



# Sefton Council

CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE WORKFORCE STRATEGY 2019/20  
REVIEW DUE 2020

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## Purpose

As a council, we recognise that the workforce is our most important resource. The purpose of our strategy is to improve the lives of children, young people and families, to keep them safe, and to fulfil their potential. This can only be delivered by a confident, competent and highly skilled children and young people's workforce that understands its responsibilities and works together to deliver relevant, responsive and high-quality services for children, young people and their families.

This strategy focuses on the social care workforce (social work, safeguarding and residential, personal advisers) and sets out how we will create the conditions for our workforce vision over the next three years. This also includes the role of the Principal Social Worker in championing good practice, and supporting learning and development.

## Supporting documents

Workforce Learning and Development Training Plan: April 2018 – March 2019

Sefton Children & Young People's Plan 2015 -2020.

CSC Improvement Plan

# Vision

## 2.1 Improvement vision

The refreshed vision for Sefton's improvement journey was agreed in 2016 with a set of values which include putting people at the heart of what we do; we listen, value and respect each other's views; we are responsive and efficient; we are clear about what we can and cannot do; we develop a culture of challenge, ownership, and innovation and improvement. The key areas and focus are:

- We want all children and young people to have a positive start in life and to be safe.
- We will ensure frontline practice is consistently good, effective and focussed on timely, measurable outcomes for children.
- We will have good management oversight at all levels to ensure effective services for children and young people
- We will achieve good outcomes.
- Where children and their families need more support, we will work closely with our partners to intervene in the right way, at the right time and as early as possible, to avoid escalation to statutory services.

As a local authority we will:

- be a learning and high-performing authority seen to innovate, and an example of good practice
- contribute to corporate priorities, including neighbourhoods, community and economic growth.

The vision for our children's social care workforce underpins this broader vision.

## 2.2 Workforce vision

Sefton's social care workers are uniquely placed to transform the lives of vulnerable children and young people, working with others to create the conditions that enable them to fulfil their potential. They will do this by developing positive relationships and robust partnerships, keeping children safe from harm by working with families to enable them to make positive changes, or by finding the best possible care when children cannot live at home, so that all children thrive and achieve.

In order to achieve this, we will ensure that:

- Frontline staff will receive good quality supervision
- Staff are able to reflect on what support they need to strengthen practice, and their knowledge or relevant research, policies and procedures is evident
- All training to front line workers and managers covers analysis, planning and recording, use of chronology and risk assessment to embed consistently good practice
- Staff take responsibility for their own development and growth
- Staff have the right organisational culture, leadership, tools and working conditions to meet these expectations
- There is a management development programme available for managers and prospective managers

## 2.3 Outcomes – what will be different

1. A culture of success in which staff:
  - feel empowered and equipped to practise to high standards
  - have a strong voice to influence developments and decisions
  - are proactive in taking responsibility for their own learning and enabling the learning of others
  - are driven by strong and high aspirations for Sefton children
2. An agreed practice model to interventions with children and families, and to working with colleagues and partners across all services to children
3. Strong, effective and professional leaders who create the right conditions for effective practice
4. Social care workers are clear about the expectations on them (the ask) and the support available to meet them (the offer)
5. Caseload levels that promote evidence-based practice, decision-making and effective relationships with children, young people and their family
6. Dynamic and responsive recruitment and retention strategies in place to attract and retain the very best social workers to work in Sefton, enabling all internal social care staff to move through the social care career pathway

7. A clear CPD framework, aligned to social care career pathways, that promotes personal responsibility for development and growth while ensuring access to a broad range of learning, development and reflection activity
8. An organisation that supports staff to be child-focused and to spend more time with children and families, maintaining a reasonable work/life balance facilitated by flexible working, efficient business processes, systems and mobile technology, and working
9. Sefton social care workers will have a clear sense of purpose, understanding their specific role within the context of the whole system multi-agency approach to improving outcomes for children and young people through integrated services.
10. We will have a knowledge and skills statement
11. We will have a core training offer for social workers
12. We will have a management development programme which will include aspiring managers.

