

Staffing Committee

24 February 2025

Appointment of Corporate Director for Care & Protection, Children's Services

For Decision

Cabinet Member and Portfolio:

Cllr. C Sutton, Children's Services, Education & Skills

Local Councillor(s):

All

Executive Director:

P Dempsey, Executive Director of People - Children

Report Author: Lateefah. O. Sulaiman

Job Title: HR Business Partner (Children's Services)

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Report Status: Public (the exemption paragraph is N/A)

Brief Summary:

Consideration to appoint a permanent Corporate Director for Care & Protection, following interviews.

Recommendation:

To approve the interview panel's recommendation for the appointment of a Corporate Director for Care & Protection, on a permanent basis in the Children's Services directorate.

Reason for Recommendation:

As required by our constitution, the role of Corporate Director Care & Protection, requires the approval of the Staffing Committee, as it is a Chief Officer role within the council.

1. **Executive Summary**

The Corporate Director for Care & Protection is a key member of the Children's Senior Leadership Team and reports directly to the Executive Director of Children's Services. This role provides strategic leadership and oversight of the Care and Protection function across all Children's Services, ensuring the delivery of high-quality support to children and families in line with national legislative frameworks—including Safeguarding, Social Work, Adoption, and Early Help. The role covers a range of services, such as: Family Support Advice Line and Duty Service (Multidisciplinary Front Door); Fostering and SGO Service; Birth to Settled Adulthood Service; Care Leavers and Unaccompanied Asylum-seeking Children; Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service; Children in Care; Locality Teams.

1.2 The role was last filled in 2022. Subsequently, the previous Corporate Director for Care & Protection was promoted to Executive Director of Children's Services on 1 October 2024.

1.3 A recruitment and selection process for a permanent Corporate Director was conducted on 28 October; however, no appointment was made at that time.

1.4 Given the pivotal importance of this role in safeguarding and driving improvements in Children's Social Care, an interim recruitment process was completed in December 2024. The Executive Director and Portfolio Holder recommended, and the Staffing Committee approved, the appointment of an Interim Corporate Director for a six-month period.

1.5 To ensure continuity of leadership and facilitate a smooth transition, the recruitment process for a permanent Corporate Director is now underway.

2.0 **Appointment Process for Corporate Director for Care & Protection**

2.1 The role was advertised externally from 17th January– 14th February 2025. It was promoted broadly, including the use of social media channels and targeted advertising, to ensure a strong field of applicants.

2.2 Subsequently, a shortlisting panel will convene on 17th February 2025, comprising Cllr Clare Sutton and Paul Dempsey. Shortlisted candidates were invited to a formal interview and selection process.

2.3 The formal selection programme consisting of three separate panels: a Stakeholder panel; a Staff panel; and a Member Formal panel including Councillors, incorporating children and young people into 2 of the panels.

2.4 The panel members listed below will participate in a face-to-face formal interview on 24 February 2025.

2.5 The Member Panel will consist of: - Cllr Claire Sutton, Cllr Bridget Bolwell, Cllr Byron Quayle, Paul Dempsey- Executive Director and Lateefah Sulaiman- HR Business Partner.

- 2.6 The Stakeholder Panel will include representatives of partner organisations- Dorset Council Adults Services, Police, Health, Education, Dorset Parent Carer Council and a Young Person on behalf of the Youth Voice team.
- 2.7 The Staff Panel will include Dorset Council Senior Managers and Business Partners including a Union representative and Care experienced Apprentice
- 2.8 Following the interview and selection process, the Formal Panel are making a recommendation to the Staffing Committee for the appointment of one of the candidates to the post of Corporate Director for Care & Protection.

3.0 Financial Implications

The post will be paid at Corporate Director salary level and costs will be managed within budget.

4.0 Natural Environment, Climate & Ecology Implications

None

5.0 Well-being and Health Implications

None

6.0 Other Implications

None

7.0 Risk Assessment

- 7.1 Having considered the risks associated with this decision; the level of risk has been identified as:

Current Risk: Low

Residual Risk: Low

8.0 Equalities Impact Assessment

The post has been recruited to in accordance with the council's equality and diversity policies.

9.0 Appendices

None

10.0 Background Papers

None.