

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

21 JULY 2015

RECRUITMENT, RETENTION AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT IN CHILDRENS SOCIAL CARE

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Summary

To provide an update on the effectiveness of the Recruitment, Retention and Workforce Development Strategy for Children's Social Care.

1. Budget and Policy Framework

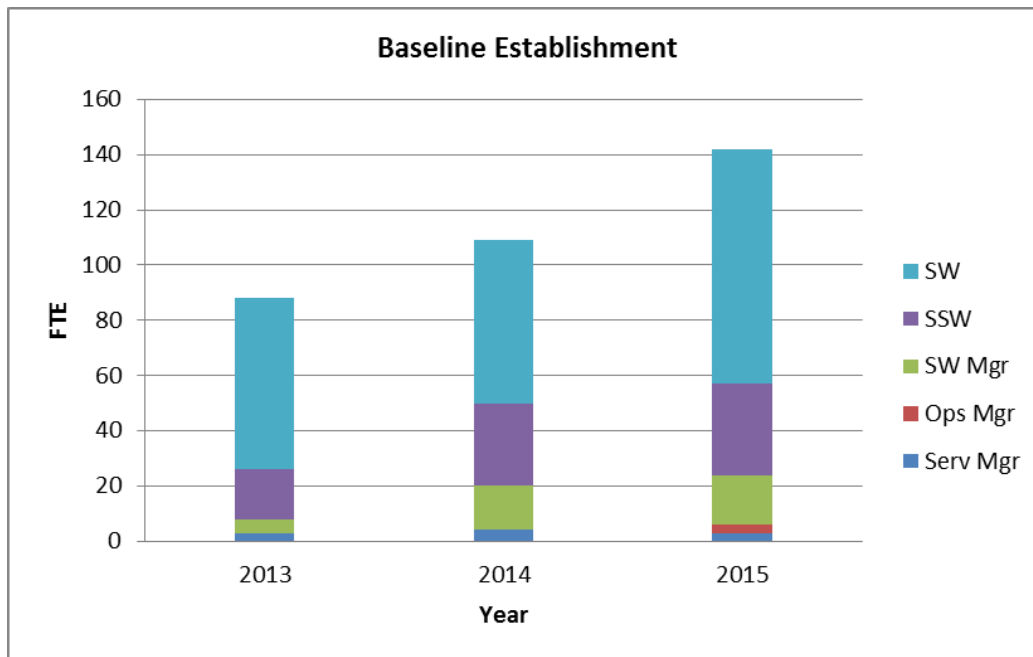
1.1 It is within the committees terms of reference to review matters related to the Children's Social Care department and it is requested that Members review the information laid out within this report.

2. Background

2.1 As part of the Council's improvement plan and to combat the local and national shortage of good quality permanent social workers HR Services produced a workforce development strategy focussing on recruitment, retention and professional development.

2.2 Continuous investment in Children's Social Care has seen the baseline establishment increase significantly from April 2013 to April 2015.

