

LEADERSHIP ARRANGEMENTS FOR CHILDREN'S SOCIAL WORK AND CHILD PROTECTION FROM APRIL 2016

Joint Report of Strategic Director, People and Head of Services for Communities

Recommendation: that the Committee note the engagement of Jo Olsson as a new interim from 14th March 2016 to act as Head of Children's Social Work and Child Protection via a consultancy arrangement for a period of two years.

1. Background

- 1.1 The previous interim took up the role on 6th November 2013 and her current contract expired mid April following a handover period with the new interim.
- 1.2 Significant steps have been taken to attempt to recruit a permanent postholder. The Appointments and Remuneration Committee were unable to make an appointment to the Head of Children's Social Work and Child Protection following a second recruitment process held on Friday 9th October 2015.
- 1.3 In light of the above, the Committee agreed on 9th December 2015, to approve the engagement of a new interim for a defined period and discussions then commenced with the relevant agencies.
- 1.4 Nine interim applications were received, all sourced from agencies, and two candidates were shortlisted for interview on 28th January 2016.
- 1.5 The improvements made within Children's Social Work and Child Protection Services must be sustained and the new interim will need to continue to ensure that the service attains a 'good' outcome in the next stage of the Improvement process.
- 1.6 The above is set within the context of the continuing challenging recruitment market for senior leadership positions in Children's Services, nationally and locally, for both permanent and interim candidates.

2. The Interim Arrangement

- 2.1 The successful interim candidate, Jo Olsson, has a range of skills and experience and a track record of delivery in a post at this level which enables Devon to continue to deliver the service improvement agenda against the future financial challenges for the Authority. She will have a primary focus on:
 - quality of practice and performance improvement
 - leadership within a large complex multi agency environment
 - the need to balance complex budgets with practice demands
 - the development of the current direct reports to the Head of Service role, particularly bearing in mind skills shortages in the Children's Social Work sector and the need for improved succession planning.

- 2.2 Jo has worked as an interim since 2013 and wishes to remain within the interim market. She has significant senior management experience within local government children's services and the third sector. A two year contract has been agreed, which has enabled the Authority to negotiate a more favourable rate, as well as providing continuity and sustainability to enable Devon to continue its improvement journey.
- 2.3 The arrangements commenced on 14th March 2016, to enable a short handover period.
3. In accordance with the Chief Officer Employment Rules, the Chief Executive is authorised to make decisions regarding the placement of interims at Chief Officer/Head of Service level, based on a clear business case in line with the Council's Pay Policy Statement, Chief Officer Employment Procedure Rules, Contract Standing Orders and relevant employment, procurement, legal and financial regulations. Further – and hence this Report - any such decision has to be reported to the Appointments & Remuneration Committee, within 6 months of that decision.

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Electoral Divisions: All

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