

Risk Stewardship Template

Risk Ref: Corporate Risk 15 (13-14)		Date template updated: 10 June 2104	
<p><i>Cross reference the risk to the Corporate and Service Delivery Plan Objective to which it relates, only key risks that require monitoring will be recorded in the Corporate / Significant Risk Register.</i></p>			
Corporate Priorities / Service Delivery Objective / Project Objective :		Risk to all Council Plan Outcomes – <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. OUR LOCAL COMMUNITIES ARE STRONG AND SUPPORTIVE 2. CHESHIRE EAST HAS A GROWING AND RESILIENT ECONOMY 3. PEOPLE HAVE THE LIFE SKILLS AND EDUCATION THEY NEED TO THRIVE 4. CHESHIRE EAST IS A GREEN AND SUSTAINABLE PLACE 5. LOCAL PEOPLE LIVE WELL AND FOR LONGER ∇ BE A LEADING, COMMISSIONING & RESPONSIBLE COUNCIL 	
<p><i>Risk description should include the cause of the impact and the consequence to the objective which might arise.</i></p>			
<p>Identified Risk Description:</p> <p>Protection of Children and Young People: There is a risk that if the Council does not recruit and retain a sufficient number of qualified and competent social workers and supervisors to meet statutory children Social Care statutory duties, children and young people may not be protected from harm or risk of harm. This will impact on the Council's outcome for local people living well and for longer.</p>			
<p>Risk Comments:</p> <p>Following an unannounced inspection of Cheshire East's arrangements to protect children, Ofsted published its Inspection Report in April 2013, with a number of recommended actions. Cheshire East Council subsequently received an Improvement Notice setting out further improvements. Whilst there has been significant improvement, the recruitment and retention of high quality Social Work staff continues to be a high priority to deliver improvements in the protection of children.</p>			
<p><i>Who owns and is accountable for the risk?</i></p> <p>Risk Owner: Executive Director of Strategic Commissioning</p> <p>Strategic Lead: Children and Family Services Portfolio Holder</p>		<p><i>Who is responsible for taking forward the actions?</i></p> <p>Risk Managed by: Director of Children's Services</p>	
		<p><i>Is the risk new, enduring, dying or re-emerging?</i></p> <p>Risk Status: New</p>	
<p><i>Assess the combined risk of the likelihood and impact of the risk being realised before taking account of any controls in place to manage the risk. This is the gross risk score.</i></p>		<p>Likelihood</p> <p>4</p>	<p>x Impact</p> <p>4</p>
		<p>= Gross Risk Score</p> <p>16</p>	
<p><i>What controls are already in place to mitigate the risk? Controls could consist of authorisation and approval processes, governance arrangements and monitoring processes, physical controls, segregation of duties, organisational, personnel, management and supervisory controls or arithmetic and accounting controls. Where is the evidence for these controls kept?</i></p> <p>Existing Controls and Evidence:</p> <p>Significant activity has taken place in Children's Services to improve arrangements to protect children since Ofsted's inspection in 2013. Cheshire East Council has developed an improvement plan to meet the recommendations from Ofsted and the Improvement Notice, including a Social Worker Recruitment and Retention strategy.</p> <p>The improvement plan has been approved by an Improvement Board that was set up in June 2013 to monitor and drive the progress made. The Board meets monthly, has an independent Chair, and is attended by a representative from the Department for Education and senior officers and from Cheshire East Council, Health, Schools and the Police. The Lead Member, Chair of Scrutiny and Chief Executive are all members of the Board, ensuring the drive for improvement has political support. The Board is supported by an Executive Group that meets regularly between Boards to ensure that the hard work by frontline services is reflected back to the Board. The Improvement Board has already 'signed off' a number of recommendations as</p>			

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complete, including those relating to Cheshire East's Consultation Service (ChECS).

The improvement plan is also being monitored and challenged by the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) – the partnership responsible for holding multi-agency partners to account over their safeguarding arrangements. Scrutiny of progress is also being made in the Council's Scrutiny Committee and Policy Development Group. The improvement plan has also been externally endorsed by Ofsted and an LGA peer review as a robust plan for improvement. Internal audit within Cheshire East were commissioned to audit the governance arrangements for the management of risk associated with the outcome of the Ofsted inspection and subsequent Notice to Improve. Internal Audit concluded that a robust governance framework has been put in place to ensure that actions raised in the Ofsted report are implemented, reported upon and formally signed off. On this basis good assurance was provided that the risks are being effectively managed.