2.3 The establishment has increased by 62% (53.77 fte) in the last 2 years as laid out in 2.4

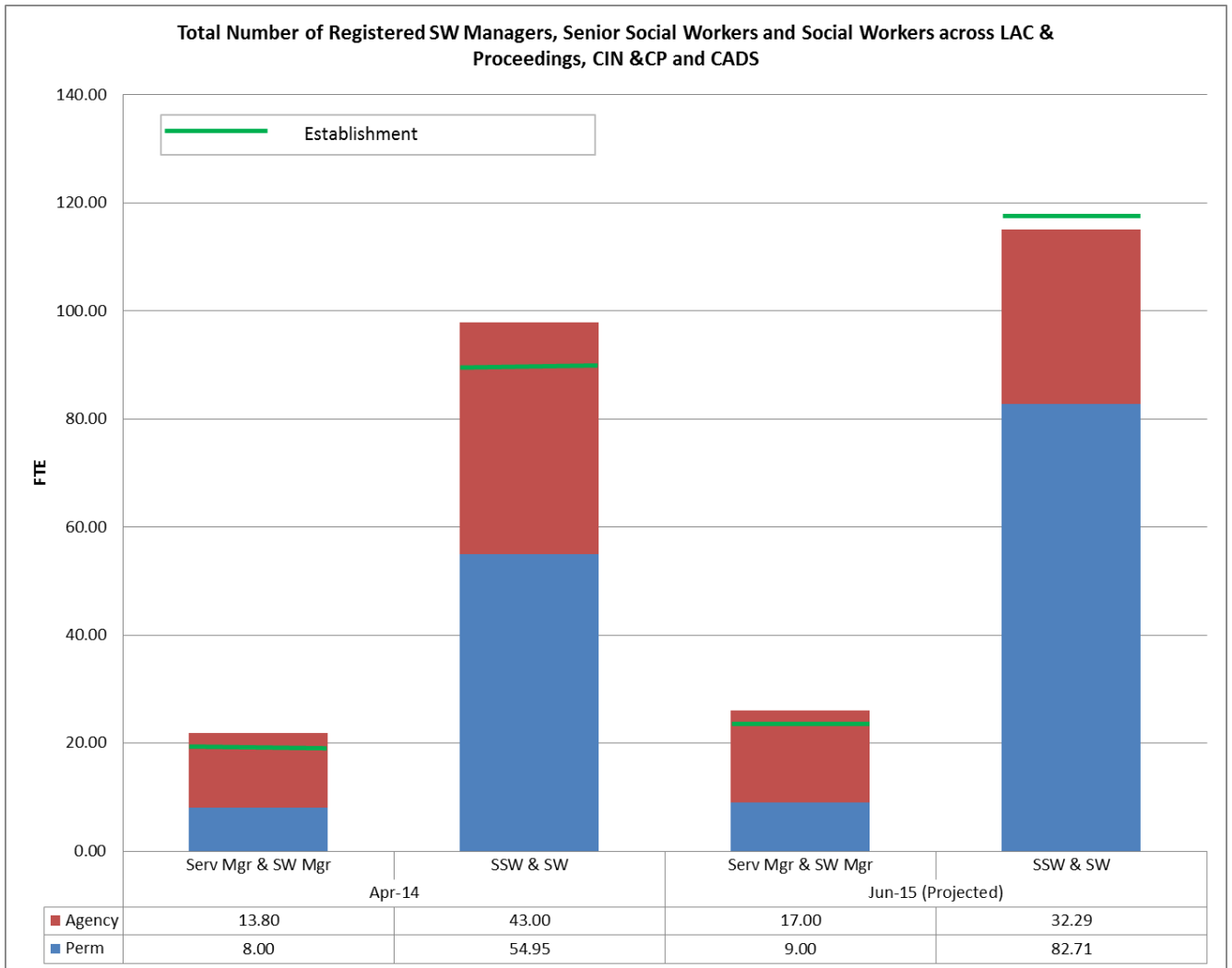


3. Workforce Development Strategy

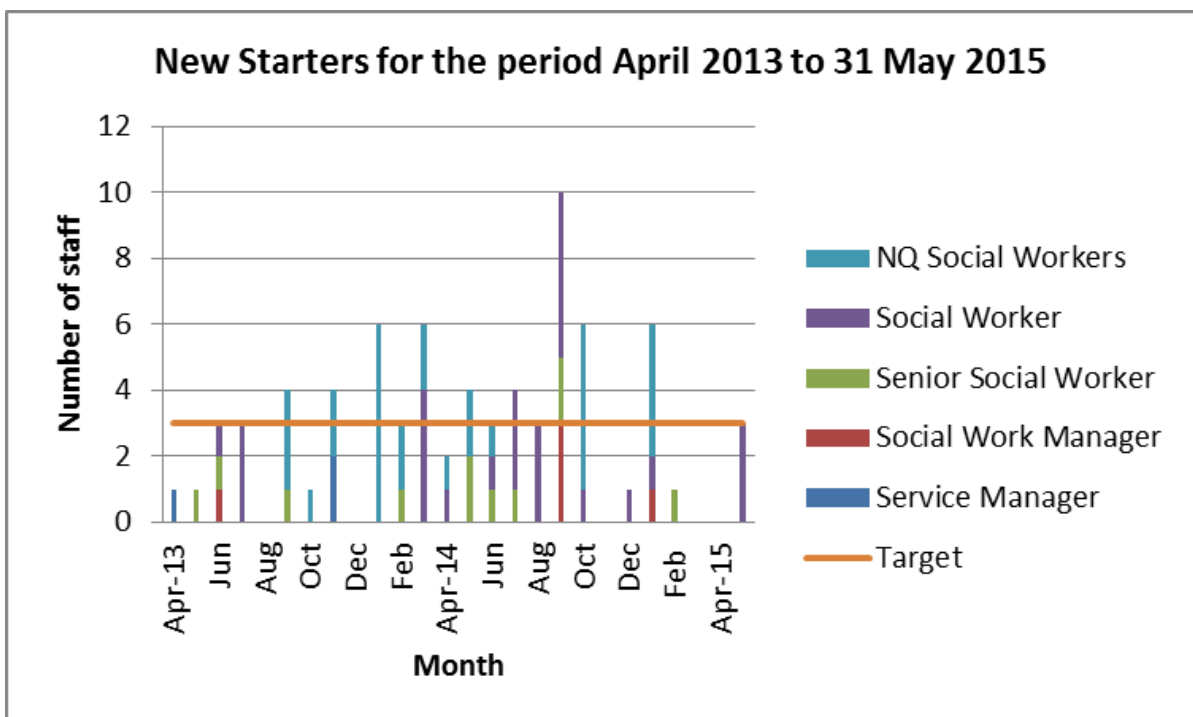
3.1 The highlights of the strategy are laid out below:

- Develop a Social Work branding unique to Medway
- Develop a Children’s Social Care recruitment microsite
- Track and follow up all recruitment microsite traffic
- Have a highly visible and professional appearance at recruitment events
- Develop a robust and challenging gateway interview process
- Agree terms and rates for agency staff within a specific framework
- Robust review of terms and conditions to ensure we remain competitive in the market
