

Children's Service Integration Programme Newsletter

Issue 1: 6 September 2016

Welcome to the fortnightly newsletter of the Integration Programme.

This newsletter is distributed to all staff working in the Children, Education and Families Directorate of Oxfordshire County Council to update you with developments across the Integration Programme.

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Revised timetable update- 6 September

We are really sorry to have to inform you that due to a number of issues beyond the control of the Integration team, we are having to revise the timeline for the integration programme. The consequence of this is that the timeframe for informing people about decisions on voluntary redundancy and the outcome of assessments has been moved.

Notifications about the outcome of applications for voluntary redundancies will now be sent out on 19 September. Notifications about the outcome of the shortlisting assessment will be sent out on 5 October 2016.

Please find the revised timetable on the next page.

Revised timetable for moving to the Integrated Children's Service

Revised 6 September 2016

Date	Activity description
	Shortlisting assessments on-going
5 - 23 Sep 2016	Interviews for Business Administration Service
13 Sep 2016	Interviews for Service Manager Workers to be told of the outcomes of these interviews by 16 September 2016.
16 Sep 2016	Interviews for Locality and Community Support Team Manager Workers to be told of the outcomes of these interviews on 16 September 2016.
19 Sep 2016	Staff notified of outcome of Voluntary Redundancy Application. Staff whose application for voluntary redundancy is not agreed will be notified of time and venue of shortlisting assessment.
23 Sep and 26 Sep 2016	Shortlisting assessments for staff whose application for voluntary redundancy is not successful. These assessments will take place at Abingdon and Witney College Wootton Road, Abingdon OX14 1GG
5 Oct 2016	All staff expressing preference for roles in Locality and Community Support Service (LCSS), Family Support Service (FSS) and Education, Employment and Training Service (EET) - notified of outcome of assessment and interview slot, where appropriate.
10 - 14 Oct 2016	Interviews for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assistant Team Manager (LCSS) • Assistant Team Manager (FSS) • Locality Worker (LCSS)
17 Oct 2016	Staff interviewed for following posts, informed of outcome: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assistant Team Manager (LCSS) • Assistant Team Manager (FSS) • Locality Worker (LCSS) • All staff within Business Administration Service
17 Oct - 18 Nov 2016	Interviews for roles within: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family Support Service • Education, Employment and Training Service • Community Co-ordinator
31 Oct - 11 Nov 2016	Induction and transition period for workers within LCSS, including administrators
28 Nov 2016	Outcomes letters sent to all staff
1 Dec 2016 - 28 Feb 2017	3 month notice period
3 Jan 2017	Family Support Service and Education, Employment and Training Service and Community Co-ordinator roles go live, including administrative staff

A message from the Staff Advisory Group

As we move into the Transitions phase of the new Children & Families Service, the Staff Advisory Group (SAG) have reviewed their role and agreed to continue to act as a sounding board/focus group to ensure the views of staff on the ground contribute to its success.

Recent additions to the group have been made to ensure that we have broad representation on the group, however, **we still need a representative from our Admin Teams (in the capacity of a representative, not to take minutes).**

If you are interested or would like further information, please email the SAG inbox on the address below and a member of the group will contact you.

To ensure that we represent the views of as many staff as possible, we would like to recommend that Teams across the service add a SAG agenda item to their team meetings, so that any action can be fed through to the groups confidential email box below.

The broad role of the group is to:

- Meet with the Children's Service Integration Programme Team/senior managers to discuss issues around the implementation of and operational needs of the new service
- Ask questions and seek clarification about decisions and planned changes on behalf of staff, via a confidential SAG email box: CEFstaffadvisorygroup@Oxfordshire.gov.uk (These will then be answered individually or themed and put on the FAQ page)
- Work with management colleagues to secure the best possible delivery of services moving forward, through open and professional dialogue
- Provide direct team and service representation through its individual members.

For more information on who your local representative is, please click [here](#):

Assessment and selection process

The written assessments started on the 22nd August and are on-going.

We have produced an information booklet for all staff in relation to the written assessments and short listing process. The document can be found in the *Assessment Preparation* section at the bottom of the [Children's Services consultation page](#).

Please email the EI Services Review inbox at eiservicesreview@Oxfordshire.gov.uk if you have annual leave or other reasons to identify any dates during the interview period when you will not be available.

Administration & Business Support

The majority of administrators and business support staff have now attended their ICT/IBC assessment. Staff will be aware that there have been issues with IBC- this has meant that not all staff were able to access IBC to complete this part of the assessment. To make things fair and consistent we have decided to disregard the IBC element for everyone when calculating the scores.

