

Briefing Note to Early Years, Children and Youth Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel 21 May 2012

Re: Role of the Director of Children's Services (DCS)

1. This is an informal briefing note to the EYC & Y Panel about the role of the DCS.
2. The DCS post is regulated under the Children Act 2004 which sets out the specific accountabilities of the DCS as the Government legislated to bring together Education Services and Children's Social Care Services following the Victoria Climbié inquiry.
3. Statutory guidance was issued by the DfE which required all 'upper tier' local authorities i.e. those with Education and Social Care Services to appoint a DCS combining the statutory roles of Chief Education Officer and Director of Social Services (for Children and Young People). The post was required to be a 'first tier' Chief Officer meaning that the post holder had to be directly managed by and accountable to the Chief Executive/Head of Paid Service of the Local Authority.
4. The statutory guidance was revised and following consultation re-enacted with effect from 1 April 2012. A copy of the revised guidance is attached for reference.
5. As part of the revised guidance any local authority intending to combine the DCS responsibilities with any other accountabilities is strongly advised to carry out an assurance process to ensure that the statutory accountabilities vested in the post are appropriately identified and discharged within the structure and line management arrangements.
6. Given the proposals to create a 'People and Communities' Department it is envisaged that such an assurance process will be put in place for completion by late June 2012.
7. The Chief Executive has asked the Strategic Director: People and Communities to establish an Assurance Process. I will liaise with the Head of Human Resources to advise the process and ensure robustness. In addition, I will request Mr J Gould, Independent Chair of the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) to test this process and report directly to the Chief Executive.
8. The elements to be included in the Assurance Process are also attached in a basic template form and I will share the finalised template and outcome of the process with the Panel at its September meeting.

Ashley Ayre

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