

CHILDREN & FAMILIES SERVICE REVIEW

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Children and Families Service have been actively involved in a service review and, following the presentation of the Service Review options to a seminar of Elected Members, have now completed a period of consultation with managers and staff across the service. The consultation process has allowed for additional contact with Community Health Partnership managers through the joint managers meeting, contact with Police Scotland and Heads of Service within Community Services.
- 1.2 Staff within the Children and Families service have had an opportunity to consider the detail of the three models presented to Elected Members and discuss the strengths, opportunities and key characteristics of each of the models during interactive consultation sessions. Staff completed questionnaires and used the Hub to comment on the models.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Community Services Committee:

- 2.3 Agrees to implement the new model, model 1, of service delivery and that the budgets will be re-configured to achieve the new model within current budget
- 2.2 Notes 1% saving will be achieved.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Following a negative Child Protection inspection in 2011 and publication of a Fatal Accident Inquiry in 2012 (relating to an incident from 2009), the Council put in place an improvement plan within the Children and Families Service. The plan introduced new processes, procedures and 5 additional new staff on a temporary basis to build resilience and promote good practice. At this stage, agreement was reached that the sustainability of the temporary posts would be considered as part of a wider service review of the Children & Families service.
- 3.2 The 2013 a Joint Integrated Children's Service Inspection outlined key strengths and areas for improvement across 9 quality indicators.

The service achieved:

- 1 - very good
- 5 - good
- 3 - adequate.

- 3.3 These grading's demonstrated improvements across all areas in a relatively short period of time. 3 quality indicators were graded as adequate i.e. strengths just outweigh weakness. Crucially assessment and care planning both graded as adequate – these are core Social Work processes. These grading were disappointing but accurately described the standards in relation to these core functions at the time of the Inspection. These areas are key development areas for the service and improvements are ongoing.
- 3.4 To improve assessment, care planning and understand the future shape of the service, a scoping of the service began and at this stage identified the following issues:
- High turnover of staff and high use of agency staff
 - Small geographical teams have less resilience
 - Achieving consistency across assessment and care planning was difficult
 - The need to focus on quality assurance to improve standards across Area Teams
 - The need for early identification and intervention which could shift the balance of care in the future.
- 3.5 The internal review identified the need to undertake a full service review which would look at the sustainability of the temporary posts, building quality assurance and creating a more stable staffing structure.
- 3.6 Three work streams were established, Frontline Services, Looked After Children and Leadership. Each work stream included staff from all levels of the organisation and the Leadership work stream included partners across Health, Police and Education. The work streams reported to a Project Board led by the Executive Director of Community Services and included staff representation, Unions and colleagues from Finance and Human Resources.
- 3.7 A benchmarking exercise was undertaken across 7 local authorities to ascertain how services were managed, workloads for Social Workers and whether specialisms were required. In addition, national information was compared. The Benchmarking exercise found that in comparison Argyll & Bute had:
- More specialised teams than comparative authorities
 - Less quality assurance processes in place
 - One of the highest caseloads for Area Team Social Workers
 - Lower spend on Children & Families than comparative authorities

- 3.8 All Authorities had different management structures; however 4 of the 7 have senior managers as an integral part of their management structure with an overview of operational activity.
- 3.9 Using the benchmarking and data analysis the frontline work stream created a workload formula. The formula, based on lower workload for Area Teams, which brings Argyll & Bute into line with comparative authorities and has created the new allocation of staff across Argyll & Bute for frontline service within the new model.
- 3.10 The Looked After Children work stream reported the need to maintain specialised Fostering & Adoption and Throughcare teams in line with the comparative Local Authorities. Given these are areas most affected by the Children & Young People's Bill this proposal appears reasonable.
- 3.11 The Bill will include additional responsibilities placed on Local Authorities through Kinship Care and an increase in the age of responsibility for Looked After Children to 25. Improved financial and practical support to kinship carers is also detailed in the legislation. Both of these services will receive additional funding through the Bill, although the details are still to be agreed, and will require some reconfiguration to meet the additional demands placed on the service.
- 3.12 The Leadership work stream examined the management structure and how best to achieve improved governance, accountability and practice through the development of an improved management structure.
- 3.13 **Three Models**

Three models were developed for consideration in consultation with workstream groups. The preferred model needs to deliver improvement in the following areas:

Identification and initial response to children at risk especially those experiencing neglect

Assessment of the needs of vulnerable children

Assessment and response to children at risk

Planning to secure better outcomes for all of our children

Secure continuous and consistent improvement in the quality of assessment of risk and needs and planning for individual children and young people

Shifting cultures to achieve excellence

Contribute to the work within the Integrated Children's Services Plan

Continue to develop rigorous and systematic joint self-evaluation to improve outcomes for children and young people

Ensure continued leadership and direction is provided to implement the planned improvements for services for children, young people and families based in localities aligned to Education structure.

