Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council

Action To Be Taken Under Delegated Powers

Sourcing Interim Improvement Director – Children's Social Care.

1. Summary

1.1 There is a need to engage suitably qualified specialist interim manager to the role Interim Improvement Director - Children's Services. The improvement Director will report directly to the statutory officer responsible for Children's Services.

1.2 This resource is not available through existing HR processes as the Templink agency worker framework is not able to fulfil this requirement.

1.3 For the value and type of appointment there is a requirement to comply with the Councils Procurement & Contract Procedure Rules.

1.4 Following a review of the options available to the Council it is recommended that the Eastern Shires Purchasing Organisation (ESPO) contract No, 3S should be utilised for this requirement.

1.5 This interim role is to be appointed to on a 6 month basis by the Statutory Chief Officer for Children's Services (DCS).

2. Recommendation

2.1 That a contract be entered into with Penna Recruitment Services to appoint Caroline Budden in the role of interim Improvement Director – Children's Social Care.

3. Background Details

3.1 Because of changes at senior level within Children's Services and a continued high demand for specialist / executive advice and guidance, the Children's Services requires the services of suitably qualified individual to undertake this specialist improvement work.

3.2 The interim Improvement Director will work to the Statutory Chief Officer for Children's Services (DCS) – supporting the DCS to improve quality and compliance of statutory targets.

3.3 Whilst the clear majority of temporary or agency workers are successfully engaged through the Templink agency worker framework, there are occasions, such as this, where specialist / executive interim managers are not able to be sourced from the framework.

3.4 Children's Social Care is the subject of formal intervention by the Department of Education following a highly critical report from Ofsted regarding the quality of the Authority's children's services. This had led to the appointment of a Children's Commissioner who is responsible to the Secretary of State on matters relating to the establishment of an independent Children's Trust along with the future performance of Children's Services

3.5 Considerable work is underway to establish the Trust status and to move the Council organisation into a new set of arrangements. A major workstream related to these moves concerns the required improvements to practice. Much of what is provided in both Child Protection and the care of Looked After Children is inadequate. Whilst there has been progress there is a demonstrable need to improve these services prior to transfer to the Trust.

3.6 Work in this area has commenced. A Director of Improvement post was established on a temporary basis to develop practice at a team level. This has been successful but now needs to be built upon. The existing post holder contract ends on 31 March 2017 and they have indicated that they do not wish to continue in this role for personal reasons. There are a number of key themes that require further development.

3.7 Whilst the additionality of the appointment of the Service Director will prove to be invaluable in improving practice standards they will need further support.

3.8 It is therefore proposed to appoint to the position of Director of Improvement for a period of six months. It is intended that this will be on a part- time basis.

3.9 The main responsibilities will include:

- Working with Team Managers in both assessment and care management to improve standards in front line practice in Assessment, Child Protection and Looked After Children's services;
- Further develop supervision arrangements for staff in Children's Social Care so as to improve workforce learning and give managerial assurance concerning social work practice;
- Create robust and effective audit arrangements provided by Team Managers and Group Heads that provides reassurance regarding the quality of work undertaken.

3.10 The necessary budget has been identified and set aside by the Finance Business Partner. Financial costs (below) are based on a 6 month assignment.

Interim Improvement Director – Children's Social Care	£620 + vat per day (2 days per week), £32,240 + vat. Start date 18 April 2017

4. Source Documents

4.1. Eastern Shires Purchasing Organisation Framework 3S

In accordance with the Council's Procurement and Contract Procedure Rules, I intend to take the action(s) recommended above.

I ~~do~~/do not have an interest to declare in this matter

[redacted]

Darren Carter
Interim Director - Resources
Date: 28/3/17

I ~~do~~/do not have an interest to declare in this matter

[redacted]

Jan Britton
Chief Executive
Date: 28/3/17

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