- Develop an Assisted and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) programme for newly qualified social workers
- Have a programme of pre-arranged interview and selection dates for a rolling year
- Establish a Social Work Academy to ensure professional development and support for new recruits and existing staff
- Establish a fast track management scheme for aspiring Social Workers
- Strengthen partnership working with Universities to offer local students placements and then employment
- Undertake quarterly staff surveys leading to action plans for change
- Gain external recognition and increased media coverage for Medway.

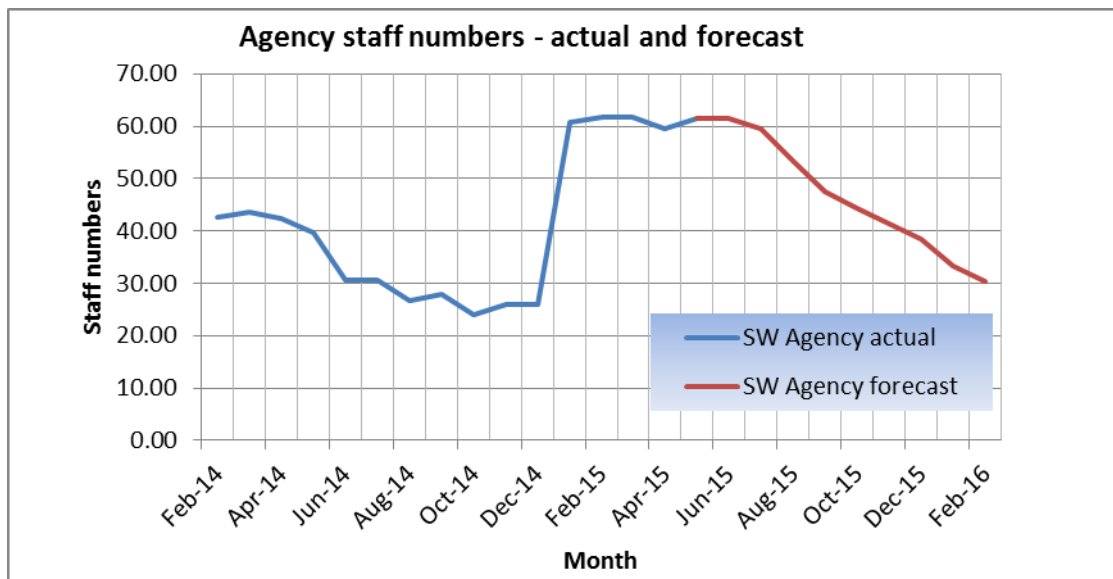
3.2 The impact of this strategy on permanent social worker numbers over the last 14 months is laid out in the graph below:



