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26<sup>th</sup> April 2010

Dear Robert

**RE: UNISON response to the Children's Services Restructure**

I recognise that you provided an updated version to the Trade Unions last Friday, as this has not been circulated to the workforce our response is based on the original proposal. 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.

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 your proposal.

Children's Services is the most high profile service the Council delivers and the consequences of poor performance are exceedingly high. The Climbie & 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 Climbie inquiry reinforced the need for integrated approach which we believe the Directors restructure does the opposite.

It is our members view that your restructure is based on an outdated silo approach where 'whole children' are split into silos.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.

I understand that there has been a lot of feedback on the restructure and I am requesting access to the spreadsheet of questions/suggestions that have been generated so far as is now common practice in other restructures.

My final point is that it is our view that Barnet continues to build on its already excellent reputation in Children's Services. It is vital our members working in social work continue to feel supported to carry out what is very difficult and stressful work. We are working closely with the Council to look at how the recommendations of the Social Care Taskforce can improve outcomes for children and retain and develop the staff working in Children's Services. I hope at the end of the consultation process we will have a structure that staff believe will deliver positive outcomes for vulnerable children and their families.

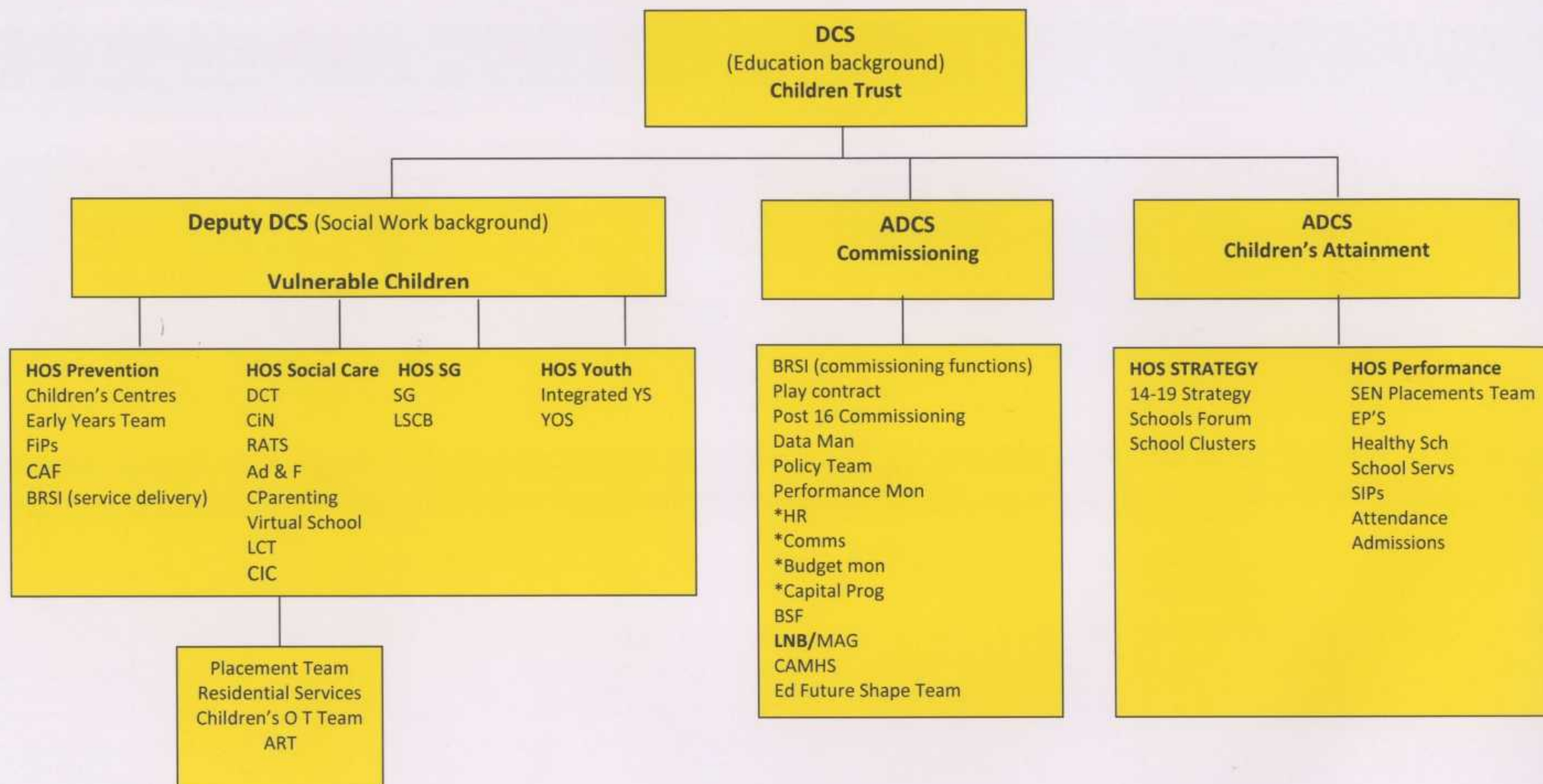
Best wishes

JDR

John Burgess  
Branch Secretary

# Barnet UNISON CHILDREN'S SERVICES PROPOSAL

26<sup>th</sup> April 2010



\*= Services being moved into Support Future Shape Organisation

# THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN CHILDREN'S SERVICES PROPOSAL

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