Be fit for purpose in terms of the potential implications of Integration in Argyll & Bute as outlined in the Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Bill and the increased duties and responsibilities detailed in the Children and Young People (Scotland) Bill.

4. MODELS AND CONSULTATION

4.1 (see appendix 2)

In all models presented for consultation, frontline services are re-configured to ensure equality based on a new workload formula.

- By disbanding Permanence and Disability teams, Social Workers will be required to build skills across the spectrum of interventions.
- Social Work Assistant's contracts will change to accommodate evening work
- Early & Effective Intervention Support Workers who work in the evenings and at weekends become part of the staffing establishment on a permanent basis. Funding is mainstreamed (see appendix 1).
- All models provide opportunities to reconfigure budgets and invest in frontline staff. Locality based models were present and one model retaining specialism. The 3 models develop quality assurance and greater governance and accountability for operational standards.
- The models achieve reconfiguration of staffing structure in addition to 1% saving over the next 2 years.
- Any gaps in finance will be filled by ongoing efficiencies and increased third party contributions. These will be actively monitored with remedial action being taken if necessary.

4.2 Consultation Process

Consultation with Children & Families staff began on 20th November 2013 and ended on 20th December 2013. There have been several meetings with each staff group across this period including:

- Managers – 20th November 2013
- All Children & Families staff – 28th November 2013
- Team Leaders – 3rd December 2013
- Social Work Assistants – 9th December 2013

In addition, a page on the Hub was set up to provide updates in relation to the consultation process.

4.3 **Staff**

Staff were asked to prioritise their preferred models and give reasons for their choice through questions. Colleagues in Adult Services, Police, Health and Education have also been asked to comment on their preferred model.

Model 1 and 3 are similar however Model 3 has a senior manager.

4.4 **Chosen Model**

The analysis of Models indicates that staff preferred Model 3, with Model 1 being their second choice. There is general positive feedback on Model 1 and 3. The move to localised management arrangement is welcomed by the Police and Health.

- 4.5 Model 1 is implementable now and the implementation of Model 1 would end a yearlong review and allow staff to be interviewed for appropriate post, reducing anxiety for staff and allowing the service to move forward with a different model of delivery to improve standards, consistency and prepare for integration.

5. **CONCLUSION**

- 5.1 The service review process within the Children and Families Service has reached the conclusion of the detailed consultation phase.
- 5.2 The focus on improving outcomes for children and young people sit at the heart of this service review. It is now important to act on the feedback from the consultation and deliver the changes required to ensure the service is fit for purpose and ready for the multi-faceted challenges ahead.

6. IMPLICATION

Policy: The Model should offer greater opportunity to deliver on Council's statutory responsibilities.

Financial: The Service Review Options are cost neutral and will be met from a realignment of existing resources. The options focus on investment in Frontline Services with corresponding efficiencies in other areas of the service. This reconfiguration of resource is necessary in order to align resources with service priorities and to ensure the service is structured correctly to meet the demands of the service.

The table below shows the current and proposed budget configurations under for chosen model.

Service Area	2014/15 Draft Budget	2014/15 Budget – Model 1	2014/15 Budget – Model 2	2014/15 Budget – Model 3
Central/Management Costs	1,014,079	↓ 832,388	↓ 832,960	↓ 905,503
Looked-after Children	5,796,330	↑ 5,922,981	↑ 5,865,044	↑ 5,849,866
Child Protection	3,403,017	↑ 3,503,925	↑ 3,512,063	↑ 3,503,925
Children with a Disability & Early Years	5,784,514	↓ 5,738,646	↑ 5,787,873	↓ 5,738,646
Criminal Justice	-13,000	-13,000	-13,000	-13,000
Total	15,984,940	15,984,940	15,984,940	15,984,940

The move to reconfigure the service will allow progress to be made within the current financial envelope and allows a 1% saving to be achieved in the next 2 years. Redundancy may not follow the 3 year rule however saving will be found from within the current budget.

Legal: None

Personnel: Staff will be interviewed for ring fenced posts to allow appropriate skills to be matched to appropriate posts

Equal Opportunities: None

Customers: Improving outcomes for customers is central

Risk: Failure to implement a model will halt progress.

