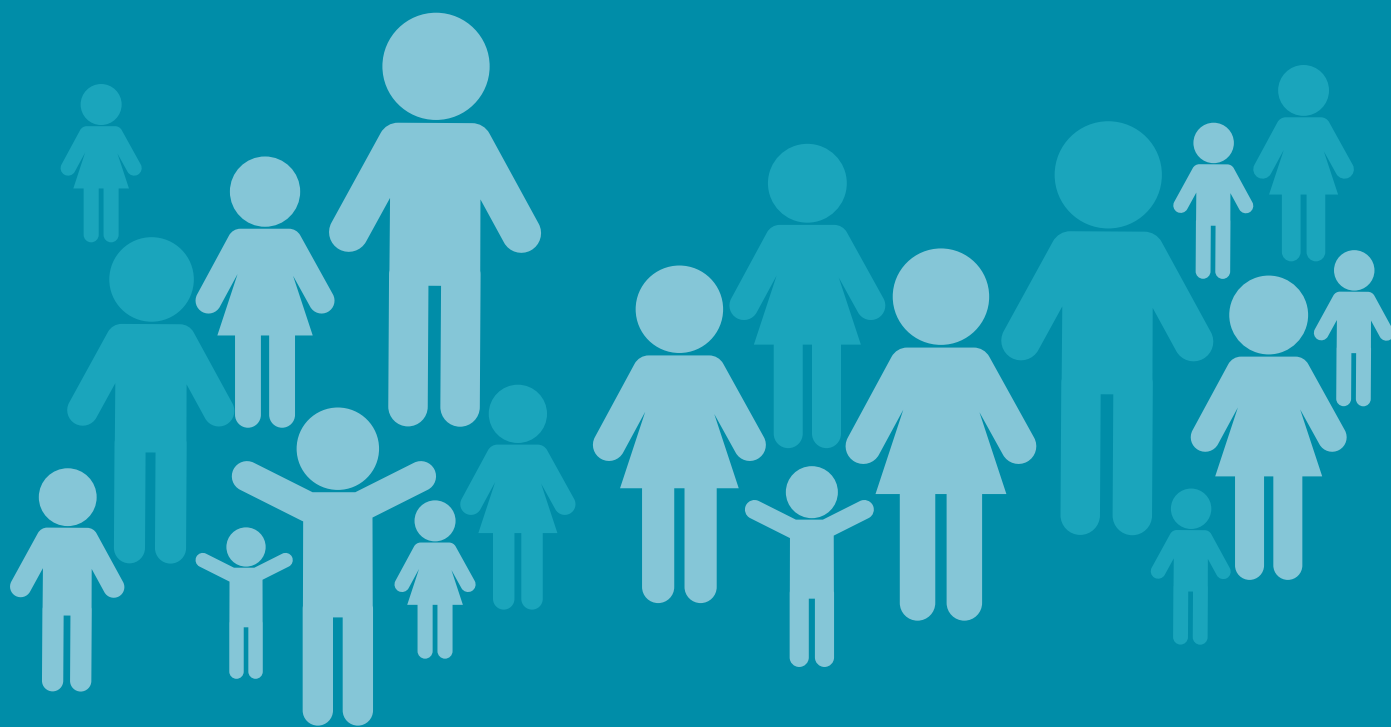


# Kirklees Children and Young People Services



## Message from Jacqui Gedman, Chief Executive, Kirklees Council

Dear colleague

I would like to share some important information about leadership changes in Children and Young People's Services.

As you know, the current arrangements are that Gill Ellis is our Director for Children and Young People and is overseeing the development of our relationship with Leeds City Council. Leeds have been on an improvement journey of their own and have emerged as an approved 'partner in practice', making it logical that we tap into their great experience and expertise in order to support our work.

Our links with Leeds are growing all the time and will again become stronger from the end of June. This is the point at which Gill will retire and the Leeds Director of Children's Services, Steve Walker, will take over DCS responsibilities here in Kirklees.

I want to stress that this is not a formal arrangement resulting from any direction given by the government. You'll be aware that the report prepared by our Commissioner, Eleanor Brazil, has not yet been considered by the DfE because of delays caused by the general election – and this remains the case.

Instead, the relationship with Leeds is one that we are proactively developing. The partnership has already helped us to improve our ways of working and, as better outcomes for children and young people are an extremely high priority for all of us, we expect the partnership to continue flourishing.

Steve Walker is already spending time in Kirklees, getting to know people and services so that the transition to becoming our DCS will be as smooth as possible. He will also continue as DCS at Leeds, holding the role with both authorities, and we are delighted to welcome Steve to our leadership team.

Steve has over 25 years' experience in children's social care, including a decade as a social worker and frontline manager. He now heads a Leeds directorate which was judged as 'good' overall and 'outstanding' for leadership, management and governance in its most recent Ofsted inspection. I'm pleased to say that one of Steve's colleagues, Elaine McShane – Leeds' Head of Children's Social Work - is also supporting us and adding extra capacity to our improvement journey. A warm welcome too to Elaine.

I'm very confident that these changes will bring long-term benefits, but it will also be sad to see Gill Ellis leaving us at the end of June. Gill stepped into the DCS role on an interim basis a few months ago, taking over at a particularly challenging time but responding with passion and an unwavering commitment to achieve the best possible outcomes for children, young people and families. Gill, of course, moves into retirement with our thanks and best wishes.

Finally, it's really important for me to mention all the hard work that I know is taking place to develop and improve children's social care services in Kirklees. This is truly a team effort and everyone's contribution is essential. The election may have delayed the Commissioner's process – and we still don't know when the DfE will make a decision – but we are continuing to work with

pace, determination and a clear focus on what needs to be done for children and families. Significant change can't happen overnight, but your commitment is making a real and lasting difference.

Thank you  
Jacqui