

Test of Assurance-Bath and North East Somerset Council

Brief Specification

Purpose:

To ensure that the new structure for the Children's service element of the People and Communities Department and its organisational arrangements enable the local authority, through the Strategic Director for people and Communities role, to:

- Fulfil their statutory duties towards children and young people effectively (including that children, young people and families receive effective help and benefit from all relevant Council services)
- Be transparent about accountabilities and responsibilities
- Support inter-agency and partnership working

Process:

Lead Officer to carry out a series of individual interviews and a small number of Focus Groups to test out the understanding of new systems, structures and lines of management and accountability.

The interviews and Focus Groups will utilise questions related to each area of assurance as identified in statutory guidance on the role of the DCS. It is noted that some questions will more readily relate to individual interviews whilst others will relate to focus group work. The Lead Officer has discretion to add/amend questions to pursue a line of enquiry.

Each interview or focus group will result in a completed pro-forma which the Lead Officer will compile into a report to be presented initially to the Independent Chair of the LSCB and the Strategic Director for People and Communities.

The Strategic Director for People and Communities will then formally respond to that report to the Independent Chair of the LSCB and a final agreed report including any action plan will then be presented to:

- Dr Jo Farrar, Chief Executive, Bath and North East Somerset Council
- BaNES Local Safeguarding Children's Board
- Early Years, Children and Youth Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel.

Individual Interviews:

Strategic Director-People and Communities
Deputy Director-Children's Strategy and Commissioning
Divisional Director-Targeted and Specialist Services
Principal Social Worker

Service Manager-Safeguarding Outcomes
Service Manager-Care Outcomes
Head of Safeguarding and Assurance
Team Managers (x2)-CFAIT.

Focus Groups:

- “Slice Groups” x two: CFAIT Workers and DTMs
- “Slice Group” x one: CiC/MoT Workers, DTMs and TM
- “Slice Group” x one FPT Workers, DTMs and TM
- IROs and Independent CP Chairs
- “Slice Groups” x two: (i) Early Help/Connecting Families/Early Years
(ii) Youth/YOT/Connecting Families.
- Senior Commissioning Managers (Liz Jones, Stephen Mason, Mary Kearney-Knowles)

Estimated Time Requirement:

10 days

Outputs:

Initial report to Independent Chair/SD People and Communities
Final report

Background Documentation:

Guidance on Director of Children’s Service Statutory Duties
Guidance on Lead Member Duties
Assurance Parameters and Key Questions
Additional Questions for Interviews and Focus Groups.