

Chief Officer Appointments Panel



Date of meeting:	23 May 2025
Title of Report:	Recruitment to the role of interim Service Director Children, Young People and Families
Lead Member:	Councillor Jemima Laing (Deputy Leader, and Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care, Culture, Events and Communications)
Lead Strategic Director:	David Haley (Director of Children's Services)
Author:	David Haley (Director of Children's Services)
Contact Email:	David.haley@plymouth.gov.uk
Your Reference:	Click here to enter text.
Key Decision:	No
Confidentiality:	Part I - Official

Purpose of Report

This report updates Members on the proposal to recruit an interim Service Director for Children, Young People and Families for a period of up to six months, with the option to extend up to 12 months pending the return of the current post holder to the role.

Recommendations and Reasons

It is recommended that the Chief Officer Appointments Panel

1. Note the content of this report.
2. Agree to commence a recruitment process for the role of interim Service Director for Children, Young People & Families

Alternative options considered and rejected

The permanent Service Director for Children, Young People and Families has been absent from work due to personal circumstances for an extended period of time. Consideration has been given to continue the current arrangement of not backfilling the role. However, the Service Director for Children, Young People and Families is a key member of the Council's Senior Leadership Team, providing leadership across the City for a range of statutory duties relating to children's social care and continuity of leadership and experience in this role is required. The recommendation is in line with the Council's established practices and is offered as the best option in these particular circumstances.

Relevance to the Corporate Plan and/or the Plymouth Plan

The Corporate Plan outlines the strategic direction of the Council. Recommendations within this report align to the current Plymouth City Council Corporate Plan

Implications for the Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications:

The Service Director for Children, Young People and Families is a permanent role with established budget contained within the Medium Term Financial Plan

Financial Risks

OFFICIAL

An appointment would be within existing budget. The additional cost of the interim position will be funded from Children's Services staffing budget. There will be appropriate scrutiny by the Council's section 151 Officer.

Carbon Footprint (Environmental) Implications:

It is the responsibility of all senior officers to ensure we develop and deliver our plans for both ensuring the Council is carbon neutral by 2030 and leading the City in carbon reduction. There are no carbon footprint implications arising from this process.

Other Implications: e.g. Health and Safety, Risk Management, Child Poverty:

** When considering these proposals members have a responsibility to ensure they give due regard to the Council's duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote good relations between people who share protected characteristics under the Equalities Act and those who do not.*

All recruitment and selection processes will be undertaken with reference to Plymouth City Council's established procedures and relevant legislation

Appendices

**Add rows as required to box below*

Ref.	Title of Appendix	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable) <i>If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.</i>						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
A	Briefing report title							
B	Equalities Impact Assessment (if applicable)							
C	Climate Impact Assessment (if applicable)							

Background papers:

**Add rows as required to box below*

Please list all unpublished, background papers relevant to the decision in the table below. Background papers are unpublished works, relied on to a material extent in preparing the report, which disclose facts or matters on which the report or an important part of the work is based.

Title of any background paper(s)	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable) <i>If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.</i>						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Sign off:

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Originating Senior Leadership Team member: David Haley											
Please confirm the Strategic Director(s) has agreed the report? Date agreed: 13/05/2025											
Cabinet Member approval: <i>[electronic signature (or typed name and statement of 'approved by email/verbally')]</i> - Councillor Laing approved via email Date approved: 13/05/2025 Date.											

1. INTRODUCTION

The Local Authorities (Standing Orders) Regulations 1993 prescribe a number of actions when recruitment to a Chief Officer post is required. The definition of 'Chief Officer' for the purposes of these regulations refers to:

- the Head of Paid Service,
- the Monitoring Officer,
- the Section 151 Officer,
- a statutory Chief Officer (as defined by section 2(6) of the 1989 Act) and
- Non-statutory Chief Officers as defined by section 2(7) of the 1989 Act (which essentially include officers who report directly to the head of paid service): regulation 1(2) of the 1993 Regulations.
- A Deputy Chief Officer (those reporting to a Chief Officer)

There are a number of defined activities that must be undertaken, including:

- The creation of a document clearly stating the duties of the officer, what qualifications, experience and skills they will need to undertake the role (the role profile).
- Making arrangements for the post to be advertised in such a way as is likely to bring it to the attention of persons who are qualified to apply for it.
- Providing a copy of the role profile to any person requesting this.