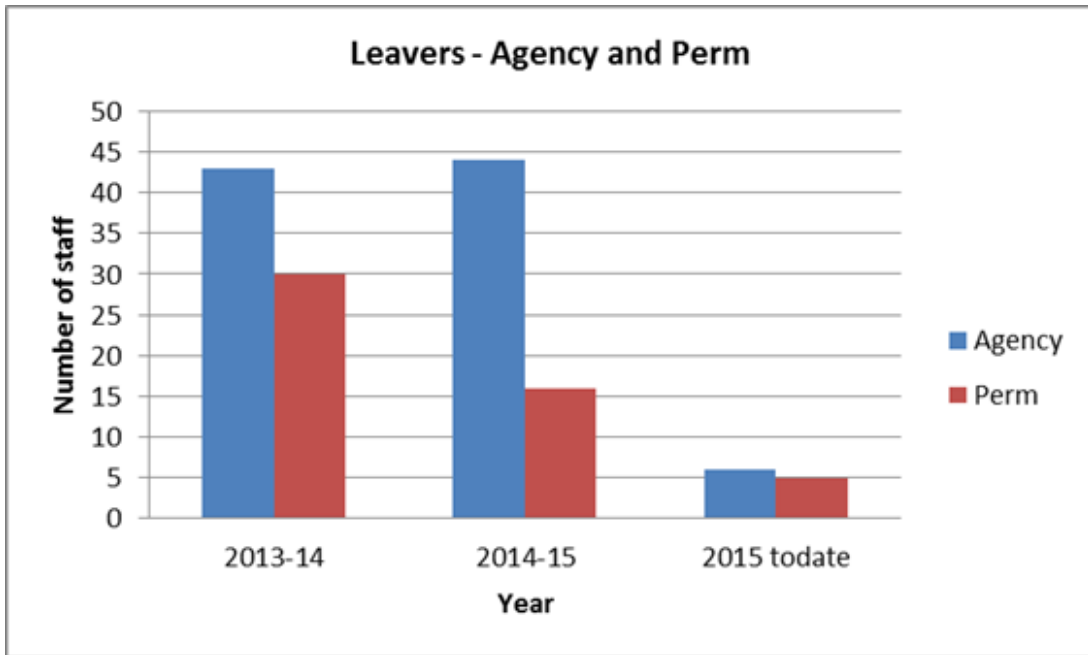
3.3 We have recruited 75 permanent social work staff in the last 2 years.



