

### Recruitment Strategy

This paper is produced against a background of:

- The Recruitment Centre now in place and becoming fully operational
- Significant use of agency staff and a continuing and significant increase in advertising spend
- Localised recruitment difficulties affecting the sound provision of services
- Reducing numbers applying for professional social work qualifications nationally
- Intense competition in a limited market of qualified staff
- Average sickness absence levels that are the highest in the County Council
- Current vacancies in Districts below 10% as a percentage of “establishment” (around 9% in Children and Families) compared to a public sector average of over 14%
- **Under-representation of members of the black and ethnic minority community, people with disabilities and women in certain aspects of the service and grading (e.g. M1 and above)**

The strategy has three basic objectives

1. To fill vacancies with appropriately skilled and qualified candidates quickly with the minimum of disruption to services:

This will be achieved through a joint strategy with the County Council’s Recruitment Centre including the following actions:

- **identify target representation levels for members of the black and ethnic minority community, people with disabilities and women in service areas and in the grading structure.**
- diversify our means of recruitment to include, for example, greater use of on line advertising; leafleting, career fairs, posters on buses, taxis etc.; radio, **incorporating specific requirements for the black and ethnic minority community, people with disabilities and women. Consider positive action in relation to these groups within advertising campaigns.**
- targeting educational establishments and non-traditional areas of recruitment (geographically as well as sources of skills)
- **use targeted and structured community workshops on interview techniques and completing application forms, what we do, how we do it and the career opportunities available.**

- greater use of promotional material enhancing our “can do” approach, mobile working, examples of innovative thinking. The aim is to achieve “candidates in waiting”
- enhance our customer care, particularly in the recruitment process. This will include how we respond to interested parties so that we ensure we capture them either now or when other vacancies arise; allocating responsibility for campaigns/districts/services to a specific personnel officer/administrator and manager so that a working relationship and identity are built up that gives greater value, flexibility and responsiveness to the process. **Include in this greater awareness of the requirements of the black and ethnic minority community, people with disabilities, the availability of flexible working/Lifewise initiatives.**
- **Ensure that equality performance measures are incorporated in managers’ job descriptions and staff involved in the recruitment process have training in awareness of equality issues.**

2. To reduce the percentage of current vacancies against total establishment:

We have some feedback on leavers. This indicates that pay and conditions are not the main leaving issue. This is borne out by County Council exit figures: 8% of all leavers do so for pay and conditions, 29% because of the job (e.g. dull work, too much, too little, stress, limited job satisfaction), 22% because of limited career development, 19% because of “poor management” e.g. red tape, poor communication, lack of value. Limited evidence in the department from exit interviews bears out this analysis.

Our approach should be

- to carry out some “audit” of current staff (particularly in hard to fill vacancy areas) of a mix of high and average performers to assess what they are looking for in their career, challenge, what makes the difference between staying and going. **Identify obstacles to progression perceived by workers from black and ethnic minority groups, people with disabilities and women.**

- improve staff’s chances of “dealing with the pressures of the job” with an occupational health/lifewise model e.g.

Breaks within the department or County Council ( compare costs of short paid sabbaticals against leaving and replacement). This requires careful assessment and selection, say, of high pressure areas and could be connected to an individual’s area of interest that is connected with the work of the department.

Job reconfiguration, probably most appropriate for high routine, process related jobs

- succession planning strategy, including fast track career routes for high achievers. Identify career paths in hard to recruit groups, identify career

“packages” that are a mix of experience and development leading through a career path. **Undertake positive action as part of this strategy in relation to disadvantaged groups.**

– examine the effectiveness of “bursaries”, further placements of students in teams and trainees and modern apprenticeships.

### **Ensure a representative distribution of opportunities under these headings**

3. To reduce the unit cost per starter.

This is a key Recruitment Centre objective. Measures above are important contributors to reduced unit costs as are:

- a clearer process for authorisation of advertisement commissions, agency workers and temps

- better use of the redeployment scheme

- re-examine our recruitment processes to improve speed and responsiveness, identify barriers that processes present, set standard turn round times for applications.

A significant amount of research has been done in setting up the Recruitment Centre. The Centre aims to provide a database on which to make decisions about recruitment and target resources. Following discussions at SSMB the next step should be to finalise the strategy with Manpower and agree action plans.