Once advertised as above, authorities will either interview all those who are qualified to undertake the role or select a short list of qualified applicants. If there are no qualified applicants, the local authority will then make further arrangements.

2. CHIEF OFFICER APPOINTMENTS PANEL DELEGATED FUNCTIONS

Council has delegated the function of interviewing candidates to the Chief Officer Appointments Panel, (COAP). COAP acts with the delegated authority of the Council to appoint to Chief Officer roles where the law prohibits the Head of Paid Service from making the appointment but allows full Council to delegate the responsibility.

3. BACKGROUND

The permanent Service Director for Children, Young People and Families joined the Council in June 2024. Due to personal circumstances, they have been absent from work since December 2024.

While the Service has continued to function effectively, it is acknowledged that following the absence of the permanent postholder for nearly 6 months, the service now requires an interim resource to cover this key role. Reporting to the Director of Children's Services, the role is accountable for a range of statutory and non- statutory services impacting on the safeguarding and protection of some of our most vulnerable citizens and their families. The post leads on the delivery of the children's social care improvement plan and has a leading role in delivering the wider vision for social care, combating social exclusion and corporate parenting as well as the continued improvement of opportunities for care experienced young people, including care leavers. There is statutory guidance which instructs a large part of the activity undertaken in this area. A professional social work qualification and registration with Social Work England are required.

It is therefore proposed that an interim be engaged initially for six months, but with the option to extend to twelve months pending the return of the permanent postholder to the role.

Subject to approval from the Chief Officer Appointments Panel, CVs will be invited from a number of specialist recruitment providers. Those candidates who are identified as having the requisite skills, knowledge and experience for the role will be invited to the Chief Officer Appointments Panel on 20 June 2025. A supplementary pack, containing CVs and supporting statements will be forwarded to the Panel prior to that Chief Officers Appointment Panel

4. FINANCIAL INFORMATION

This type of post is very much in-demand and there is a shortage of high-quality candidates. Market rates for these roles typically fall within a range of £800-£1,000 per day (inclusive of charges).

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Appointments Panel:

1. Note the content of this report.
2. Agree to commence a recruitment process for the role of interim Service Director for Children, Young People & Families

SERVICE DIRECTOR

CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES



Grade and Tier	Chief Officer – Band 4	Reference:	COF0010
Reports to:	Director of Children's Services	Job Type:	Strategic Leader

Role Purpose

- Lead on the development and implementation of the Council's strategy for commissioned services for children, youth and families, alongside health agencies and the Director of Integrated Commissioning
- Enable Strategic Directors to focus on driving the Council's overall objectives at a city, sub region, regional and national level.
- To communicate the vision of the Council and motivate and influence others to acquire this.

Member of the Federation for: People, Children's and Public Health Directorates; encouraging best use of resources, avoiding duplication and silo working, facilitating knowledge transfer between the senior team.

Statutory and Key Responsibilities/Accountabilities

- Accountable for provision of statutory children's services as specified in legislation including Children's Act 2004, Crime & Disorder Act, Legal Aid Sentencing & Punishment of Offenders Act 2012, Youth Justice Plans/functions, Education & Inspections Act, Working Together.
- Act as the 'Caldicott Guardian' for children's services.
- Lead for Corporate Parenting.

Key Responsibilities**Corporate and Organisational**

- Provide strong, visible leadership and direction through compelling communication of the Council's vision and values to own Department, Federation and wider where necessary
- To act as the principal policy and professional advisor on the children, youth and families matters within own Department and provide specific subject matter expertise and advice to Directors, Chief Executive and Members as required.
- Ensure own department delivers the policies set by elected members, ensuring all staff understand and act on the aims of the organisation, in order to meet the needs of the people of Plymouth
- Embed climate change actions across the functions of the Children's Services department contributing to core reductions in support of the Council's pledge to become carbon neutral by 2030.

Performance and Finance

- Take lead responsibility for the overall management of the Department, with particular reference to the development and implementation of the strategies that protect children and young people and improve their life chances, ensuring the Council's financial, human resources and other assets are planned, deployed and managed effectively to deliver the priorities.
- To ensure the department provides cost effective and efficient services for customers.
- Embed a positive, innovative culture, which responds effectively and efficiently to deliver an outstanding customer focused service with best in class policies and practices which respond continually to the changing internal and external environments.

