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| **ALDCS: Sector-led Improvement: Improvement Plan 2018**  **Theme 3: Workforce – Recruitment and Retention** |

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| 1. **Introduction - ALDCS Sector-Led Improvement:** |
| Sector-Led Improvement is overseen by ALDCS, which act as a Regional Improvement Alliance (RIA) covering the 33 London Authorities. The aims are:   * Securing a journey of continuous improvement to achieve the best possible outcomes for children and young people. * Building on existing capability in children’s services, corporately and with partners to identify good practice, diagnose improvement challenges and identify risks to performance. * Systematically sharing knowledge about what works across the sector and ensuring that there is effective brokerage of best practice solutions.   For the 2018/19 SLI cycle, London has been divided into four sub-regions, North, West, East and South, each of which have developed improvement priorities, which have been shared across London. Three pan-London themes have been identified;   * Theme 1: Adolescent / Contextual Safeguarding * Theme 2: SEND * Theme 3: Workforce – recruitment and retention * Theme 4: Financial analysis and understanding demand |

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| 1. **Identifying and describing the challenges – the case for improvement:** |
| There are significant problems in recruiting and retaining Children’s Social Care staff across London. All four London sub-regions have raised this as a key priority area for improvement. This challenge is particularly evident across qualified social work roles dealing with managing risk in the community – across MASH, Child Protection and Children in Need work. Retention of staff is also problematic, with increasing numbers of qualified social workers leaving the profession. Although this is a problem experienced across the country, it is more severe in specific regions, and London is one of these.  There are a number of causes or drivers of this problem:   * Supply – due to social workers leaving the profession, there is a perception that there are insufficient social workers available of the required quality to cover key roles. * Push factors: Environment and conditions. Stress and challenges of the work, caseloads and support available. Reputation and impact of OFSTED outcomes. * Competition between local authorities leading to disparity in rewards and flexibility offered through agencies / umbrella companies. * Lack of opportunity and insufficient clarity and understanding of career pathways.   The competition between Local Authorities, and with agencies to attract staff can lead to an escalating trend of increased benefits increasing the costs associated with providing services. |

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| 1. **Understanding the problem (including performance data, national data and benchmarking):** |
| Although there are differences across London, this is a significant issue for all sub-regions. There is a wide variation between Local Authorities that are performing ‘well’ (rate of permanency as a % of total staff), and those which are experiencing challenges. As described above, there are a range of factors that may affect the ability of Local Authorities to achieve permanent stability in social care staff. The situation is quite volatile, with many local authorities employing a range of strategies just to effectively ‘stand-still’.  The context of the Local Authority can compound challenges including reputation, geography, transport, working conditions, benefits and weighting. |

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| 1. **Financial implications:** |
| There is also a financial cost. Even with the memorandum of understanding, the employment of agency staff can add around 30% on to the staffing costs. |

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| 1. **Practice Implications and impact on families and children:** |
| Where there are significant gaps and/or an over-reliance on temporary staff, this can lead to problems with the quality and consistency of practice. This variability can make it more difficult to achieve an OFSTED rating of ‘good’ or better. This is likely to increase the risk of inconsistent standards and risks being missed – and may impact on the reputation of the local authority.  There are a number of challenges associated with this issue. It leads to a difficulties in delivering services of consistent good quality. There are problems with succession planning due to churn and retention issues. The capacity to drive improvement is constrained if first-line managers are not in place. Inconsistent relationships for families / children. |

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| 1. **What is working; what is there to build on?** |
| Leaders for London.  Memorandum of understanding.  Social Work accreditation.  Teaching partnerships.  Initiatives such as Step-up and Frontline.  Practice Leaders / practice supervisors course.  Learning from LA’s that perform well in this area - Social Care Academies (usually single-borough). |

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| 1. **Aims and key areas of focus (*probably best set out in a basic peer challenge skeleton for each priority)*** | |
| **Aim** | **Measure** |
| Increasing the supply of social workers | Reduction in vacancies and use of agency social workers. |
| Improving retention across London  Improving retention within each LA / sub-region. | Reducing those leaving the profession in the London region < 10 years in practice.  Reduce changes of social worker. Reducing churn / instability across individual LA and sub-regional groupings. |
| Succession planning – tracking progress of individuals – career development (accreditation?) |  |
| Reducing costs. |  |
| Improving the quality of service provision. |  |

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| 1. **Identifying options for improvement** | | |
| **Proposal** | **Action** | **Outcomes and success criteria** |
| Shared recruitment activities | Marketing and branding across London or sub-regions.  Shared recruitment events across London. | Improved levels of permanency and stability in key roles, in ‘target’ authorities across London. |
| Regionalised benefits and retention incentives | Develop and agree common approach | Local Offer and formal agreements in place – improved retention across key roles for participating authorities. |
| Pan-London approach for recruitment for into hard-to-recruit roles (ie Team Manager) | Develop and agree approach to collaboration. | Track benefits and improved levels of permanency and stability for target roles. |
| Workforce standards across London are consistent | Design principles are developed, agreed and implemented.  Training / career progression programme designed. | ‘London Pledge’ is shared and delivered.  Training / career progression offer delivered, and outcomes measured. |
| Recruitment agencies engaged across London | Define process of supply and how to share resources across London |  |

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| 1. **Options for next steps** | |
| **Item** | **Timeline** |
| Develop a working group (to report to ALDCS) with representatives from each sub-region. |  |
| Link with the heads of HR group to collaborate on this work-stream. |  |
| Link with other RIA across the UK to learn from other areas. |  |
| Organise an event to develop the potential options and agree top priorities. |  |
| Scope out business cases and agree 2 / 3 to work on over the next year. |  |