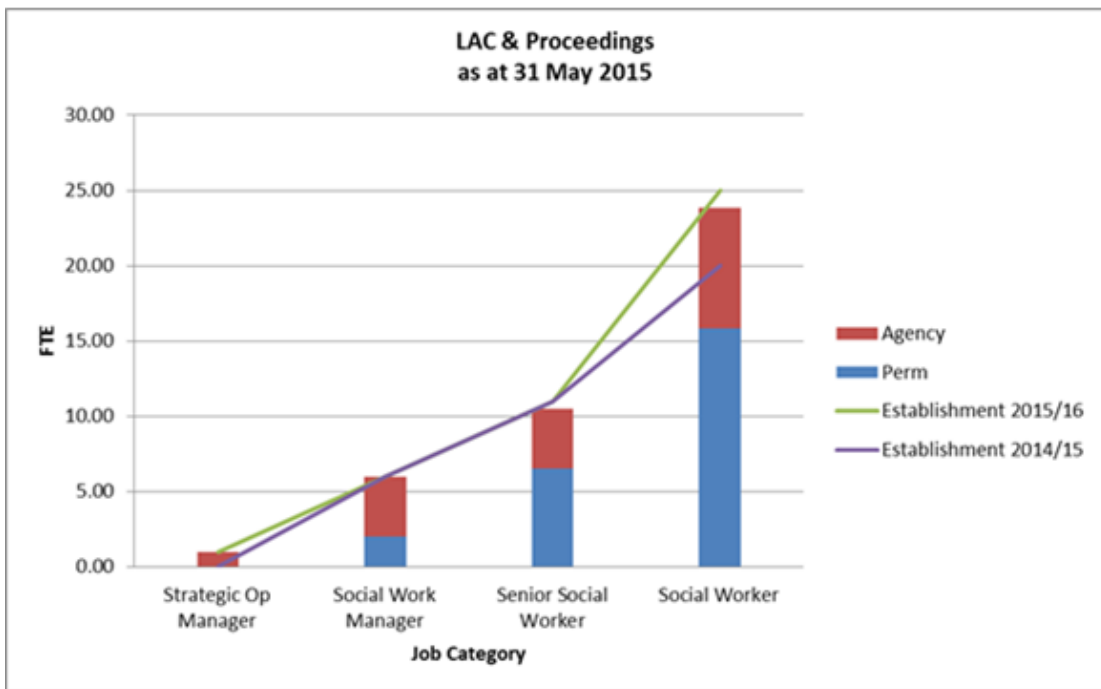
- 3.4 We have taken 29 Newly Qualified Social Workers through the ASYE programme in Children's Social Care and placed them permanently within the service.
- 3.5 We ran a 'return to social work' programme from which we recruited 6 permanent social workers into Children's Social Care.
- 3.6 We have recruited 13 Social Workers from overseas.
- 3.7 We have had 9 agency workers transfer to permanent contracts.
- 3.8 We have provided 61 student placements in the last 2 years. Of these 7 students have been appointed to NQ Social Worker posts and been supported during their ASYE year. A further 7 have been offered NQ Social Worker posts commencing in September 2015.
- 3.9 We have significantly reduced the number of agency staff within the establishment, and we forecast a continued decrease in the number of agency staff as shown in the graph below:

