

DCST PROPOSAL – ASYE Academy – Grow our own experienced social workers

If we act now we could have two initial cohorts (6 from April 2021 for step up students and either May or June for an additional 6). We believe we can select all 12 from the current 18 students we have on final year or step up placement in the Trust. Traditionally, newly qualified (ASYE Social Workers) sit within the teams with the team manager having responsibility for their on job development and our Centre for Excellence provides off-job training and development. The ASYE offer by the Trust's Centre for Excellence is seen as good by ASYE social workers and within the region. The teams already have a cohort of newly qualifieds in their teams and therefore adding additional inexperienced social workers is not seen as supportive to the team, the newly qualified social worker or the children requiring social care support.

To safely bring a large cohort of newly qualifieds on-board we need the capacity to provide the development over twelve to twenty four months. We would look at a cohort of 12 in August 2021 and 6 in August 2022 an August 2023. This assumes other things (such as caseloads) remain equal, and the impact of Covid on graduates is unaffected.

The proposal

Representation from the Centre for Excellence, Operational Heads of Service, HR&OD and Workforce Development met to review and discuss the newly qualified offers made over the past few years and identify lessons learned to support any new model. There was an agreement from this group that an “academy” which is close to social worker teams but managed outside of the operational services would improve the quality of support and develop newly qualified social worker's knowledge and experience with a more consistent approach.

To deliver the academy the following steps are proposed:

1. The Heads of Service identify the initial two agency workers who will leave in February/ March 2021 to start the funding of the additional newly qualified social workers.
2. An advert for newly qualified social workers will go out week commencing 24th November with interviews and selection centre on 8th December already organised for the students and step up students on placement with the Trust.
3. An induction programme is co-ordinated by the Centre for Excellence/Workforce Development to introduce the newly qualified social workers to the Trust, the Academy ASYE programme, the support and help available to them, how they will be assessed during the first year and the teams they will be eventually joining.
4. They are advised which teams they will eventually be working with but for their first nine to eleven months they will work within the Academy in teams of 5-6 with case work from their team manager.
5. They are supervised by two practice development social workers (5-6 each) who are paid at Team Manager grade. One will need to be backfilled, the other is currently part of the workforce development team and dedicated to the ASYE social workers. If the Trust only brings on board six newly qualifieds only one Practice Development Social Worker will be attached to the academy.
6. The academy is based at Mary Woollett Centre so the newly qualified social workers are based near to practicing social workers. They are likely to be spending more time in the

office as a team than other teams in the Trust, to ensure they are given the support and guidance. An office space will need to be identified within the current office accommodation the Trust has at Mary Woollet Centre. Smaller desks can replace the larger desks in one of our offices to create the ability to have more staff in an office whilst still working under Covid-19 Health & Safety protocols. Furniture etc can be taken from other locations as we are also looking to reduce our office accommodation across the borough. This will be reviewed in light of Covid Tiers but still believed to be workable.

7. The newly qualified social workers workload is managed to ensure their case work and work experience is co-ordinated to support their learning and development.
8. They initially commence by gaining knowledge and experience of the work in the Assessment Team and early help work for the first three to four months so they get a good grounding and then move on for the remainder of the eight to nine months into Children in Need and Child Protection
9. They are buddied with experienced social workers so they can initially shadow child protection and court proceedings and the more difficult and complex work of a social worker.
10. After completion of the ASYE a second year of consolidated learning will be given, which will be jointly owned by the Centre for Excellence and Service Head of Service. We want to offer this to this year's ASYEs too.
11. The Academy will be overseen by a Service Manager from either Child Protection or Assessment Services and the Principal Social Worker.

Agency worker reduction

Newly qualified social workers have a protected caseload of 15 and there needs to be a natural build up to that number. An agency worker typically carries a caseload of up to 25 cases. The following is proposed as to how we would manage the case load transitioning from agency worker to newly qualified:

- For every six newly qualified workers there will be an immediate reduction of 1-2 agency workers and then circa every 3 months a further reduction of 1 agency worker. We have built in attrition of 25% into year 2 although we are hoping with this model and SW pay changes this may be lower.
- The costs include ASYE practice development social workers per six social workers (one is already factored into the Trust's costs).
- The Trust would receive £1,000 per ASYE from Skills for Care at the beginning and end of the year.

COSTS and SAVINGS

Assuming Cohort 1 April 2021 of 6, Cohort 2 May/June 2021 of 6, Cohort 2 August 2021 of 12, Cohort 4 August 2022 of 6 and Cohort 5 August 2023 of 6 the costs / savings over the MTFS are:

Annual change from current position

2021/22 -	£236k cost plus £50k to buy out existing saving
2022/23 -	£387k saving

2023/24 - £393k saving

MTFS timeframe - £494k saving

MTFS budget change

2021/22 - £286k cost

2022/23 - £623k saving

2023/24 - £ 6k saving