## Local and national context

### National and local drivers

This strategy has been developed within the context of some national and local documents, drivers and strategic groups including:

Assessing Parental Capacity to Change (2014)  
 Care Act (2014)  
 Care Planning Placement and Review Regulations Guidance (2011)  
 Children & Families Act (2014)  
 Children Act (1989)  
 Children Act (2004)  
 Data Protection Act (2018)  
 Disability Discrimination Act (2010)  
 Every Child Matters (2003)  
 Family Justice Review (2011)  
 Freedom of Information Act (2000) HCPC Standards of Conduct, Performance & Ethics (2016)  
 Human Rights Act (1998)  
 Knowledge & Skills Statements  
 LGA Peer Review April 2018  
 Making Safeguarding Personal (2014)  
 Mental Health Act (1983); (2007)  
 Munro review resulting in shift in focus from 'doing things right' to 'doing the right thing'  
 Notification that social workers will be subject to three-yearly assessment and accreditation  
 Ofsted Inspection April 2016  
 Sefton Children & Young People's Plan 2015 – 2020  
 Sefton LSCB  
 Sefton's improvement journey  
 Sefton fundamental review of Children's Services structure October 2017  
 Social care reform announcements  
 Clarification of the children's social work role  
 Refresh of the Professional Capabilities Framework 2018  
 Public Health Outcomes Framework  
 Regional Adoption Agency  
 Sefton Strategic Needs Assessment 2018  
 Sefton Turnaround Programme  
 Standards for Employers of Social Workers in England.

The scope of this workforce strategy incorporates all social work in children's social care.



## Workforce profile and comparative position

The Local Authority Interactive Tool (LAIT) has been used to look at comparative data as this allows for benchmarking with both neighbouring authorities and statistical neighbours. At the time of this strategy the latest data available for benchmarking is September 2018.

Figure 1 shows the Full Time Equivalent (FTE) number of social workers in Sefton compared with statistical neighbours.

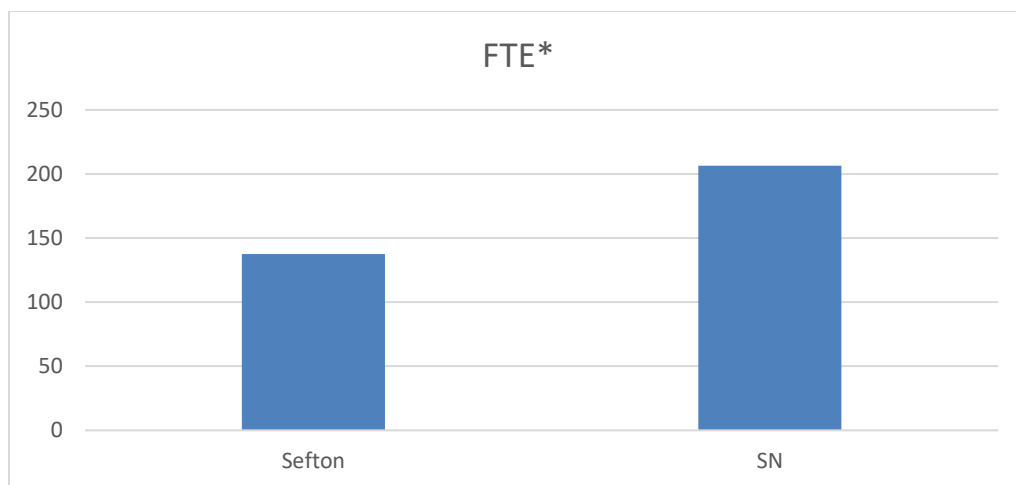


Figure 1

Figure 2 shows the number of agency workers in Sefton, which were in the main cover for maternity leave. Figures 3 and 4 show the absence rates and vacancy rates respectively.

