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14th April 2010

Dear Colleague

Children's Services Restructure – DRAFT Briefing

Please find enclosed UNISON alternative proposal to the Children's Services Restructure. Our proposal is based on the widespread responses from UNISON members working in Children's Services. We are intending on submitting our proposal to the Director but want members to discuss and respond to our draft.

It is important in these stark economic times, with the ongoing criticism of the number of senior management posts and high salaries in the public sector, that we avoid top heavy management structures. Our proposal has only 3 senior management roles as opposed to the 5 in the Directors' proposal.

Children's Services is the most high profile service the Council delivers and the consequences of poor performance are exceedingly high. The Climbié & Baby Peter inquiries are a constant reminder of what is at stake. It is our view and the view of our members that the proposed restructure is potentially dangerous and could undermine the already excellent safeguarding and social work practice being delivered by staff. The Social Work Task Force said the '*voice of social care*' needs to be heard within Children's Services. It is our view the Directors proposal does the opposite. The restructure lowers the social care profile across the service which makes the structure unsafe. It is vitally important there is a strong Safeguarding oversight across the whole of the Children's workforce as more and more services are carrying out work with vulnerable children and their families. It is worth remembering that the Climbié inquiry reinforced the need for integrated approach which we believe the Directors restructure does the opposite.

The Directors restructure is based on an outdated silo approach where 'whole children' are split into silos. This approach is not holistic, not integrated and is contrary to the future shape cross cutting theme being adopted across other Directorate restructures.

In our restructure we have noted that a number of services that were included in Policy, Performance and Planning are currently being transferred in to the Future Shape Support organisation. We see this as an opportunity in terms of the current capacity for development of a coordinated, integrated commissioning structure.

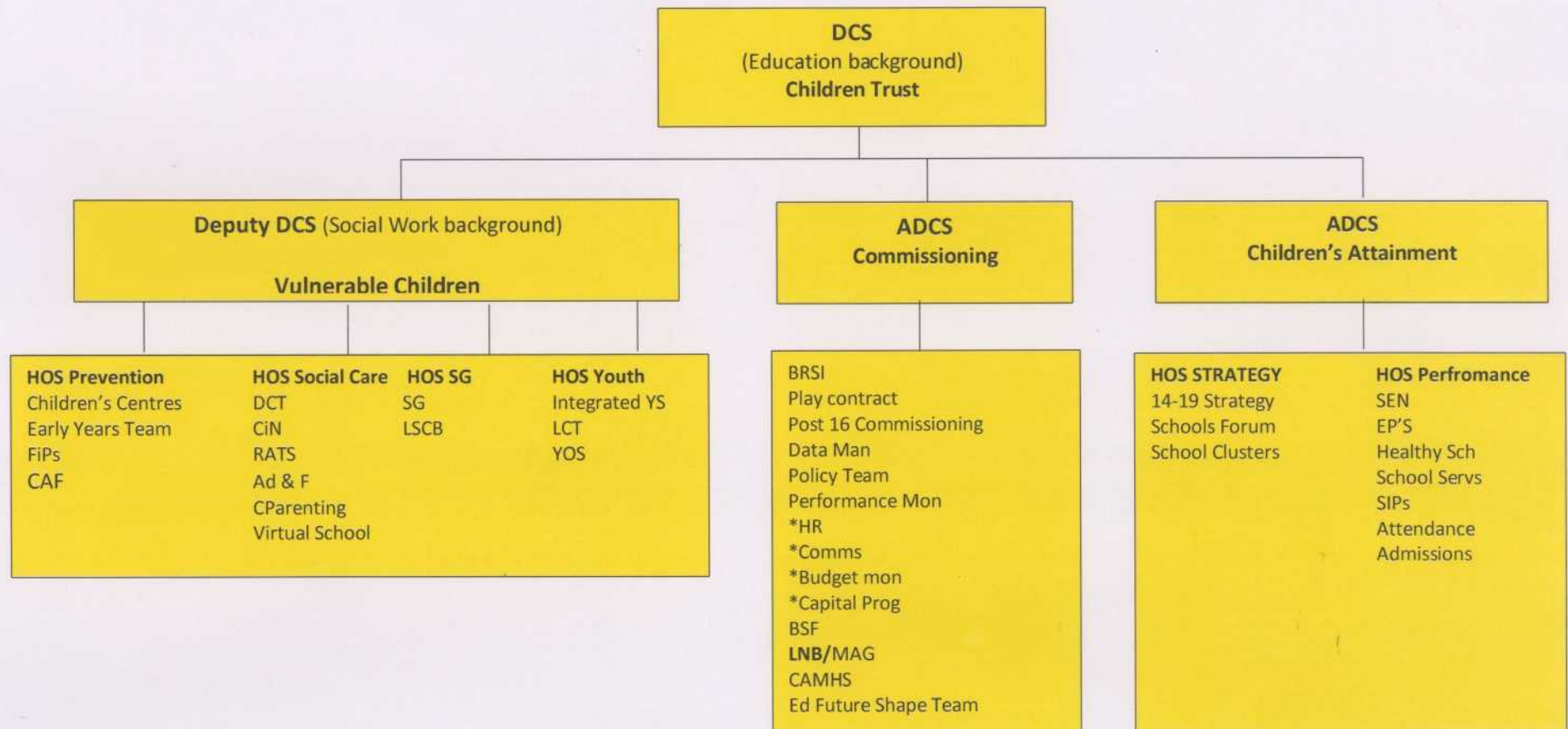
Message to our members working on Education teams in Children's Services.

We have not had much response from our members working in the Education/Schools teams and would strongly urge our members to read and send in your comments.

We urge members to share this DRAFT with colleagues, discuss in team meetings and send any comments to john.burgess@barnetunison.org.uk by Friday 23rd April 2010.

DRAFT Barnet UNISON CHILDREN'S SERVICES PROPOSAL

14 April 2010



*** = Services being moved into Support Future Shape Organisation**