The recruitment and retention strategy involves a range of initiatives including; 'growing our own' Social Workers, recruitment and retention payments, enhanced training, better ICT, reducing case loads and supportive working environments. Regular recruitment events are held and there is a focus on Cheshire East being the employer of choice.

Progress So Far:

- A staff survey identified staff issues and the majority of actions to address these are now complete/underway
- All staff have been issued with lightweight wifi enabled laptops and blackberry's
- Accommodation issues for existing Social Workers have been resolved
- A new 'grow your own' social worker scheme has been launched
- A recruitment campaign to attract Social Workers to Cheshire East
- A new online CEC Social Work recruitment resource for Social Workers to attract potential candidates interested in working for Cheshire East Developing dedicated
- A revised process to increase engagement with new staff before during and as part of their induction
- Cheshire East has attended Careers Fairs
- A risk management strategy has been implemented to reduce the risks when cases transfer between Social Workers
- Policy Development Group carried out a focussed piece of work with Agency staff looking at their current arrangements and what might attract them to permanent positions within CEC.
- Staff have been redeployed to ensure there is a permanent Group Manager leading each team.

A report to the Improvement Board in March 2014 summarised the findings from Ofsted's improvement pilot and the Safeguarding Children Peer Review. It also set out those areas where the level of improvement required has not been made. Regular monitoring of recruitment and retention of staff has concluded that there is currently an over reliance on agency Social Workers. Agency staff are not permanent staff and as such don't provide consistency and stability for children and families, although a number of these are choosing to stay with Cheshire East for longer periods.

The priorities for a new plan for 2014 have been agreed by the Improvement Board and will be adopted by the LSCB. One of the key priorities is that high quality Social Workers are recruited and choose to stay with Cheshire East. A detailed action plan has been developed to address this priority. The effectiveness and progress of the improvement plan will continue to be monitored and challenged by the Improvement Board.

Assess the combined risk of the likelihood and impact of the risk being realised after taking account of the existing controls in place to manage the risk. This is the net risk score – as it is now.

Likelihood

3

x Impact

4

= Net Risk Score

12

Is the net risk now acceptable or not? Are there further reasonable controls or planned actions you can take to manage the risk down to an acceptable level? If not, consider the need for a contingency plan for what will happen if the risk is realised. Members of the Corporate Risk Management Group are responsible for ensuring that actions proposed to mitigate corporate and significant operational risks are sufficient and proportional to the risk

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identified.

Future Planned Actions / Contingency:

The priority to recruit and retain sufficient experienced and competent social workers remains in the 2014 plan. For the May 2014 Improvement Board a detailed action plan, performance measures and quality assurance arrangements were presented on how this priority will be addressed. This includes:

- Actions to ensure newly qualified social workers progress and develop
- Promoting Social Work as a career option through schools careers evenings, college and university fairs, targeting undergraduates and sponsored work placements
- Increasing Cheshire East’s online recruitment presence through the use of google, social networks etc
- Increase in the number of places on our trainee social worker programmes (grow your own)
- Agreeing a regional protocol for the safer recruitment of agency workers.
- Revising the workforce strategy
- Recruiting a Grade 10 Social Worker to support and mentor ASYEs
- Exploring overseas recruitment options.

Next Review Date:

July 2014

Some risks require weekly or monthly monitoring, others will only need to be revisited following the proposed date for the completion of the planned action.

The reason for monitoring key risks is to create an early warning system; risk registers should be regularly reviewed and amended. Questions asked during monitoring are: Is the risk still relevant? Is there any movement in the net risk score? Are the controls still in place and operating effectively? Has anything occurred which may change its impact and/or likelihood? Have any significant control failures or weaknesses occurred since the risk was last monitored? Is the risk increasing - do I need to devise more controls? Is the risk decreasing – can I relax existing controls?

Monitoring Arrangements:

Key Risk Indicators:-

- % of permanent –v- agency staff
- % of experienced –v- newly qualified
- the maximum single Social Worker caseload
- the average caseload

Future Issues:

- Changes in inspection frameworks
- Public sector funding
- Regional variations in Social Worker pay

Predict the combined risk of the likelihood and impact of the risk being realised after taking account of the existing and planned controls in place to manage the risk. This is the target risk score.

Likelihood

2

x Impact

3

= Expected Score

6

Comments

June 2014: The overall net risk rating is 12, high risk. Although the existing mitigation measures are starting to have an impact - there has been an increase in applications and subsequent appointments - the effect of existing actions will take some time to take full effect and so this will remain a priority for the Council.