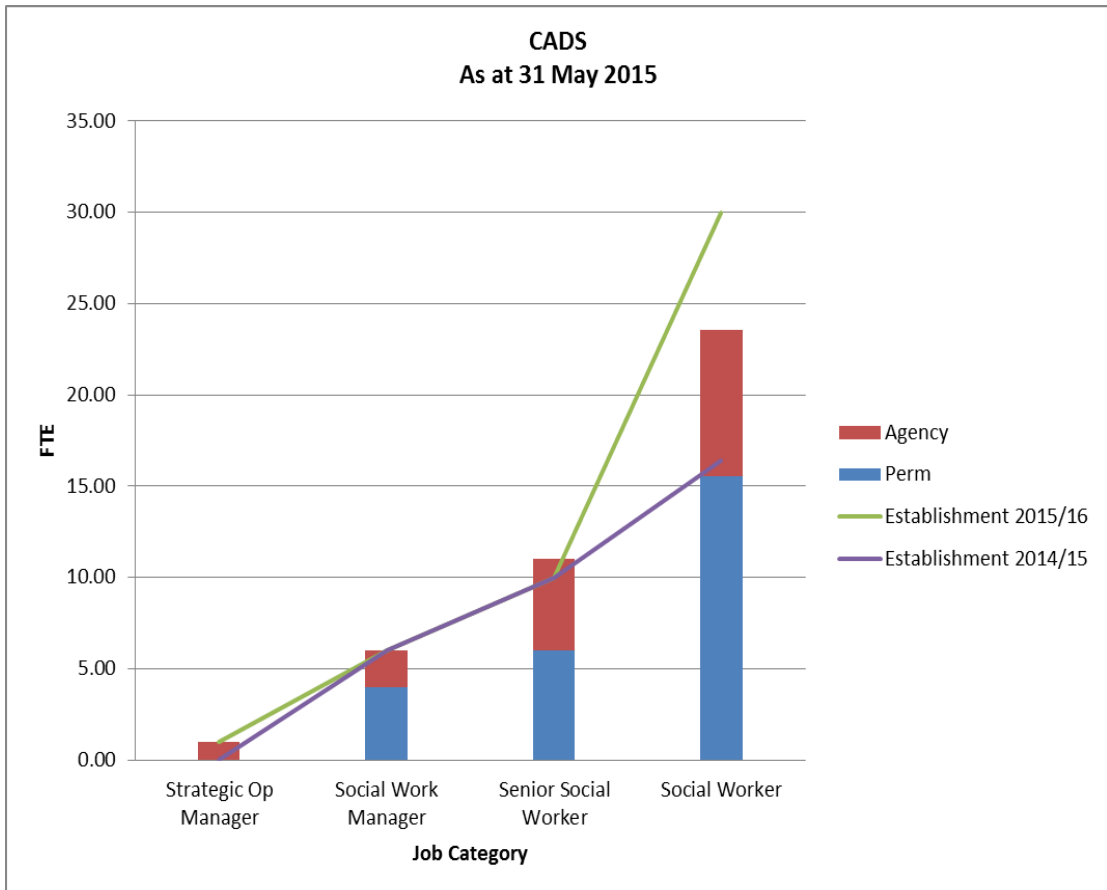


- 3.10 We have seen a significant reduction in the number of permanent and agency leavers as laid out below:

