

SOCIAL SERVICES, HEALTH & HOUSING

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE SERVICES - A. JARRETT

24th November 2014

SECTION A – MATTER FOR DEICISION

WARDS AFFECTED: ALL

Safeguarding, Reviewing and Quality Assurance Service

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 To Seek Member Approval to establish a Performance, Quality and Practice Manager Post (Grade 11) (utilising a current vacancy within the service) and for a Complaints Officer (Grade 8) and an Engagement and Participation Officer (Grade 8) to be appointed within Children and Young People Services.

2. Background Information

- 2.1 Since its launch in 2013 our Performance and Quality Assurance Framework has continued to be implemented across the service. This has incorporated the establishment of methods for measuring and evaluating the quality of our service provision and using findings to identify priorities for improvement and further develop services.
- 2.2 These methods include a programme of routine thematic case file audits, responding to and learning from complaints and obtaining feedback from service users.
- 2.3 Whilst the Service has made progress in improving the quality of casework, there is now a need for dedicated resource in order to undertake a further step change and equip the service to embed quality assurance throughout its everyday activity. The Performance, Quality and Practice Manager's post will ensure that regular audit work is undertaken within and across the service, results collated and actions followed up.
- 2.4 Using external auditors continues to be a financial pressure on the service with there being an ongoing need to commission independent auditors to

compliment the limited capacity of managers to participate in quality assurance activity.

- 2.5 The CSSIW report “Inspection of Children’s Services in Neath Port-Talbot County Borough Council” (January 2014) commented “a comprehensive and detailed quality assurance framework has been developed but not rolled out. An action plan is required to support this work to become embedded in practice. The key areas for improvement have been identified and there is a need for systematic quality assurance to be implemented”. It was also recognised “external resources have been secured to undertake audit work, as capacity in the newly recruited management team has been restricted due to competing demands”. This continues to be a financial pressure on the service with there being an ongoing need to commission independent auditors to compliment the limited capacity of managers to participate in quality assurance activity.
- 2.6 CSSIW also recommended “plans to implement the quality assurance framework should be prioritised and include using the outcome of complaints to inform practice”. The recently published Welsh Government “Guide to handling Complaints and Representations by Local Authority Social Services” (August 2014) reinforced this stating “it is important that local authorities learn from these complaints and where necessary use them to identify where services should be changed and improved”. This guidance also states that local authorities should appoint a complaints officer who has “sufficient capacity, authority and independence to manage the complaints and representation process effectively, to deliver a child centred service where appropriate and to contribute to service development”. The creation of a post within Children Services will enable us to achieve this.
- 2.7 Finally, it was also observed by the CSSIW that “a comprehensive Participation, Engagement and Advocacy protocol developed in partnership with the third sector was drafted in September. There are plans to implement the protocol across both community services and children’s services. It is not clear how social workers are to be engaged in this work, but there were indications that the voice of children looked after was being more strongly represented”. The service had already recognised that implementation of this protocol was a priority and an action plan for achieving this was under development ; however it will require dedicated resources to ensure we hear the voices of children and use their views to decide how we shape services and resources in the future. This will be the over-arching responsibility of the Engagement and Participation Officer.

3. **Proposal**

- 3.1 It is therefore proposed that a team is established to drive forward this work programme with a Performance, Quality and Practice Manager Grade 11 working to the Principal Officer for Safeguarding, Reviewing and Quality assurance and themselves supervising a Complaints Officer, Grade 8 and Engagement and Participation Officer, Grade 8.

4. **Financial Appraisal**

- 4.1 See appendices A&B. The Director of Social Services, being prudent, removed £100K from the CYPS placement budget last year to fund independent stage 2 complaint investigations on the basis that complaint numbers were very high and of a complex nature. This year, however, the service has managed to reduce complaints by over 60% and so those monies will not be needed if the complaints process continues to be tightly managed. The proposed CYPS complaints officer will fulfil this role and will ensure that fewer cases progress to an independent and costly Stage 2.

5. **Recommendation**

It is recommended that Members APPROVE the establishment of a Performance, Quality and Practice Manager Post (utilising a current vacancy within the service) and for a Complaints Officer and an Engagement and Participation Officer to be appointed within Children and Young People Services.

6. **Officer Contact**

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Appendix B

Personnel report – Funding statement
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	First year (2/12th)	Full Year
SET UP COSTS		
Recruitment		
Accommodation		
Office		
Other		
Total		
Funded from:		
Revenue budget		
Reserves		
Specific grant		
Other(specify)		
Total		
RECURRING COSTS		
Employee costs (see financial appraisal)		
Starting salary	12,401	76,926
Additional at top of scale		
Accommodation		
Travel		
Other (specify)		
Total	12,401	76,926
Funded from:		
<u>External sources</u>		
Specific grant		
External agencies		
Service level agreement		
Other (specify)		
<u>Internal sources</u>		
HRA		
Existing budget allocation (Complaints)	12,401	76,926
Additional guideline allocation		
Other (specify)		
Total	12,401	76,926