Cleland Sneddon
Executive Director of Community Services

For further information contact: Louise Long
Head of Service – Children & Families
Kilmory Castle
Lochgilphead
PA31 8RT

Tel: 01546 604526

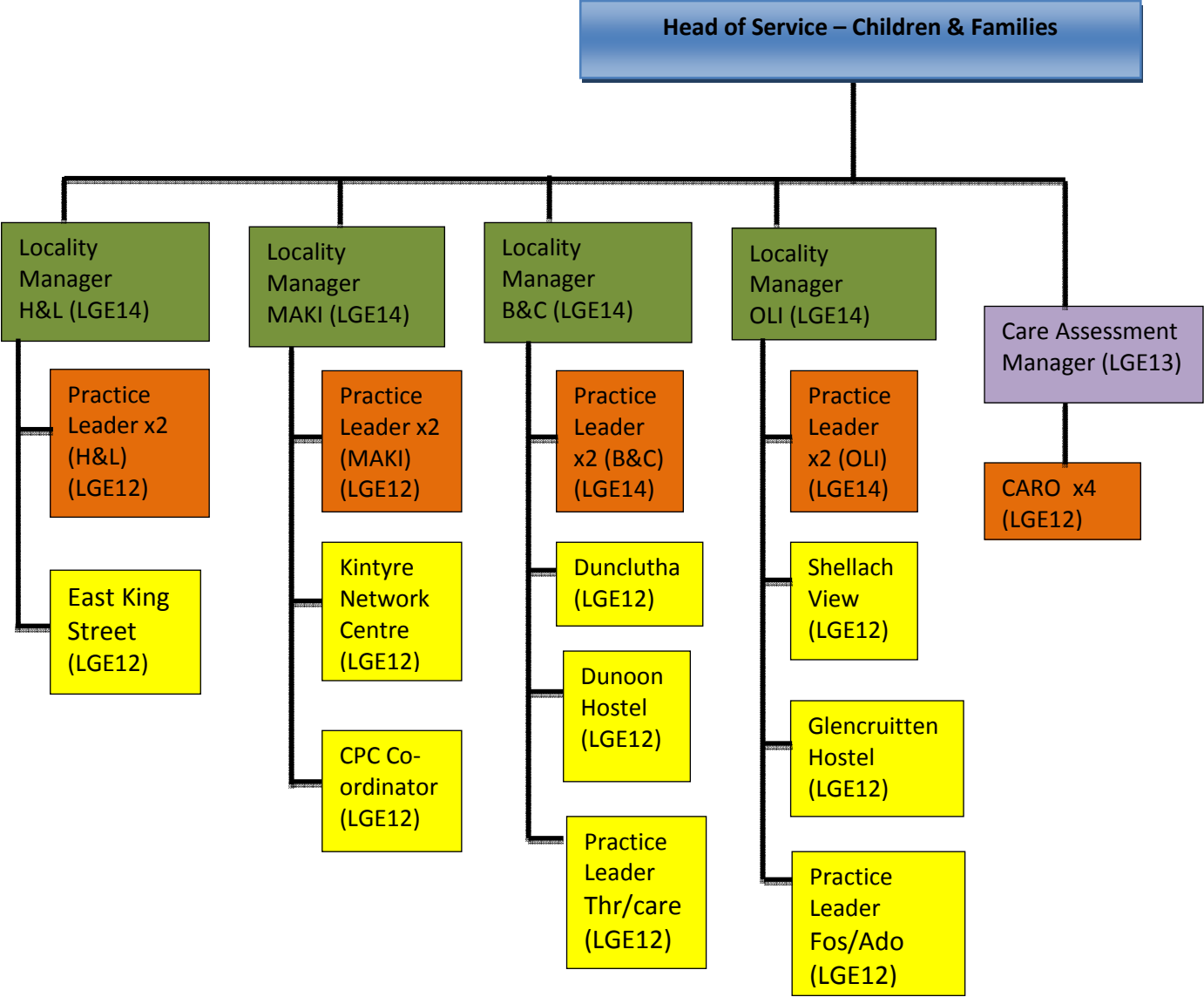
Complement of Main Grade Staff

Appendix 1

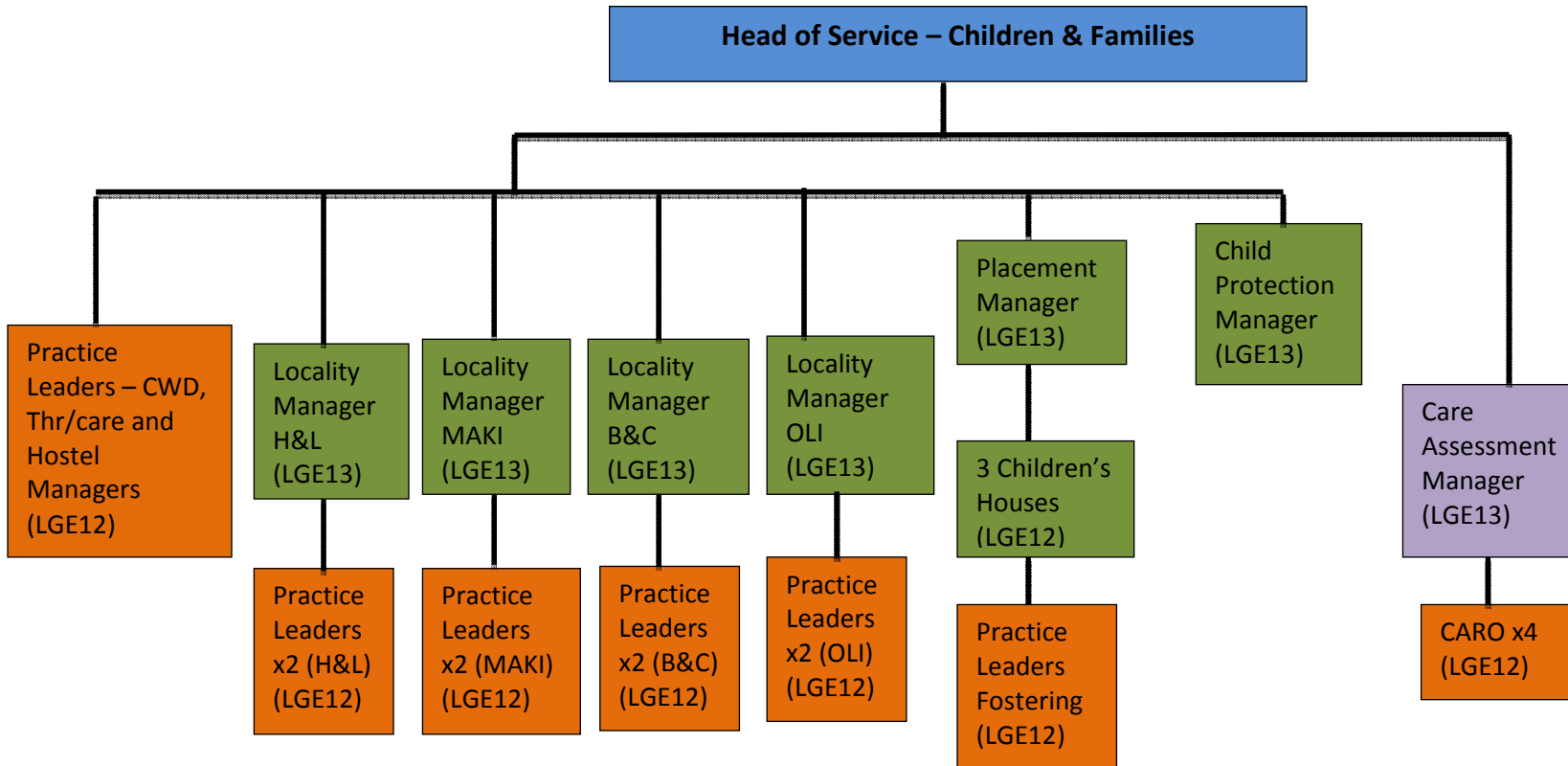
Each of the 3 models has the same complement of main grade staff.

Bute & Cowal	Helensburgh	MAKI	OLI
2 Practice Leads	2 Practice Leads	2 Practice Leads	1.75 Practice Leads
10.5 Social Workers	10.25 Social Workers	7.25 Social Workers	7 Social Workers
3 Social Work Assist	3 Social Work Assist	2 Social Work Assist	2 Social Work Assist
1.7 Foster/Adoption	1.3 Foster/Adoption	0.5 Foster/Adoption	1.5 Foster/Adoption
1 EEI Support Worker	1 EEI Support Worker	1 EEI Support Worker	1 EEI Support Worker
What difference in each area?			
+1 Social Worker	+0.25 Social Worker	-0.5 Practice Lead -0.25 Social Work	-0.25 Practice Lead -0.5 Social Worker
-0.11 Social Work Assist	+1 Social Work Assist	-2.71 Social Work Assist	
-0.3 Foster/Adoption	+0.3 Foster/Adoption	+0.5 Foster/Adoption	+0.5 Foster/Adoption
+1 EEI Support Worker	+1 EEI Support Worker	+1 EEI Support Worker	+1 EEI Support Worker

