

14 December 2015**Agenda Item: 10****REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE****CHANGE IN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE INDEPENDENT CHAIR SERVICE****Purpose of the Report**

1. To seek Committee approval to increase the Child Protection Coordinator establishment from 8.5 fte to 9.1 fte and dis-establish 0.7 fte of the Independent Reviewing Officer establishment which is currently not being utilised.

Information and Advice

2. The Independent Chair Service in Nottinghamshire sits within the Safeguarding and Independent Review Service. The service is responsible for quality assuring practice in relation to children in public care and children subject to a child protection plan, and to promote effective interagency working. There are two groups of staff within the ICS: Child Protection Coordinators and Independent Reviewing Officers. Child Protection Coordinators are responsible for chairing all initial and review child protection conferences and complex strategy meetings. Independent Reviewing Officers are responsible for chairing reviews for Looked After Children and monitoring care planning in between reviews.
3. The establishment for the child protection coordinator group is currently 8.5 fte with an additional temporary post to provide the capacity in the service to chair historical abuse strategy meetings. From the end of November there will be 8.1 fte permanent workers in post, which includes a half-time child sexual exploitation coordinator role. Agency staff have been used as necessary to maintain capacity and provide an effective service. There are currently 1.9 fte agency workers covering the 0.4 fte vacancy, backfill for the 0.5 fte CSE role until January and cover for the temporary post.
4. Since the beginning of the year there has been a significant increase in Child Protection Plans in Nottinghamshire which has put considerable pressure on the capacity within the Child Protection Coordinator group. At the end of October 2015 there were 813 children subject to a Child Protection Plan, compared to 697 at the end of March 2015. There has also been an increase in the number of child sexual exploitation meetings held.
5. It is proposed that the remaining 0.4 fte permanent vacancy in the child protection team is increased to a full time vacancy to enable the team to meet the increased demands on the service. The funding required for this increase in the establishment by 0.6 fte is £29,654 which can be met from the existing independent reviewing officer budget. It is planned that

this proposed full-time vacancy will be filled by a permanent staff member thereby enabling the exiting of an agency worker.

6. The establishment for the independent reviewing officers group is 14.77 fte. Given the relatively stable numbers of looked after children, there are no plans to utilise the establishment above 14 fte. Therefore the required funding for an additional 0.6 fte child protection coordinator can be met from the independent reviewing officer group without any impact on that service.
7. For information, it is planned that the temporary child protection coordinator post referred to above will be filled by a current agency worker taking up a fixed term contract with the department, thereby becoming a temporary NCC staff member. There will be no additional cost incurred for the agency to fixed term transfer under the terms of the managed service contract where previously introductory fees would have been incurred.

Other Options Considered

8. No other options have been considered as the above best meets the service needs.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

9. The proposed changes to the establishment within the Independent Chair Service will enable the service to respond to the changing work pressures across the service. These slight changes to the establishment will not increase the current overall budget.

Statutory and Policy Implications

10. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, sustainability and the environment and ways of working and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Financial Implications

11. This proposal is cost neutral.

Human Resources Implications (GME 18/11/15)

12. The proposal is in accordance with the agreed employment policies and procedures of the County Council and is a positive way to generate capacity within existing budgets.

Implications for Service Users

13. This proposal will promote consistency in chairing arrangements for child protection meetings which provide a more effective service.

RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1) That approval is given to increase the Child Protection Coordinator establishment from 8.5 fte to 9.1 fte and dis-establish 0.7 fte of the Independent Reviewing Officer establishment.

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Constitutional Comments (SMG 26/11/15)

14. The Committee has the responsibility for approval of departmental staffing structures as required. The proposals in this report fall within the remit of this Committee.
15. The Employment Procedure Rules provide that the report to Committee include the required advice and HR comments and that the recognised trade unions be consulted on all proposed changes to staffing structures (and any views given should be fully considered prior to a decision being made).

Financial Comments (SS 26/11/15)

16. The financial implications of this report are contained within paragraph 11 above.

Background Papers and Published Documents

None.

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

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