**Together for Children - Sunderland**

**Chair - Role and Person Specification**

**Background to the Board of Directors**

Together for Children’s Board will consist of a number of Executive Directors (3) and Non-Executive Directors (6) comprising the following:

* A chair (a non-executive director appointed by the Secretary of State for Education (in consultation with Sunderland City Council) during the period that Sunderland’s children’s social care services are subject to Government intervention, and by the Council subsequently);
* Three executive directors from Together for Children’s executive management team (including its Chief Executive);
* Three non-executive directors with collective knowledge and expertise across children’s services, public services, business development and other relevant areas plus appropriate local knowledge and sensitivity; and
* Two other non-executive directors (e.g. members and/or officers) appointed by the Council.

The Board operates at a strategic level and is the responsible body for the performance, achievement and overall direction of Together for Children. More specifically, the Board:

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| * Establishes and models Together for Children’s values and culture |
| * Is accountable for Together for Children’s performance: * Outcomes for children and young people; and * Management of resources (staff, budgets, equipment). |
| * Sets policy for: * Service improvements and developments; * Financial investments; and * Operational management, including financial and staffing. |
| * Is responsible for ensuring that Together for Children fulfils its legal and contractual obligations. |

## The role of the Chair

As Chair, the post holder will provide strong, independent leadership to Together for Children, and ensure that its Board is effective in setting and implementing Together for Children’s direction and strategy for the delivery, and improvement, of children’s services. As a Board member, the post holder will be required to represent Together for Children locally, regionally and nationally, developing and maintaining excellent relationships with a range of key partners and stakeholders including the council, schools, other councils, Government, health organisations, and partners in the delivery of high quality and value for money services to children and their families.

The Chair will:

1. Provide strategic leadership to Together for Children including setting the vision for the delivery of children’s services, developing the Board’s priorities, and agreeing agendas which will facilitate discussions that reflect Together for Children’s identified strategic priorities.
2. Establish effective corporate governance arrangements for Together for Children including supporting the Board to ensure transparent selection, appointment, assessment and (should it prove necessary) the removal of Executive Directors, or any other direct appointee (in consultation with the Secretary of State for Education) and exercising the casting vote at formal meetings should the Board be unable to reach a collective decision.
3. Oversee Together for Children’s performance, including supporting and guiding the Board in the routine performance assessment of Together for Children and guiding the Board’s strategic reviews on how to achieve and assess the impact of improvement in services for children.

**Person specification for the Chair**

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| Personal qualities and skills  * Demonstrable passion for improving opportunities and outcomes for children; * Strong leadership skills * Strong interpersonal and relationship building skills; * A strategic thinker able to clearly express their view verbally and in writing; * A commitment to Together for Children’s values and public service nature; * Capacity to commit the necessary time to fulfil the role. |
| Experience  * Demonstrable experience of strategic decision making. * Leadership experience at a senior level in a large and complex organisation. * Experience and strong professional knowledge of children’s services. * Experience and strong professional knowledge in a public sector organisation. * A level of local knowledge of Sunderland. |

## Terms of appointment

The Chair will be appointed for a fixed term up to March 2020, with the potential for re-appointment at the end of that term. During the period that Sunderland’s children’s social care services are subject to Government intervention, the Chair will be appointed by the Secretary of State. Once Government intervention ends (typically one year after Ofsted judges services to no longer be inadequate), responsibility for appointment of the Chair will pass to Sunderland Council.

Non-Executive Directors are anticipated to commit to approximately 20 -30 days per year, including attendance at six scheduled Board meetings together with any further Board or committee meetings that may be arranged, and to undertake particular work on behalf of the Board from time to time as required.

The Chair shall be remunerated on a fixed rate per day basis; the remuneration is £495 /day (index linked). This is set by the Department for Education during the period that services are subject to Government intervention; and will subsequently be set by the Council.

Please note that Together for Children will not become fully operational until 1st April 2017 (i.e. the service commencement date under the proposed services contract with the Council). Prior to this date, it is intended that the Board will operate in “shadow form” whilst the relevant children’s services remain part of the Council, to firstly oversee and influence on an informal basis the service’s management team and the delivery of the transferring services during this interim period, and to approve the necessary set-up arrangements prior to 1st April. The Chair will be expected to work alongside the Government’s Commissioner for Children’s Social Care in Sunderland during this “shadow” period.

Subject to the provisions of Together for Children’s articles (from time to time) and the powers set out therein, the Secretary of State shall have the right to terminate the Chair’s appointment, through the provision of three months’ notice in writing (save in the case of a breach by the Chair of their obligations in which case the Secretary of State shall have the right to terminate the appointment forthwith by notice). In the event of a termination of a director’s appointment in accordance with the above, Together for Children shall not be liable in any circumstance for any loss of office or otherwise or for any other direct or indirect losses, costs or expenses arising out of or in connection with such termination.

The Chair must provide a minimum of three months’ notice in writing to Together for Children and the Department for Education of any notice of resignation.

## Qualification criteria

The Chair must:

* Be aged 18 or over;
* Not be the subject of a bankruptcy order or an interim order or entered into a composition with his/her creditors generally in satisfaction of his/her debts;
* Not have been convicted of any criminal offence, excluding any that have been spent under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 as amended, and excluding any offence for which the maximum sentence is a fine or a lesser sentence.
* Provide a satisfactory enhanced DBS disclosure.

## Those applying must:

* Declare any interest(s).  Specifically, any links or roles currently held with any local authority or organisations operating in the children’s services sector within the past 10 years. Due diligence checks will be undertaken to determine whether the applicant is associated with any event likely to damage the reputation of, or embarrass the Department for Education, Together for Children or Sunderland Council. This could include, but is not limited to: involvement in financial irregularity; a pay-off from a previous period of public sector employment; direct criticism within a Serious Case Review; holding a senior leadership role in a local authority at a time when Ofsted judged any aspect of its children’s services provision to be inadequate. Those applying are asked to describe any such associations. The Council and Department for Education reserve the right to exclude applicants based on the information provided or identified through our due diligence checks.
* In light of the recommendations made by the Committee on Standards in Public Life (the Nolan Committee), declare any significant activity undertaken in the past five years. This information will be used for monitoring purposes. However, if your application is successful the information may be released into the public domain

Those invited to interview will be required to complete a questionnaire on these and other mandatory criteria prior to any successful applicant being offered the post.