

**For general release**

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	<b>Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee</b> <b>3 November 2020</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Response to Budget Reductions</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER:</b>	<b>Nick Pendry Director Early Help &amp; Children's Social Care</b>
<b>CABINET MEMBER:</b>	<b>Councillor Alisa Flemming, Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Learning</b>
<b>PERSON LEADING AT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING:</b>	<b>Debbie Jones, interim Executive Director, Children, families and Education</b>

**CORPORATE PRIORITY/POLICY CONTEXT/ AMBITIOUS FOR CROYDON**

To offer a clear commitment to children in care and our young adults leaving care is fully aligned to our Corporate Plan for Croydon (2018-2022) in the following areas

- Our children and young people thrive and reach their full potential
- Everyone feels safer in their street, neighbourhood and home
- Everyone has the opportunity to work and build their career.

[Corporate Plan for Croydon 2018-2022](#)

<b>ORIGIN OF ITEM:</b>	This item was identified as an item for Scrutiny.
<b>BRIEF FOR THE COMMITTEE:</b>	To provide an overview of the staffing changes in early help and children's social care following the cross-council staffing review to address the current financial challenge

## **1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

1. This report provides an overview of the anticipated reductions in staffing across early help and children's social care in response to the in-year measures taken to address the Council's funding gap. Redeployment interviews are currently taking place and the notice period for staff who are to leave the council ends on 20<sup>th</sup> December 2020. Final details will therefore be confirmed after that date.

## **2 Background and context**

- 2.1 On 6<sup>th</sup> July 2020 a formal consultation period for the staffing review across the Council was launched. Executive Directors and their teams were tasked to make savings in each of their divisions, looking at ways to reduce their staffing budget against a 15% target. Resource plans setting out the proposed staffing changes were published for staff and trade unions, including a plan for the Children, Families and Education Department (CFE)
- 2.2 The consultation period closed on 9<sup>th</sup> September 2020 and revised resource plans were published setting out the final proposed changes.

### 3. Staffing changes

- 3.1 Table 1 below sets out the staffing reductions as 19<sup>th</sup> October 2020.

FTE agency reduction	FTE vacancy reduction	Voluntary severance accepted	Offered Redeployment	At risk of redundancy
32	11.8	5	5	6

Table 1

- 3.2 Table 2 compares the number of social work posts by service in December 2019 with those as at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2020.

Service area	December 2019			September 2020		
	Permanent	Agency	Total	Permanent	Agency	Total
Early Help	0	0	<b>0</b>	6	4	<b>10</b>
SPOC & Assessment	29	41	<b>70</b>	37	19	<b>56</b>
Social Work with Families	45	45	<b>90</b>	66	11	<b>77</b>
Adolescent Support	13	2	<b>15</b>	16	0	<b>16</b>
Social work with Children Looked After	56	31	<b>87</b>	66	13	<b>79</b>
Children with Disabilities	23	13	<b>36</b>	27	3	<b>30</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>298</b>			<b>268</b>		

Table 2

### 4. Changes in staffing

- 4.1 The staffing review coincided with the planned reduction in additional staff

brought in over 2018-20 to support improvement work. In addition, the impact of the transformation programme, Destination 2021 which increased capacity in Early Help, introduced the systemic model of practice and assistant team managers in larger social work teams has led to a reduction in activity at the front door, in child protection work and in court proceedings.

- 4.2 More permanent staff have been recruited over the past twelve months, including newly qualified social workers, more external applicants for social worker and management roles and experienced social workers from overseas. As a result the majority of the posts released under the staffing review were agency workers, or vacancies held pending the planned reductions. 47 Agency workers have left over the last 6 months.
- 4.3 The changes will be finalised by the end of December 2020 when all the redeployment interviews and notice periods will have been completed.

## **5. Impact on service delivery**

- 5.1 Heads of Service have given careful consideration to the importance of sustaining the gains in the quality and effectiveness of services. Consultation with staff led to changes to the original proposals in both early help and the quality assurance and safeguarding services, as staff brought forward genuine and helpful challenges.
- 5.2 Heads of Service and the Director are confident that the staffing reductions will not impact on service performance as set out in the Sub-Committee's dashboard.

## **6. Next steps**

- 6.1 With the scale of the Council's financial challenge it is clear that there is a need re-assess services and reduce spend in order to make the necessary reductions. This will be set out in the Croydon Renewal Plan.
- 6.2 In order to ensure the excellent work that has gone in to improving Children's Services and achieving a Good Ofsted rating is not undone the interim Chief Executive has elected to re-start the Children's Improvement Board. This will provide additional assurance of the performance in Children's Services, and through monitoring will ensure issues that do emerge can be very quickly escalated. This will provide the mechanisms to manage and implement funding reductions to ensure the successful improvement journey is not undermined.

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<b>CONTACT OFFICER:</b>	Nick Pendry Director, Early Help and Children's Social Care
<b>BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:</b>	None
<b>APPENDICES:</b>	None