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Workforce Board

22 January 2013

Item 3

Workforce Policy and Strategy

Purpose of report

For information and direction.

Summary

This report updates members on latest developments on the work programme of the strategy team.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the latest work programme.

Action

Officers to:

- Proceed with planned workforce strategy activity.

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Public Health Workforce Issues

1. Agreement has been reached on options for pension access for transferring public health staff who subsequently move jobs. A joint letter setting out the policy has been sent from Carolyn Downs and Duncan Selbie (Chief Executive Designate of Public Health England). The main purpose is to provide continued access to National Health Service (NHS) pensions especially for those who are within ten years of retirement, which is the cheapest option for councils. Further technical advice on pensions is being prepared.
2. Discussions continue on the final wording of the core clauses in the transfer scheme documents that will give legal effect to transfers. The final decisions will be made by ministers. Councils have been advised that there is no material effect on their own preparations which should continue at a proper pace.
3. The LGA, along with the Unions, Department of Health and other national partners, has provided a series of heavily subscribed and well-received regional seminars on preparations for the transfer. A further session is planned on the detail of medical contracts.
4. Other work is continuing on issues such as the management of specialist trainees and general workforce development. The need for advice and support after April is becoming clear and was supported by attendees at the regional seminars.

Layers and Spans of Control

5. Following the success of the pilots and the significant savings and efficiencies made through the layers and spans approach to organisational design, we have created an offer for councils. Members of the Workforce team will be working directly with councils to look at organisation design from a vertical point of view, taking into account hierarchy, accountability and decision-making. It is an approach to delayering, or more accurately, 'right layering' and it has a very strong track record in the private sector. This offer will commence in February and communications and regional events will follow.

Employer Standards for social workers

6. The Strategy Team have just filmed a podcast featuring the Employer Standards to further promote them amongst councils and the private and voluntary sector. The podcast will shortly appear on the LGA website and will also be communicated to councils as a way of improving social work and social care.
7. Planning for the LGA conference in July is already on the way, with a session planned on 'What does good adult social care look like?' working in conjunction with the Policy team and the podcast will also be shown at the event.

Item 3

New ways of working including social enterprises

8. We have researched eight case studies and these are now available to view on the LGA website. We intend to revisit these case studies in April to follow these new social enterprises through their journey to become established independent businesses, delivering services outside of local authority control. This will ensure the wider local government community can benefit from the lessons learned by both the new social enterprise and the parent local authority throughout this transition period. We are also supporting the programme team in delivering four regional workshops aimed at elected members these are scheduled as follows:
 - 8.1 4 February - Wakefield;
 - 8.2 6 February - Birmingham;
 - 8.3 5 March - Preston; and
 - 8.4 7 March – London.
9. A representative from one of the case studies will speak at each event and the workforce team will run a session on employee engagement.

Pay policy and practice in local authorities – a guide for elected members

10. Building on our work to promote and clarify the requirements of the Localism Act 2012, we have produced a guide for elected members on pay policy and practice, final draft attached at **Annex A**. The guide is intended to encourage members to become involved in key strategic decisions regarding pay and reward within their councils. Amongst other information it describes the role of remuneration committees and contains a template pay policy statement.

Case Work

11. The strategy team has been supporting the Principal Advisers in the management and conclusion of complex employee relations case work. Currently the local authorities receiving support are the Isles of Scilly Council, Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council, Cardiff Council and London Borough of Tower Hamlets.