Model 1

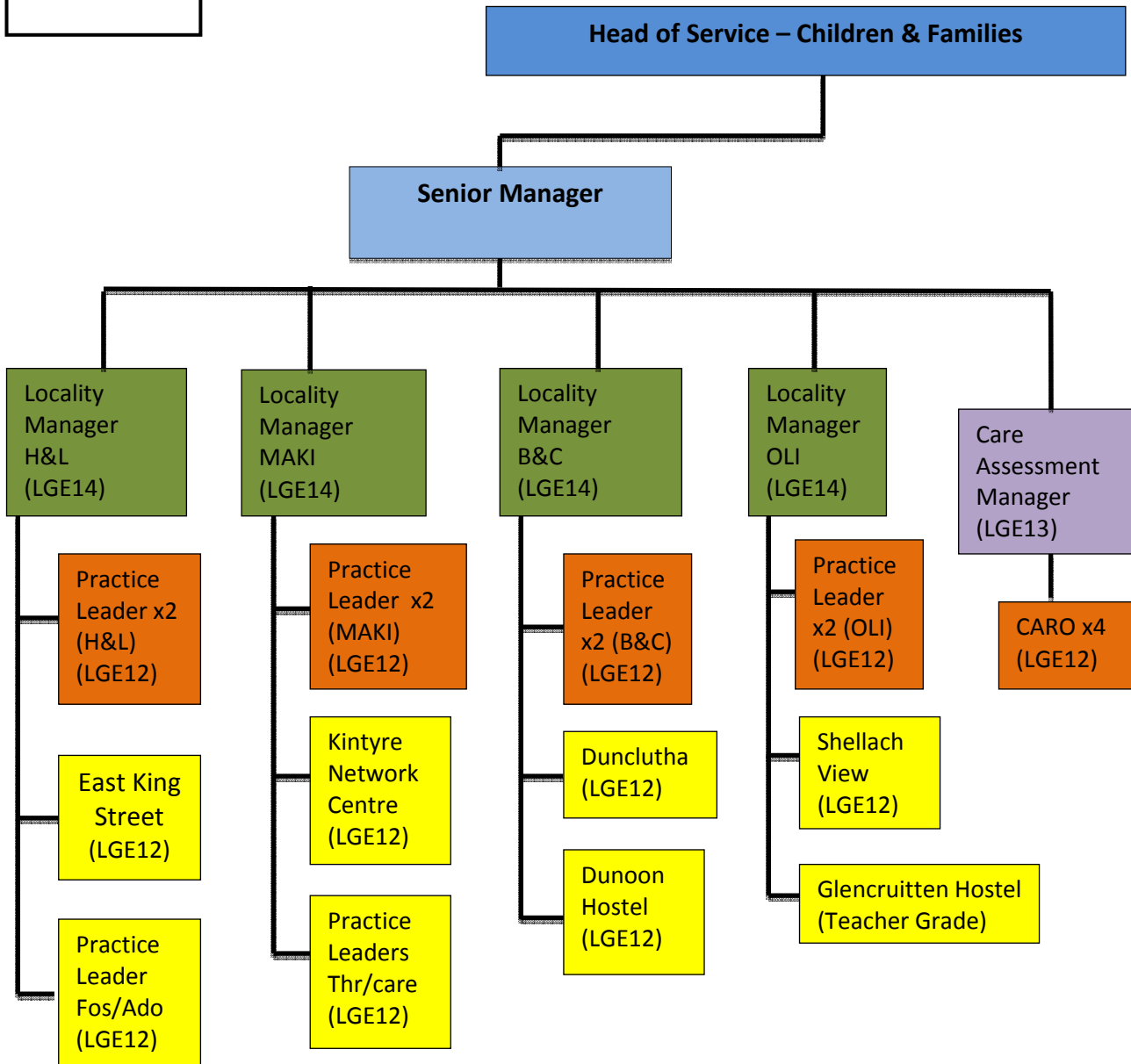


Model 1
 Locality based model, removal a layer of management to allow investment in front line and quality assurance. It strengthens localised service delivery.



Model 2

The model removes a layer of senior management to allow investment in quality assurance. It continues to focus on a mixture of area teams and specialisms.



Model 3

Model 3 provides re-configuration of current management structure to provide quality assurance and investment in front line services. It strengthens local arrangements and provides greater accountability.