Customer and Communities

- Contribute to the development of programmes of local engagement and communication within the city with stakeholders and local communities designed to promote the work of the Council and own Department and deepen the Council's understanding of those it exists to serve.
- Create an environment and culture that empowers and requires employees to work collaboratively and effectively across the Department, with the Directorate/Federation, organisation and with partners.
- Leads and challenges own direct reports to create continuous improvement and service delivery that is innovative, customer focussed and effective in delivering the Council's agreed outcomes.

Partnerships and External Relationships

- Develop and engage in mutually beneficial relationships with partners and, where appropriate, integration of service delivery, to successfully deliver expected outcomes and benefits for the City.
- To fulfil a proactive role at local, regional and if appropriate national level in promoting and advocating for the City and its communities to deliver improvements and opportunities for residents and businesses.

Governance

- To ensure the statutory duties of the Department are met in accordance with legislation, guidance and regulatory requirements.
- Ensure effective measures are in place to manage and mitigate risk to protect the liability of the Department (Inc civil contingencies).

Role Accountabilities	Role Outcomes
Corporate and Organisational ▪ Lead CYPF Management Team to transfer and redesign services from traditional departmental structures into modern and effective customer services. ▪ Accountable for the development of the Council's commissioned services (working with the Head of Service Strategic Cooperative Commissioning) within the social care, youth and health arena. ▪ Lead on the digital transformation of the Council ensuring that customer requirements are at the forefront of developments, that systems are fit for purpose and employees appropriately trained. ▪ Deliver services for all Children in Need. ▪ Lead and advocate for Corporate parenting responsibilities. ▪ Deliver responsibilities relating to the Safeguarding Partnership and Working Together Performance and Finance ▪ Accountable for the delivery of the departmental budgets as aligned to the corporate plan. ▪ Ensure there is an appropriate performance framework in place to manage service	▪ The lives of children and young people are improved; their chances and aspirations are raised. Strategies for the improvement of outcomes for children, young people and their families are delivered. ▪ The Early Help Strategy is implemented across the Council and partner agencies. ▪ Youth Offending and Integrated Youth Services are delivered effectively and in line with Section 39 (i) of the 1998 Crime and Disorder Act, Legal Aid Sentencing and Punishment Act 2012, the Youth Justice Plan and relevant sections of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 ▪ Managers are provided with the right level of consistent advice and support and coached to deliver good people management practices. ▪ There is a collaborative approach to managing Trade Union/professional association and other relationships relating to employment matters. ▪ CYPF workforce understand the Council's values, priorities and desired outcomes. There is demonstrable evidence of engagement and progress. ▪ The performance management framework is clearly communicated, implemented and monitored to ensure good performance is

performance and delivery objectives within department. Customer and Communities - Ensures services within own department are focused on continuous improvement within agreed levels of customer satisfaction to best meet the needs of internal and external customers and citizens. - Ensure efficient processes and ease of use business focused support to customers. - Facilitate a culture change programme to support the organisation's transition to a customer focused culture Partnerships and External Relationships - Create and manage effective relationships and partnerships with a broad range of stakeholders, building support amongst them in order to deliver better public services. - Promote the city by supporting and participating in key corporate events - Build a consistent approach to leadership styles across the organisation to derive an empowered leadership culture. - Lead for operational partnership arrangements to protect and safeguard children. Governance - Deliver the statutory functions within CYPF. - The Council's obligations for safeguarding of vulnerable groups is reflected across all areas of service delivery with direct responsibility for children's social care safeguarding - Member of Tactical Command team for civil emergencies and business continuity in liaison with the police/other agencies as appropriate. Member of the out of hour's rota. - Ensure the Department is compliant with all statutory, regulatory, safeguarding and audit requirements, including, where applicable, those of Ofsted, CQC, Health and Safety Executive and Information Security.	recognised. Performance is managed by outcomes and poor performance is addressed quickly. - CYPF has a long term financial strategy and plan (MFTP) which is clear and actively communicated to CMT, Members and the wider departmental workforce. The revenue and capital budget is delivered within agreed tolerances. - Statistical returns are made on time. - CYPF services make a demonstrable contribution to Plymouth being recognised as a safe place to live because of the services it delivers. - CYPF is able to demonstrate how it is performing against a range of performance indicators. Action is taken if performance fails to meet required standards. - Front line services and improved outcomes for the community are efficiently delivered. - Customer experience and satisfaction is improved and there are measures in place to demonstrate that. Clear plans are in place where satisfaction is low. - Strong networks have been established in the region to best maximise investment from a range of funding agencies/from grants/from partners. - A number of key partnerships have been developed which have delivered better outcomes for Plymouth's employees/citizens. - Plans and training are in place and resourced to deal with a range of emergencies. Business continuity is in place. - All CYPF information is held securely, safely and in line with legal and statutory requirements. - Effective measures are in place to manage and mitigate risk to protect the liability of the department and wider Council. - Risks are mitigated and feedback is used to engender a culture of continuous improvement. - Strong networks have been established in the region and the city has received demonstrable investment from a range of funding agencies.
Essential Qualifications and Experience	Essential Skills and Behaviours