Interviews have now started for the new Business Administration Service and all staff have been informed of when they should attend. However, if you are in any doubt please contact: Cefadmintest@oxfordshire.gov.uk.

Confidential HR advice is always available to staff so please contact Vivien Trafford via eiservices@oxfordshire.gov.uk if you wish to discuss your particular circumstances.

Inventories

Teams at each of the Children's Centres and Early Intervention Hubs have been asked to complete inventories of equipment and resources.

When the inventories are completed we will have a full picture of the available resources across the current services and what will need to be redeployed to the Children and Family Centres for the new integrated service. This will ensure that the teams working at the Children and Family Centres have all the equipment they need in order to deliver a 0-19 years service.

The inventories will also identify surplus resources. Once we have identified what will be reused at the Children and Family Centres we can begin conversations with local schools, colleges, community groups, charities and other OCC services around whether they would be interested in it.

The programme will follow the established OCC 'disposals' procedures which govern the transfer and sale of equipment and resources to other groups.

If you have any suggestions for groups local to a Children's Centre or Early Intervention Hub that you feel may be interested in equipment or resources used in the centre or hub please contact eiservicesreview@oxfordshire.gov.uk with details of the group including, if possible, a named contact.

Children and Family Centres- update on works

There are 8 Children and Family Centres going forward, 7 of which require some work in order to make the building suitable for the new service.

A preliminary specification was developed by service managers and is being used by Carillion as the basis for a programme of works.

To ensure that all areas of the service have participated in setting or refining the building design, a series of visits are underway with current centre managers and Family Support Team managers.

The visits are organised by area - touring all the future Children and Family Centre locations in that area. At each site the plans are reviewed and discussed, with comments and suggested recorded and fed back to the design team that review the suggestions and incorporate.



We are expecting the next series of detailed designs to be produced towards the end of September.

Qualifying as a Social Worker

As part of the integration programme, we are keen to increase the opportunities for staff to qualify as social workers. With average cost of qualifying being around £27,000 pounds (based on a three year degree course) we are increasing the number of funded placements available.

The routes to qualifying are through academic study at a degree or masters level, and as such there are entry criteria that rely upon GCSE/ A-level equivalent qualifications as well as experience; further information about entry requirements can be found [here](#) on the BASW website.

If you are successful in receiving funding from OCC you will be expected to work as a children's social worker for Oxfordshire for three years from qualification (this includes your first Assessed and Supported Year).

In January 2017 we will undertake a further application process open to all staff across CEF, where we will agree to sponsor a number of social work students. If you are successful in receiving funding you will still need to apply and be accepted on a qualifying course.

Assessment and Accreditation of Social Workers-

Update from Lucy Butler

Jim Leivers, Shaun Hanks & I went to a DfE meeting last week on the Assessment and Accreditation of Social Workers.

The DfE explained that this system was being introduced to:

- ❑ Embed the knowledge and skills statement
- ❑ Provide a window into the practice of individuals (and employers)
- ❑ Help define what good looks like
- ❑ Develop confidence in social workers

There is a commitment from the DfE to have all child and family social workers assessed and accredited by 2020.

The work has already been trialled across pilot authorities which assessed social workers through a knowledge assessment, digital scenarios, simulated assessment and employers ratings. The DfE called this a 'proof of concept'. About 900 social workers took part in this with a 80% pass rate.

The DfE proposes to roll out this system of knowledge assessment, simulated observation and written assessment to all social workers. They told us they were still working on how they would assess practice leaders.

Roll out plans

The DfE is rolling this out in two phases:

Phase 1 will run from autumn 2016 to September 2018. Phase 1 will include 30

Local Authorities which have volunteered to be in the early roll out (not Oxfordshire). The DfE expects this to cover 7,000 social workers. Phase 1 will also include all ASYE – about 4,000 in total.

Phase 2 will start in October 2018.

It's fair to say that the DfE still has work to do to fully bottom out how this will work across Local Authorities. Decisions it still has to make are– should the scheme be mandatory? How does accreditation work with Agency staff when the Employing Agency has such a key role in validating the accreditation? And a big question- what status does the accreditation have? Also if you don't pass the test what does this mean for you to continue to do your work, especially if it involves court work?

The DfE has assured us it is working on these areas and will develop guidance on these and other matters in the autumn.



We will continue to engage in the debate with the DfE and would encourage all registered social workers to get involved too. In the autumn, the DfE will be publishing a consultation document – we be responding to that as a county council but you can also respond as individuals.

We will keep you informed of developments in this area as we hear them.