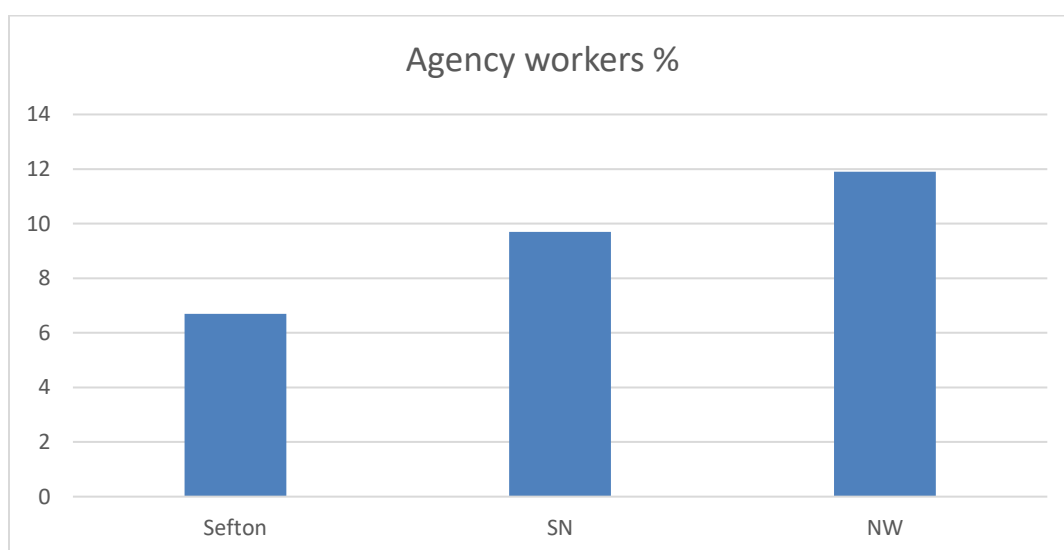


Figure 2

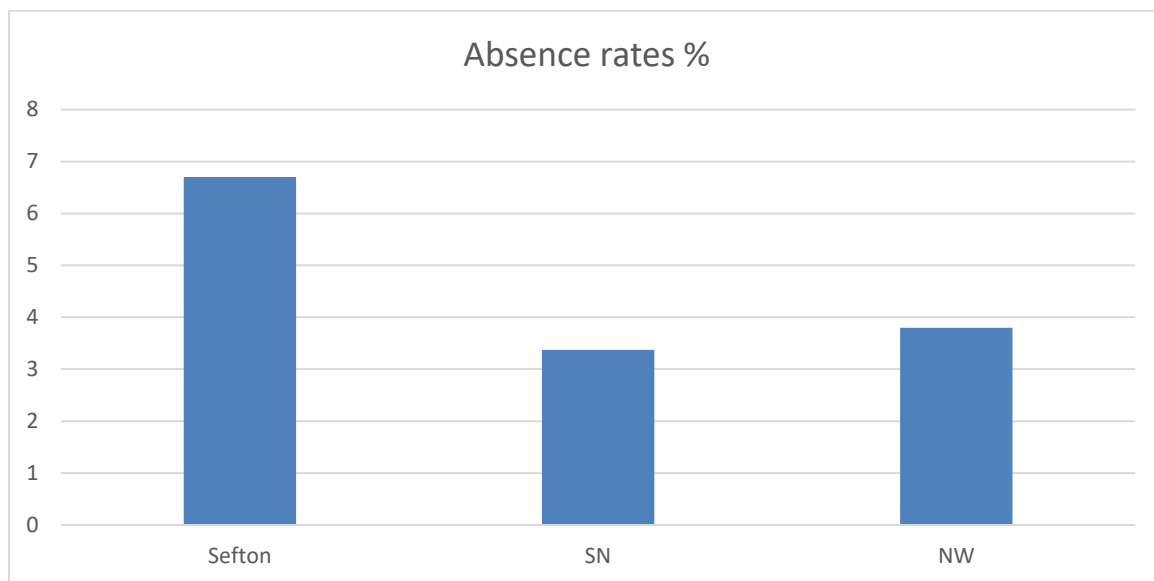


Figure 3

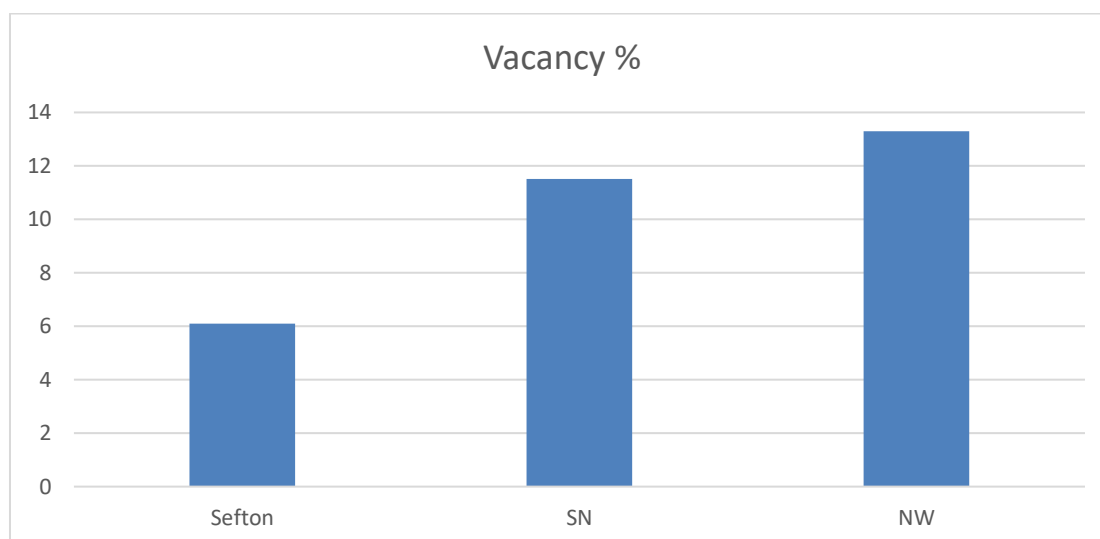


Figure 4

It should be noted that the figures are for **all** registered social workers working with children within Sefton and, therefore, include any social workers employed outside of social care such as in Aiming High, Education Welfare, YOT, Early Help and CwD Team.

Following the restructure of Children's Social Care in October 2017 Sefton had 94.25 full-time equivalent front line social workers within Children's Social Care service area, in addition to Managers and Independent Reviewing Officers. In August 2018 there was agreement from the Chief Executive to over recruit by 10 Social Workers, 1 Team Manager and 1 Principal Social Worker. This makes

comparators difficult for establishment changes year on year.

As the figures in general include all registered social workers in all areas we wanted to know the annual turnover rate for children social care social workers only, this is 10% for the year to the end of March 2019.

Sefton has a high proportion of ASYEs (24) in comparison to the rest of the social care workforce which allows for “growing our own” future experienced and team manager roles. In figure 5 below the percentage of social workers in each age bracket is shown with figure 6 showing the age profile of IRO’s.

