REPORT TO:	Health Policy and Performance Board
DATE:	21st June 2016
REPORTING OFFICER:	Director of Adult Social Services
PORTFOLIO:	Health & Wellbeing
SUBJECT:	Social Work Caseload Management
WARD(S)	Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To appraise the Board of Adult Social Care's approach to caseload management.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That:

i) **The report be noted**
ii) **Members comments received.**
iii) **Members are invited to attend a social work matters forum**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 **Caseload Management**

Caseload management is an important part of overall workload management, in our care management services, particularly in ensuring that social workers have a manageable workload, that they have a good mix of cases and that peaks and troughs with individual workers are co-ordinated effectively across the whole team. Social Workers have a workload <u>average</u> of 25 cases. However, it is important to note, some staff may have a significantly smaller case load, this may be indicative that they are working with highly complex cases that require more time consuming case management interventions. Some social workers may have somewhat higher caseloads, which is likely to be indicative that they have some inactive cases that they need to close off their systems.

3.2 Therefore we start off with a solid grounding that workloads are manageable. We have good staff retention, of permanent social workers, hold no vacancies and have negligible reliance on agencies workers. We operate with a new progression route policy for social work staff, we hold a good mix of experience staff and newly qualified staff and offer regular placements for social work students.

3.3 We are operating within, the National Employer Standards for Social Workers, which were published by the Local Government Association (LGA) May 2014 which, "set out the shared core expectations of employers which will enable

social workers in all employment settings to work effectively". The purpose of the Standards is to sustain high quality outcomes for service users and their families, carers and communities.

3.4 The Employer Standards are split into three main areas, as shown in the diagram below:

Within the framework there is a specific standard on "Safe Workloads and Case Allocation" that states: - Employers should ensure social workers have safe and manageable workloads.

3.5 The approach in Halton

There is an established Professional Capability Forum, chaired by the Principal social Worker, (within Halton this is the Divisional Manager Care Management Services), and its members include, team managers, social workers and policy professionals. We examined the Employee Standards and developed an overarching action plan.

3.6 As a part of this work a new Caseload Management Framework for Adult Social Care teams has been developed and a revised Supervision Policy, Procedure and Practice, launched in March 2016). It impresses that within adult care management services; caseload management is seen as an important aspect of maintaining workforce skills and experience, managing workload capacity and being able to offer effective services. From using the Framework managers are aware of the types of caseloads that each individual has and this enables them to allocate new cases appropriately, making sure that all workers have the opportunity to have a range and variety of cases. There is also a new requirement for managers to Audit supervisions.

3.7 Within the framework a caseload weighting tool was developed with managers alongside social work practitioners. We worked on the basis that caseload management can be operated as a system or scheme that is put in place to record the types and volume of work undertaken by each worker. This enables an accurate assessment of the workload for individual workers. This is normally

carried out using some sort of weighting of the types of cases the worker has using points for certain criteria. Such a system generally focusses on the complexity of the case and the risk value of the case. This information is then combined with other factors (such as the experience of the worker) to calculate an overall "score" which can then be used to assess how appropriate the workers' caseload is for them. We trialled some caseload weighting tools from other authorities with some social workers and sort their views on them.

3.8   A workshop was held to offer dedicated time to discuss existing caseload weighting models. The group had the opportunity to talk those we trialled and other additional models and agreed to develop our own approach in Halton, a an example from the Social Care Institute of Excellence (SCIE) model, in addition to the group's own ideas.   This took into account the problems encountered with points-based models and instead opting to use a traffic light system. This model uses the headings of Activity; Risk and Travel with three options under each.   Each option is classed as Red, Amber or Green to ascertain the most complex cases. Prior to supervision, each worker can rate their own cases, in preparation for discussion at supervision where the manager can then confirm the rating and note down the total number of cases in each category - red, amber and green.

3.9   Evaluation - As with all new frameworks and systems, to ensure they are working effectively a review needs to take place. In terms of this framework, it has been agreed to undertake a two-stage review at the three-month period and six-month period (June 2016 and November 2016). Analysis will be completed by Principal Managers to evaluate the framework and its effectiveness.

3.10   In conjunction with the development of the Caseload Weighting Framework, the Supervision Policy, Procedure and Practice have been revised. The revision includes the following main changes:
- Inclusion of a Continuing Professional Development (CPD) table for social care workers/occupational therapists to use to record and evidence their own CPD in-line with the requirements of their relevant professional bodies;
- Updated the Supervision Record to include the new caseload weighting information.
- A Supervision Audit tool for managers

3.11   Areas for Improvements

- We are working with our performance team to develop more in-depth intelligence and reporting on social work activity, including cross comparisons across teams.
- Following the implementation of the Progression Route Policy for Social Work an opportunity has arisen for the development of two new "Advanced Social Work posts". This should help support the larger integrated field work teams with direct practice support advice and expertise and supervisions.

- We are shortly sending out a workforce survey called "The Organisational Health Check", which is recommended by the Local Government Association (LGA) as part of assessing performance against the framework described under The Standards for Employers of Social Workers. This is an important tool in supporting and delivering effective social work. It assesses practice conditions in five areas :-

1. Effective workload management
2. Pro-active workflow management
3. Having the right tools to do the job
4. A healthy workplace
5. Effective service delivery

    This will check that the working environment of the organisation's social work workforce is safe, effective, caring, responsive and well-led.

3.12   Additional professional support infrastructure for Social Workers

- A Social Work Matters Forum has been established since, February 2015. The Principal Social Worker meets quarterly. with social workers to look at and discuss professional and topical issues for social work. The Forum aims to:

    ➢ Elevate the voice of the social work
    ➢ Promote professional debate on key social work issues
    ➢ Share and update on upcoming social work agendas

There is a national Chief Social Worker for Adults, Lyn Romeo, who works from Government Office, her role is to:
    ➢ Provide an expert voice for social work in government, providing advice and guidance on social work and social work matters in relation to policy and legislation.
    ➢ Continue the reform of social work education, training and practice.
    ➢ Improve the wider public's perceptions and understanding of the role and value of social work in improving people's lives.

The Chief Social Worker will be visiting the Forum to meet with social workers in Halton.

- Action Learning Sets – Social Workers meet on a monthly basis to discuss case work, research articles etc to promote reflective practice and support the professional capability portfolio.

4.0   POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1   None Applicable

5.0   OTHER/FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1   There are no financial implications at this time.

6.0   **IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

6.1   **Children & Young People in Halton**

        None Applicable

6.2   **Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton**

        None Applicable

6.3   **A Healthy Halton**

        None Applicable

6.4   **A Safer Halton**

        None Applicable

6.5   **Halton's Urban Renewal**

        None Applicable

7.0   **RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1   Need to ensure Caseload Management Framework is monitored and reviewed. No risks involved at present.

8.0   **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1   None identified.

9.0   **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
Caseload Management Framework for Adult Social Care	Municipal Building	Marie Lynch Divisional Manager