

Appendix 7

Creation of Children's Service

I write to give details of the first steps we plan to take to bring together current services from Education and Social Services into a new Children's Service.

Lisa Christensen will take up her appointment as Director of Children's Services on 1st February 2005 and will assume responsibility for all relevant services from that date.

Related changes that will take place from that date are the transfer of Adult Education and Adult Guidance functions to Cultural Services and the creation of the post of Director of Adult Social Services. This post is about to be advertised nationally and it is anticipated that an appointment will be made during February 2005. Arrangements will be made to cover the role on an acting basis until a permanent appointment has been made.

In order to maintain operational stability and ensure that Lisa Christensen has an opportunity to fully engage staff, the schools community (and other stakeholders) in the development of the new service, we will seek to minimise changes to structures and individual job roles initially. In the light of this, we will do the following with effect from 1st February 2005:-

- With the exception of Adult Education and Guidance, all staff currently in Education will transfer to the new Children's Service, as will all staff currently within the Children and Families Division of Social Services, and the Every Child Matters Project Team.
- The Deputy and Assistant Directors of Education and Social Services will be redesignated as Acting Deputy and Assistant Directors of Children's Services, and will continue to carry their current portfolios of responsibility, reporting to the Director.
- There is a need to put some slightly different interim arrangements in place for service support functions, particularly because of the need to plan the disaggregation of the functions to support the new service configurations. We therefore plan to create a transitional role of Acting Head of Resources, reporting to the Director, which will assume overall responsibility for ensuring financial, HR, ICT and administrative support to the Children's Service. This role will be advertised and filled internally as soon as possible. Current support functions in Education will report to this role.
- There are a number of roles in Social Services, within the Performance and Resources Directorate which currently provide support across the other Directorates. These roles will transfer to the new Adult Social Services Department initially and interim working protocols will be established to maintain support to both Adults and Children's Services

while we consider the most appropriate way to organise these activities to support the new service configurations.

Early consideration is being given to the key issue of management arrangements for services for vulnerable children in the light of our work to date as part of the Every Child Matters Project. I anticipate that further information about that will be available before the end of the year.

Between February and April 2005 there will be a programme of engagement with staff, the schools community and other stakeholders to inform the development of proposals for the structure and organisation of the Children's Service.

I anticipate that draft proposals will be published by 30th April for consultation. We will aim to complete the consultation by 31st May and then to assimilate staff to the new structures between June and August. The new structure will take effect from 1st September.

We will aim to establish assimilation and appointment arrangements which minimise the process for individuals. Alongside this we will establish a programme of development and support activities to support the transition to the new service structure.

Key priorities throughout this period will be to maintain services and to support staff. Please do not hesitate to contact me, Lisa Christensen or Anne Gibson if you have any questions or comments on the plans outlined above.

Lisa is now planning meetings with managers and staff and there will be further communications from her about that.

Information from Tim Byles, Chief Executive, via Corporate Personnel