become one of six ‘Trailblazer’ local authorities, working with the DHSC to trial key aspects of the reforms. The scale and pace of change involved in being a Trailblazer is driving innovative thinking about the way in which care needs are assessed and met in Oxfordshire, and teams across the organisation are collaborating to improve the way our systems work.

65. Given the scale of change, Oxfordshire has taken a programme management approach to delivering the reforms which has established robust governance, ownership, and risk management at a senior level.

66. A project workstream in this programme is Workforce Development. This project is assessing the impact of the reforms on Oxfordshire’s internal and external workforce requirements and working to develop an aligned strategy for recruitment, training, and development. The project is linking to demand modelling work to ensure that there is an understanding of future workforce requirements to enable recruitment planning. Workforce and operational implementation projects are working together to identify opportunities to explore new roles and ways of working. Workforce data modelling will inform a refreshed Workforce Strategy which is due to be published in April 2023.

67. Reforms will have a direct impact on the type of staff roles needed within Adult Social Care and wider support functions such as finance and customer service.

68. As a trailblazer, Oxfordshire will start early assessments ahead of other Local Authorities. We have developed a new team model to test our approach, who will

use a strengths-based approach, linking to the Oxfordshire Way with support to access community provision and resources where appropriate. The trial early assessment team will work alongside small groups of service users in the first instance, using a co-design process to test and refine our online self-assessment tool and online processes. This will allow us to develop a final target operating model which is rooted in, and informed by, service user experience.

69. It is a key principle of the programme to enable people to access high quality information and support in ways that suit them, promoting self-service wherever possible and an ethos of “digital first”. As well as supporting people to get independent and immediate access to tools such as a financial “ready reckoner”, the approach has been developed taking account of the recruitment challenges in our sector. We are designing our solutions to the predicted increase in demand to be realistic, so that we are not relying on a large-scale recruitment drive.
70. The recruitment that we are planning involves largely non-professional roles. A new brand entitled ‘Belong’ is being developed and will include the use of experiences from staff at all levels, as well as showcasing the benefits of working in the authority to attract workers

Activity Focused on the External Adult Social Care Workforce

71. The Care Act 2014 gives local authorities responsibilities for the adult social care workforce overall, requiring local authorities to facilitate markets that ‘offer continuously improving, high-quality, innovative and appropriate services, including fostering a workforce which underpins the market’.
72. The external provider market, particularly domiciliary care providers is experiencing acute staffing pressures. There is anecdotal evidence that in response to increasing living and travel costs, workers are moving from domiciliary care provision to working in fixed-site care homes. Providers work independently to recruit staff and are often in competition as Skills for Care data shows that 58% of recruitments are of staff already working in the sector. Addressing attraction, recruitment and retention challenges is key to addressing these pressures, with challenges ranging from low numbers of young people entering the sector, an increasingly aging workforce, lack of aspiration to enter social care as a career and poor perception of working conditions.
73. We have an established workforce programme consisting of interventions that have been funded by the Council to engage care providers and support attraction, recruitment, and retention. Though recruitment market conditions are challenging, there remain opportunities to grow staffing in the sector. Current workstreams are:
 - i. Reviewing best practice across other areas - learning what is working and why
 - ii. Re-publicising hardship grants (funded through the Workforce Recruitment and Retention Fund, administered by the Care Worker’s Charity) to ensure that employers and care workers have knowledge of the support available.
 - iii. Implementing from 24th October 2022 a New Starter Grant (funded through the Workforce Recruitment and Retention Fund, administered by the Care

- Worker's Charity) aimed at financially supporting new starters or returners to direct care roles with pre-recruitment and first month in post costs.
- iv. Redesigning and significantly updating the Proud to Care Oxfordshire Website, working towards a one-stop resource for social care jobs, providing clear information on recruitment support and vacancies across the independent sector.
 - v. [Care Friends](#) is a relatively new recruitment tool that encourages existing employees to "refer a friend" and recruit their own contacts to consider a career in social care. In other local authority areas such as Cornwall and Kent, the app has significantly improved recruitment and retention against traditional methods such as recruitment websites. Through the WRRF, funding has been made available for all providers to access licences to use the app for one year.
 - vi. As part of continuous improvement, the Quality Assurance Team supports care providers to review and diversify their recruitment practices and more broadly improve their organisational processes, to support the provider to become an "employer of choice" in the local care market.
74. Further work is underway to engage external providers in the co-design and co-production of an Attraction, Recruitment, and Retention Plan for our external market in Oxfordshire. Delivered in conjunction with OxLEP, and with the support of Skills for Care, work starts with an in-person workshop on 8th November 2022.
75. A review of funding provided through the DHSC Workforce Recruitment and Retention Fund is concurrently underway, to capture learning and return on investment. This information will support co-design of future funding initiatives.
76. To further support national adult social care recruitment, the government has announced that the [Made with Care](#) national recruitment campaign will run again from November 2022 to March 2023. The council is working with the Oxfordshire Association of Care Providers to further develop the Proud to Care website and local media to take best advantage of this exposure.

Cross-system working with NHS partners

77. The DHSC policy paper [Health and social care integration: joining up care for people, places and populations](#) (Feb 2022) sets out the national agenda to further bring together the NHS and local government to jointly deliver for local communities via Integrated Care Systems (ICS). Oxfordshire is part of the [Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, and Berkshire ICS](#) (BOB ICS).
78. The paper recognises that the health and care workforce are our system's biggest asset and notes the importance of ensuring that staff feel confident, motivated, and valued in their roles and that they can work together in a person's interests regardless of who they are employed by.
79. To achieve this, the ICS will support joint health and care workforce planning at place (i.e., Oxfordshire) level, working across the system with social care employers as well as local NHS employers such as Oxford University Hospitals and Oxford Health NHS Trusts. They will improve initial training and ongoing learning and development opportunities for staff, create opportunities for joint continuous development and joint

roles across health and social care and increase the number of clinical practice placements in adult social care for health undergraduates.

80. The Council is working closely with partners across the Health and Social Care system in BOB ICS to develop new strategic priorities, to ensure that these include the social care perspective.

Summary

81. There are significant local and national pressures directly impacting the attraction, recruitment, and retention of staff across the local government and independent sectors, which are also reflected in the NHS. In preparation for the implementation of the Care cap and to support the children's sector, the council has developed a range of local strategies reflecting national policy and opportunities to address these pressures.
82. Future UK Government funding for Social Care reforms remains unclear during this period of political instability. To ensure the implementation of the Care cap in a successful and sustainable way, the council has adopted a 'digital first' approach, with appropriate safeguards for those who need support to engage digitally. The Adult Social Care recruitment and retention strategy is being refreshed and will inform further actions needed to inform our approach.
83. To further support the recruitment and retention of social workers and Occupational Therapists within Adult Social Care, the council intends to develop professional pathways that provide career progression outside of management roles. Work on this will be further appointment of new whole time Principal social Workers and Principal occupational Therapist roles.
84. In addition to regular communication to ensure that the external Adult Social Care market is able to sustainably meet local needs, the council is working at pace to deliver a co-produced strategy to attract, recruit and retain workers across the sector.
85. Children's social care has delivered and secured cabinet approval to invest in recruitment and retention within the internal workforce, whilst is engaging with providers to reflect the recommendations delivered in the Competitions and Markets Authority to drive down cost and increase availability of placements for children.

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Annex: 1-4: Adult Social Care Dataset
5: Industry Data Supplied by OxLEP

Background papers: Nil

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01 November 2022