**Workforce Self-Evaluation Guidance**

**Background**

This guidance document supports the work of London authorities who have chosen Workforce as a thematic priority for self-evaluation as part of Regional Improvement Alliance (RIA) programme for 2019/20.

The purpose of this self-evaluation is:

1. To enable authorities to robustly assess the strength of their workforce, through an understanding of their local context and key drivers, against a shared evidence base.
2. To support work within authorities and between London authorities to continuously improve the children’s workforce, addressing local, sub-regional and regional challenges.

The self-evaluation does not replace work undertaken as part of existing improvement activity or preparation for Ofsted annual conversations but can draw from these and / or inform their development. This self-evaluation need not cover all aspects of an authority’s workforce context and responsibilities but should quickly lead to a focus on the key challenges and strengths of existing approaches. It should provide the authority with a clearly identified set of priorities on which it will want to focus its energies to support its workforce strategy and planning. This self-evaluation should also identify areas where the authority will benefit from collaboration with others and where collective systemic / strategic change is required.

The self-evaluation will be assisted by reference to:

LGA Social work health check 2017 – report and health check tool:

<https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/workforce%20-%20social%20workers%20-%20Social%20Work%20Health%20Check%20Survey%20Report%202017%20-%204%20june%202018.pdf>

LGA Standards for employers of social workers in England:

<https://www.local.gov.uk/our-support/workforce-and-hr-support/social-workers/social-worker-standards/standards-employers>

ADCS Building a workforce that works for all children:

<https://adcs.org.uk/assets/documentation/ADCS_Building_a_workforce_that_works_for_all_children_FINAL_11_March_2019.pdf>

This self-evaluation is primarily concerned with the social work workforce. Clearly the ability to recruit, retain and develop staff across the whole children’s workforce will have an impact on outcomes and experience for children but for the purposes of the current phase of the RIA sector-led improvement work it is social workers who are the key consideration. For this self-evaluation issues in relation to the non-social work workforce will be relevant where they relate to the quality and impact of social work.

**Areas for Self-Evaluation**

**A - Local context (quantitative data):**

1. What do the key indicators tell you about the health, effectiveness and capacity of your social work workforce? Consider both published data shared for the self-evaluation by the RIA team and your current local data.

Key data to review, including trajectory over time, include:

- Numbers of social worker

- Turnover rate

- Number of agency workers

- Agency rate

- Number of vacancies

- Vacancy rate

- Absence rate

## - Average caseload

2. Consider any other sources of national or local statistical data about your social work workforce that inform your understanding.

**B - Local context (qualitative data)**

1. Consider evidence from social work health checks, surveys, staff forums and participation activities that inform your understanding of social workers experience in your borough.

**C - Recruitment**

1. How effective is your current approach to recruitment? What is working and what are you experiencing as the key barriers to successful social work recruitment? Comment on any local / regional / national initiatives which you have undertaken to support social work recruitment. What has been more / less effective?

**D - Agency social workers**

1. Describe the key challenges and any successful approaches you have undertaken with social work agencies and the agency social workers you employ.

2. How well integrated are your agency social workers into your services? Do you have any practice in relation to the deployment, retention, conversion of agency social workers you would want to share?

3. Do you have any comment in relation to agency social worker pay / conditions and any collective local authority arrangements?

**E - Retention and workforce support and development**

1. How successful are you in retaining social workers? What approaches have you used to retain and develop social work staff? What has been more / less effective in your work to develop a social work workforce which has optimum impact for children?

2. Have you undertaken a social work health check? If so how recently and what did you learn? If you have not undertaken a health check what approaches have you used to understand the capacity, experience, health and well-being of your social workers? Consider specifically:

* Safe practice environment
* Professional support/supervision
* Stimulating work
* Professional development/training
* Organisational culture
* Environmental ‘hygiene’ factor
* Practical benefits (e.g. terms and conditions etc.)

**F - Strengths**

1. What do you see as the strengths of your social work workforce and your approach to ensuring quality and impact of your social workers?

2. Are there examples of innovative or particularly effective practice you want to share with other authorities?

**G - Workforce improvement activity**

1. What are your key priorities over the next 12 months for ensuring you have a social work workforce which will deliver quality and impact for children?

2. What are your priority actions?

3. What are your measures of success that will indicate you have made progress against your priorities?

4. Consider systemic changes which would benefit from action undertaken in collaboration with other local authorities?