

## Transition plan for Director of Children's Services

### **Business continuity**

The Council's commitment to, and investment in, children's services will remain unchanged. The following measures will ensure that our improvement plan which is closely aligned to Children's services 'Blackpool Families Rock (BFR)' restorative approach will continue at pace and without disruption.

### **Leadership, strategic capacity and partnership working Support**

During the Transition period it is proposed that the Assistant Director Jeanette Richards will undertake the role of interim Director of Children's Services. This will ensure continued focus on the Council's agreed improvement plan and will also provide stability and reassurance to the Council's workforce and Partners that it is 'business as usual'. To support the Assistant Director (AD) during this period the following measures are also planned:

**Leader of the Council**- Over the last six months the Leader of the Council has spent time getting to know Children's services using her legal background and knowledge and experience of working in the family court to build strong and trusting relationships with both the Director of Children's Services and Assistant Director within Children's Services (DCS). During the transition period there will be continued close working directly with the Assistant Director (AD) to maintain focus and provide political leadership. The Leader will also Chair the Children and Families partnership to ensure the agreed strategic direction is maintained and to further embed a collaborative culture based on values and principles around inclusion and restorative approaches.

**Chief Executive** – The current one to ones with the AD will continue, but at an increased frequency to ensure an appropriate level of support and challenge are in place, which will ensure any barriers experienced are unblocked without delay.

The Chief Executive will continue to work closely with partners to encourage a collaborative culture and to challenge any evidence of working practices which do not align with the Council's values and principles around inclusion and restorative approaches.

**Partners** - The strategic Children and Families Partnership is still at an early stage so it is vital that during transition the Leader, Chief Executive and AD continue the Council's commitment and persistence to get to a position where everyone in Blackpool is working together collaboratively to deliver better long-term outcomes for the town's children and young people. The Council has already agreed a manageable set of priorities and is finalising joint agreement of measurable outcomes which will evidence progress in working together effectively to deliver better outcomes for children.

**Strategic Corporate Leadership team support** – fundamental to the transition plan is strategic support for the interim DCS and this will be delivered through key members of CLT including Director of Resources, Director of Public Health, Director of Governance and Partnerships and Director of Adults Services. This will provide additional capacity but also support and strengthen financial planning and modelling, collaborative relationships with

Public Health focused upon improved outcomes and stronger relationships with Members and Scrutiny. The very experienced Director of Adult Services will support SEND transitions but will also provide mentoring and strategic peer support and challenge.

**Additional Head of Service post** – an additional Head of Service post has been recruited to in order to create an adolescent service, strengthen senior Leadership and provide additional capacity both during the transition phase but also post DCS recruitment.

**Project support** - Children's services has a number of key and challenging projects to deliver and these are key components of the medium-term financial strategy and our improvement plan. The leadership of these projects will continue and the Chief Executive will continue to ensure sufficient capacity is available through Kate Aldridge, the Head of Corporate Delivery, Performance and Commissioning and the Corporate Delivery unit with additional external resource as required.

**Linda Clegg** - As Chair of the Getting to Good Board Linda Clegg has a close working relationship with Blackpool, shares the Council's values and helps to provide support and challenge with the improvement journey. During transition Linda will mentor the AD and will also provide capacity by acting as interim Chair to both the YOT and SEND boards

**Support for Schools** - Strategic leadership between the AD, senior officers in education, the Opportunities Area board and the school improvement board will continue. To add additional capacity during transition an interim post of AD for Education and SEND will be created and it is considered that there is expertise to fill this post internally. In addition Frank Norris the new chair of the Blackpool education board has capacity to mentor and support the new post holder with strategic thinking and confidence building in his approach to some of the more challenging schools. The Assistant Chief Executive also has experience of providing support to Education and is happy to do so again. This additional capacity will ensure the progress made in developing early help, promoting safeguarding and greater inclusion in schools will continue.

**Support for Social Care** – strategic leadership and oversight of the improvement journey will continue. To add capacity an interim AD for social care role will be created via expression of interest with current heads of service. Jeanette as acting DCS will direct specific pieces of work via the interim AD.

**Headstart** – Kate Aldridge, the Head of Corporate Delivery, Performance and Commissioning will oversee the Headstart programme during the transition period and will provide leadership and support to sustainability planning.

**Safeguarding Board** - the review of service delivery continues and this will be led during transition by Kara Haskayne the Principal Social Worker (PSW) working closely with Human Resources.

**Regional Adoption Agency** - The Regional Adoption Agency (RAA) is now well established and the plan for next year will be finalised prior to the departure of the DCS. During the

transition period it is our intention that Lancashire act as chair supported by Board Member Louise Storey (Blackpool Head of Service) to ensure outcomes are met.

**Children's safeguarding partnership executive and north tactical** - The interim DCS will attend the pan Lancashire Executive Board and chair the north tactical group, supported by the safeguarding business unit and the PSW. This will support continued partnership relations and focussed improvement around the priorities.

**Employee Engagement** – These changes will be communicated effectively and reassurance will be provided that there will be no impact on the Council's improvement journey or structures either during the transition phase or following the appointment of a permanent DCS. This is vital to maintaining the morale and commitment of the workforce which will help to ensure workforce stability and resulting long lasting trusting relationships with children and families.