

REPORT TO: Health PPB

DATE: 11th February 2025

REPORTING OFFICER: Executive Director of Adults

PORTFOLIO: Adult Social Care

SUBJECT: Results from the Employer Standards Health Check Survey 2024

WARD(S) Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Health PPB with a summary of results from the [Employer Standards Health Check survey](#), which was conducted at a national level between 16th February and 22nd March 2024. (See attached at appendix 1 Headline Results document.)

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

RECOMMENDED: That

(1) The report be noted.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 The Health Check survey is co-ordinated nationally by the Local Government Association (LGA). It is part of [The Standards for Employers of Social Workers](#), which were refreshed in Autumn 2020. In 2022, [The Standards for Employers of Occupational Therapists](#) were published by the LGA.

3.2 A decision was made by Debbie O'Connor, Head of Assessment & Care Management, Principal Social Worker that we would only invite registered social workers to take part in the survey this time. The decision was made not to invite occupational therapists to take part due to needing 10 responses from a service (occupational therapy) to include service specific data in our report. A decision was made again not to include non-registered social care professionals who were able to take part, because it was felt that the questions would not apply to such roles. The survey is also open to children's social workers, this year the overall comparison with Children's can be seen in the report.

3.3 We have now received a report and are able to access information relating to the survey responses from a total of 30 registered social workers (28 adults registered social workers and 2 mental health registered social workers). Access to responses is only provided when there are at least 10 respondents in any staff group in order to protect anonymity.

- 3.4 The purpose of the health check survey is to examine the following questions about the experiences of social workers:
- How well do employers deliver the employer standards?
 - How do people perceive their working environment?
 - What factors influence engagement at work and increase the likelihood of people stay with organisations?
- 3.5 The health check survey is conducted on an annual basis, and this is the fourth year that it has been run nationally by the LGA with Halton having taken part each time.
- 3.6 Some key points to note from the attached summary of results are:
- Our average overall responses to standard 1 to 8 is higher at a score of 80, to the Northwest at 77 and nationally at 76.
 - Our average overall responses workplace experiences is also higher at a score of 75, to the Northwest at 69 and nationally at 67.
 - When looking at Adult social workers, there are no standards in the amber zone, they are all in the green zone, whereas last year there was one standard in the amber zone, which was CPD.
 - 7 of the standards have increased from last year. There is only standard 2, Effective workforce planning systems which has remained the same as last year with a score of 83. The national average response to this standard is 78.
 - Standard 6, Continuing professional development (CPD) has had the biggest increase from a score of 66 last year to a score of 85 this year. This is then followed by Standard 3, Safe workloads and case allocation with a score of 70 last year to a score of 82 this year. This is then closely followed by Standard 5, Supervision with a score of 74 last year to a score of 85 this year.
 - When looking more closely at the individual questions under the safe workloads and case allocation standard, last year, of particular concern was the responses to the statement “I am usually able to balance the demands of case work and the resources needed to fulfil my responsibilities.” This was a score of 50 last year and this has increased to a score of 71 this year.
 - Last year, in relation to the supervision standard, the lowest scoring statement was “I have uninterrupted, scheduled supervision at a suitable frequency with an appropriately skilled social work supervisor.” It fell in the amber zone but it is green this year with a score of 78.
 - In previous years, CPD has scored low, in particular the following statements – “My organisation provides regular/annual appraisals (or performance reviews) that are relevant for social workers” and “Within my organisation, I have an up to date plan of my professional development needs and how I and my employer will contribute to them.” These were red scoring statements. There has been an increase this year for both statements. “My organisation provides regular/annual appraisals (or performance reviews) that are relevant for social workers” has increased from a score of 47 last year to a score of 67 this year. “Within my organisation, I have an up to date plan of my professional development needs and how I and my employer will contribute to them” has increased from a score of 43 last year to a score of 68 this year.

4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 In May 2022, SMT approved the Social Work Accountability & Assurance Framework, which was developed as part of our work on The Standards for Employers of Social Workers (particularly Standard 1 – strong and clear social work framework). The framework contained an improvement plan, which is the mechanism through which we can progress any actions arising out of the results from the health check survey. A further meeting may need to take place to complete an action plan based on the latest health check survey results.

5.0 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Locally, we previously established a Social Work Employer Standards Working Group to oversee our work relating to the Employer Standards, including the Health Check survey. The group used to meet on a six-weekly basis. Involvement in the group and attendance at meetings placed demands on the members of the working group (e.g. principal/practice managers). An improvement plan sits within this framework that was owned by the Employer Standards Working Group, it was decided this was no longer needed as the work is covered by Adult Social Care Learning and Development.

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

- 6.1 Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence
The Employer Standards Health Check Survey gives a voice to registered social workers. It helps them feel listened to and know that their employers are proactive in tackling challenges.
- 6.2 Building a Strong, Sustainable Local Economy
The Employer Standards Health Check Survey gives a voice to registered social workers. It helps them feel listened to and know that their employers are proactive in tackling challenges.
- 6.3 Supporting Children, Young People and Families
None.
- 6.4 Tackling Inequality and Helping Those Who Are Most In Need
The Employer Standards Health Check Survey gives a voice to registered social workers. It helps them feel listened to and know that their employers are proactive in tackling challenges.
- 6.5 Working Towards a Greener Future
None.
- 6.6 Valuing and Appreciating Halton and Our Community
The Employer Standards Health Check Survey gives a voice to registered social workers. It helps them feel listened to and know that their employers are proactive in tackling challenges.

7.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**

- 7.1 The responses to this survey represent the views of only 30 members of our adult social care staff. The Social Work Matters Forum distribution list indicates that there are a total of 83 registered social workers including managers. We

should be careful when drawing conclusions from these findings as they may not be representative of the entire staff group. Also, if we are to continue taking part in this survey in future years, we need to consider how to increase the level of responses.

7.2 Due to the rule of 10 imposed by the LGA researchers, we are unable to receive information on the responses from the OTs and therefore they were not requested to complete the survey. We have previously informed the LGA that we have a total of less than 10 OTs employed locally. At the Social Work Employer Standards Health Check Webinar held by the LGA on 28th May, it was clarified that although a report could not be generated for surveys with less than 10 participants, the responses would inform the national picture. Our OTs could be consulted to see if they would like to take part.

8.0 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is not required for this report.

9.0 **CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 None identified.

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

Appendix 1: Headline Results document

Attached separately.