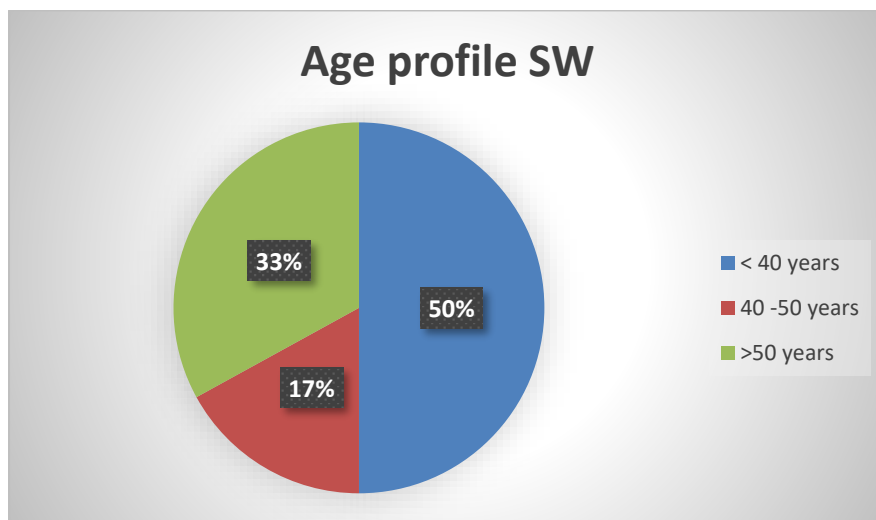


Figure 5

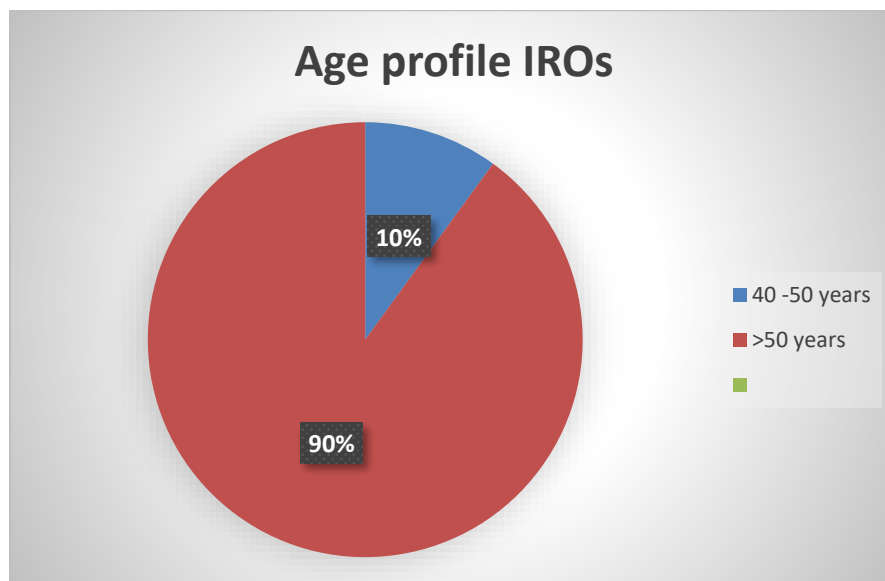


Figure 6

When looking at the IRO service as a comparison against social workers there is a higher % in the 50 plus age group which is reflective of the experience required to undertake the role.

The ratio of male and female social worker are 10% and 90% respectively.

## Priorities to achieve outcomes

The priorities to achieve the outcomes over the next period are:

- Ensure frontline practice is consistently good, effective and focussed on timely, measured outcomes for children
  - Assessment and Planning
  - Voice of child and understanding the daily lived experience
  - Looked after children and care leavers
- To improve management oversight at all levels to ensure effective services for children and young people and that frontline staff received good quality supervision
- Ensure that frontline services are sufficiently resourced and the workforce appropriately skilled to enable high quality work to be undertaken with children and young people

## Current actions to deliver priorities

The priorities will be delivered through the CSC Service Improvement Plan with sets out the activity and timescales for delivering the improvement. The action plan will be reviewed and refreshed regularly.

In addition, we have regular Practice Champions meetings, which have developed tools to use with children to ascertain the child's lived experience and also developed practice guides.

Sefton Corporate Learning Centre offers a portfolio of blended training and development opportunities to the Children's Social Care workforce. This includes mandatory and best practice training for students, ASYEs, Support Staff, Social Workers and Managers. Further information regarding the Children's Social Care core offer of training can be accessed from Sefton's Workforce Learning and Development Plan: April 2018 – March 2019.

We also have Practice and Performance Meetings which look at learning from audit, a market place to share new initiatives and a focus on practitioners sharing good practice.

The training and development of social workers has been agreed based on the identified needs of the workforce within individual Performance Development Reviews as well as the Ofsted Inspection and learning from audits and complaints.

We are member of Research in Practice (RIP), an organisation that supports the children and families sector, by embedding evidence-informed practice at all levels of the organisation. Support includes training events, online resources, hard copy publications and evaluation support.

In addition, other development opportunities are available such as an annual Focus on Practice Week which seeks to look at good practice and share the learning from such events.

## Conclusion

Sefton will not deliver its improvements for its children and families without an involved, capable and motivated workforce. This strategy sets out where we will focus our attention for the next three years and how we will know we are getting things right.

Our most important indicator of whether we are getting it right is what our workforce tells us. We are committed to regular, effective and strong workforce communication and exchange of ideas and will use the results from this communication and engagement to inform what we are doing, check the effect of what we do and to change it where we are not getting it right.

## Actions for the next period

Action	Lead	By when
Recruit 10 additional social workers	Service Managers	
Recruit 1 additional Team Manager	Service Managers	
Recruit 1 Principal Social Worker	Head of Service	
Ensure all staff are signed up to Research in Practice (RiP) and using the resources available	Service Managers	
Supervision survey to be carried out annually	QA Manager	
Annual review of core offer for Social Workers to ensure the offer meets training/development needs	Service Managers	