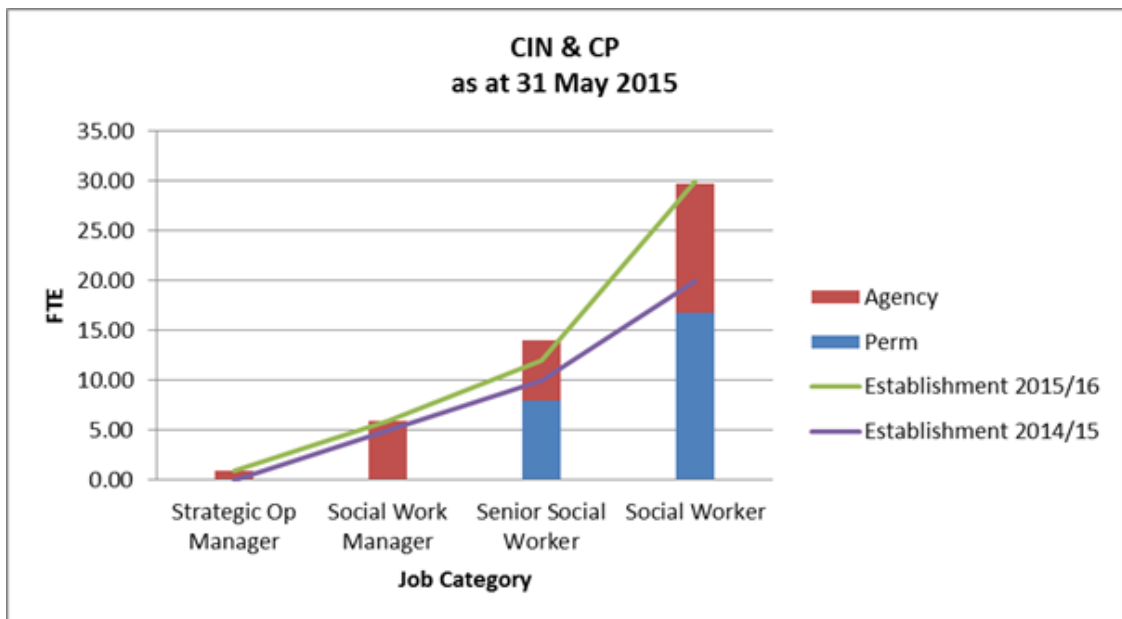


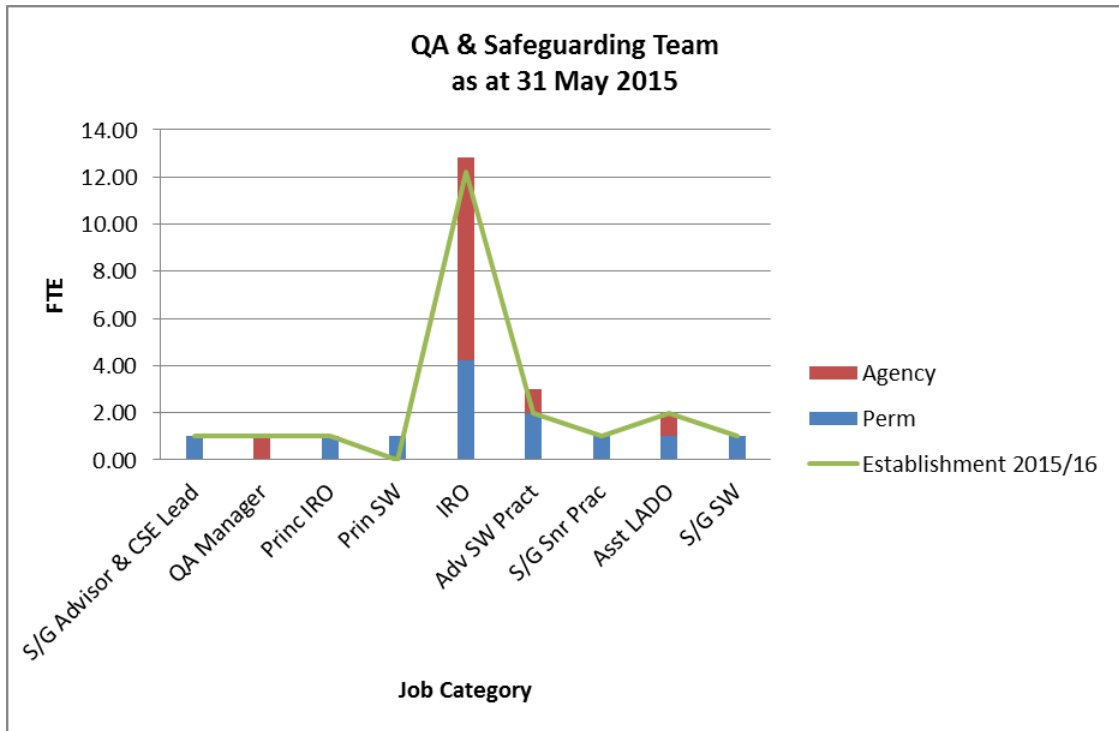
3.11 The impact on the separate teams is laid out in the graphs below:





NB. The gap between establishment and posts filled for social workers relates to increase in establishment/newly created positions in SMART Team. These posts are currently being advertised before seeking agency.