▪ A social work qualification and a registration to practice (with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC)). ▪ Knowledge of social care, youth and family services and commissioning frameworks and legislation, as well as current and future policy developments within the social care system. ▪ Substantial experience of leading and developing a successful social care department, including a strong commissioning and enabling model of delivery linked to outcomes. ▪ Substantial experience of maintaining high safeguarding standards and understanding of systems to protect vulnerable groups. ▪ Strong record of delivery and improvement of whole system change and development of effective commissioning strategies. ▪ Evidential ability to have identified strategies for collecting and using market and client data to drive performance improvements and efficiency. ▪ Strong record of the involvement of service users in the design and determination of services within the children's social care sector. ▪ Leadership experience in a culture change environment ▪ Experience of deploying commercial and transformational acumen within medium or large organisations. ▪ Experience of developing strategies and translating them into effective operational plans gained in a multi-disciplinary organisation. ▪ Experience in working effectively and impartially with elected members/senior board/executive members and in supporting democratic decision-making processes. ▪ A broad knowledge of public sector service delivery including direct delivery and commissioning of third party contracts / SLAs. ▪ Experience of engaging and involving communities to whom statutory or other services are provided. ▪ Proven experience of commissioning/delivering services to achieve quality and value for money for customers. ▪ Understanding of the principles of System Leadership. ▪ Experience of using a range of change management and transformation methodologies to deliver impactful organisational change at pace. ▪ Experience of working and succeeding in complex partnership arrangements.	▪ Able to be a collaborative system leader across council with focus on culture change and transformational leadership. ▪ Able to effectively manage and motivate a diverse team of employees, enabling them to deliver quality customer services. ▪ Able to translate complex strategies into what is required to deliver cultural, organisational and technological improvements. ▪ Able to work as part of a high functioning non silo'd Directorate Team ▪ Able to translate vision, complex concepts, financial information, principles and practices into clear compelling organisational strategies and plans. ▪ Business planning skills - including analysing demand, priorities, trends and predicting future customer needs. ▪ Commercial acumen to be able to interpret and interrogate complex financial and other information. ▪ Ability to think innovatively to identify income generation opportunities/income streams in own Department in line with Council vision. ▪ Able to understand performance management systems and methods to drive continuous improvement for customers. ▪ Ability to influence, coach and mentor others to improve and build a high performance culture. ▪ Authentic and effective communication skills. ▪ Ability to challenge in a constructive manner, not afraid to tackle difficult behaviour and situations. ▪ Stakeholder management skills within the public and private sector. Ability to develop and maintain effective dialogue and develop trust with stakeholders including other Service Directors, Directors, CMT, politicians and partners who provide of key public services, to protect and promote the best interests of the city. ▪ Ability to deal with competing interests while maintaining effective working relationships and a productive work environment. ▪ Advanced negotiation and influencing skills, with the ability to establish pragmatic solutions and agreed outcomes.
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▪ Experience of leading a multidisciplinary workforce to drive performance and a successful culture. ▪ Experience of working within and promoting a health and safety and safeguarding culture. ▪ Demonstrable commitment and experience of celebrating and valuing diversity	▪ Political awareness and acumen. ▪ Innovative and able to challenge traditional ways of doing things in a positive, constructive way.
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