

The Twelve-Point Plan submitted by UNISON and GMB to solve the Staffing Crisis in Children's Social Care

1. To continue the inclusive work with staff and trade unions around the new office accommodation so that it is suitable and appropriate for the needs of staff and children. For this to begin a new culture where management are open to staff suggestions, even if they are critical in nature.
2. To cease all 'blind' allocations of children to workers without their knowledge.
3. To uphold a guarantee on caseloads that no social worker will be expected to carry more than 21 open cases at any one time. If necessary, safely not allocating certain work for a short period, rather than hiding the pressure on the service by overburdening staff.
4. To uphold the government guidance around caseloads for Independent Reviewing Officers.
5. To conduct, with the trade unions, a review of Business Support, workloads and responsibilities. To agree a way forward on appropriate remuneration that ceases threats of 'downgrades' and constant sudden moving of staff.
6. To aim to eliminate the need to hire any agency staff by management seeking to slightly overstaff on establishment at any one time. This should be cheaper than constantly relying on a minimum of 30 agency staff across the service. It should also provide a small pool of staff that could be used to meet sudden peaks of demand in any particular part of the service.
7. To continually review the staffing requirements given demand on the service and future demographic changes in Sandwell.
8. To implement a market supplement of £4,000 per annum for E, F and G grade and social workers, plus IRO's, to be paid for five years. This will aid recruitment and retention. Evidence for the need for the market supplement to be the high numbers of agency staff. The cost of this market supplement would be far cheaper than paying for agency staff. If 200 staff receive an additional £4,000 then the total annual cost is £800,000 compared to approximately £5million for agency staff. The market supplement to be paid in monthly salaries.
9. To agree a collective approach to quality assurance with the trade unions that, if at all possible, avoids individual recriminations but promotes organisational learning.
10. For management to ensure staff do not work excessive hours and applies the Councils approach under the flexi time scheme where workers shouldn't work more than 42 hours each week.
11. That if staff are expected to work over 42 hours during the week, because of excessive workload, then any hours worked beyond 42 to be rewarded with the appropriate overtime payment.
12. For the trade unions to play an active part in recruiting and attracting social workers to Sandwell.

Make Sure You are a member of Sandwell's Biggest Trade Union

UNISON

Call 0121 569 5996 or join online www.unison.org.uk