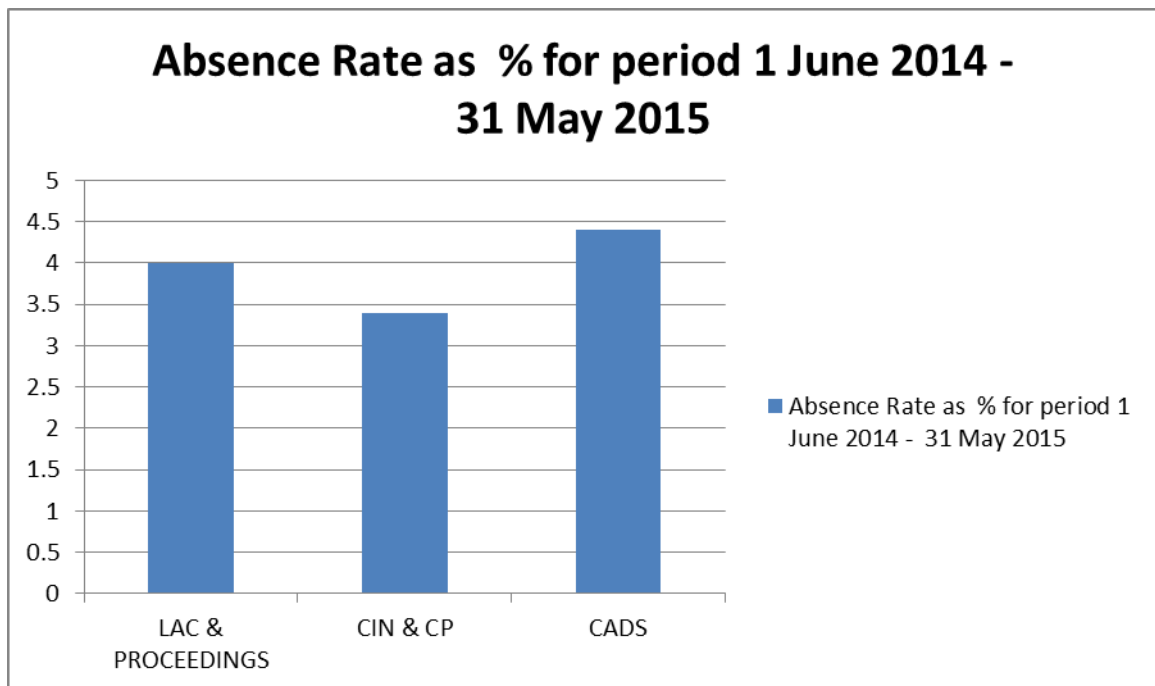




4. Sickiness Absence

4.1 The DfE Children's Social Work Workforce Collection Data for 2013/14 reported an average absence rate of 4% for England.

4.2 The absence rates for Children's Social Care for the period 1 June 2014 to 31 May 2015 are shown below



5. Advice and analysis

- 5.1 The recruitment, retention and workforce development strategy has had a positive impact on the Council's Children's Social Care improvement plan.
- 5.2 Permanent recruitment to the role of Team Manager continues to be difficult locally and nationally.
- 5.3 We are running a targeted campaign through Community Care Live and are focussing our recruitment efforts in this area for the next London recruitment fair, for which we are headline sponsors, in November 2015.
- 5.4 A step up to management course will be starting in September for delegates who have been nominated by their team manager and head of service.
- 5.5 A second return to social work course will be starting in September with a specific strand for managers returning to social work.
- 5.6 A joint health and social care induction programme has been developed and will be run for the new cohort of NQSWs and Health Visitors for Medway in September.

6 Risk Management

Risk	Description	Action to avoid or mitigate risk	Risk rating
Unstable workforce	Not being able to recruit and retain good quality social work staff could lead to an unstable workforce and ultimately would not provide the best service for the children and families of Medway.	Implementation of Recruitment, retention and workforce development strategy	Medium

7. Implications for Looked after Children

- 7.1 Details of all vacancies are sent to the LAC team and personal advisers for discussion with looked after children and children leaving care

8. Financial implications

- 8.1 The report does not contain any recommendations which have financial implications.

9. Legal implications

- 9.1 The report does not contain any recommendations which have financial implications.

10. Recommendations

10.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to note:

- The impact of the workforce development strategy
- The continuing priorities of the strategy

Lead officer contact

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Appendices

None

Background papers

None