

The Highland Council
ADULT & CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE
22 MAY 2013

Agenda Item	17.
Report No	ACS/56/13

Trainee Scheme: Public Health Nursing
Report by Director of Health and Social Care

Summary

This reports sets out proposals for a trainee scheme for Public Health Nurses.

1 Background

- 1.1 The recruitment of qualified Public Health Nurses (PHNs) has traditionally been difficult within Highland.
- 1.2 While PHNs do move to Highland from other parts of the country, this will usually only be possible for permanent posts, and relocation costs can be expensive. There are some local nurses who self-fund to obtain the PHN qualification, but this does not allow the organisation to plan strategically to address recruitment and workforce challenges.
- 1.3 It has been several years since the Health Board funded PHN students, and the demographics of the workforce would suggest that we will require to recruit to several PHN posts within the next 5 years.

2 Proposal

- 2.1 It is proposed that Highland Council creates a Public Health Nurse trainee scheme. It is recommended that the recruitment and terms of the PHN training programme should involve broad equity with the programmes that have been provided for trainee Social Workers and Educational Psychologists. This would involve training posts within PHN teams, where registered nurses would be employed as staff nurses while undertaking the PHN degree qualification at one of the Scottish Universities providing this course.
- 2.2 The university with traditional links to Highland is Robert Gordon University in Aberdeen. It provides a 2 year part-time distance learning PHN degree, requiring only 4 days attendance in Aberdeen. The majority of study can be undertaken in the trainee's own time although additional study time would be at the manager's discretion. Posts would be advertised for nurses currently undertaking the PHN course or willing to do so.
- 2.3 Job descriptions are already available and graded at a band 5. With a similar

mechanism to the Educational Psychologist trainee scheme, course fees would be paid by the trainee; however, assistance would be provided to find bursaries or other sources of funding support. Students would have to be accepted by a University within 12 months of coming into post (23 months with discretion). If students pass the course, they would be offered a PHN post within the same area. Students would be asked to sign a legal agreement to continue to work in Highland for 2 years following graduation.

2.4 It is proposed that 4 trainee posts be created, one in each of the 4 areas. In the North and West areas, these posts would be created to fill currently 'hard to recruit to' posts. In South and Mid areas, the trainee posts would provide much needed additional capacity to the PHN teams, funded from preventative spend, as it is clear that additional posts will be deployed in these areas.

2.5 Some savings will be achieved from the appointment of trainees in North and West. The additional costs in Mid and South are detailed below:

	Cost
Band 5 staff nurse	£35500 per year
Total cost	£71,000

2.6 In addition there would need to be an additional Practice Teacher post created from within existing PHN staff to supervise the students on placement. There are currently 3 Practice Teachers in Highland. The practice teaching role could be linked to the practice lead posts proposed as part of the Family Team developments:

	Cost
Difference between Band 6 & band 7	£1000, rising to £6000 by year 6
Module costs (x1)	£450

3 Implications

3.1 Resources

The resource implications are detailed in this report.

3.2 Risk implications

These proposals would address possible risk associated with future difficulties in recruitment.

3.3 Legal Implications

There would require to be a legal agreement with staff who are recruited to the scheme, that ensures that they continue to work in Highland following qualification.

3.4 Equalities and Climate Change Implications

None

Recommendation

Members are asked to agree these proposals for a Public Health Nursing Trainee Scheme, and recommend the changes to establishment set out in this report to the Finance, Housing & Resources Committee.

Designation: Director of Health and Social Care

Date: 12 May 2013

Author: Susan Russel, Principal Officer (Nursing)

Background Papers: