

Report to:	Cabinet	Date of Meeting:	23 rd May 2024
Subject:	Childrens Social Care – Service Restructure		
Report of:	Risthardh Hare	Wards Affected:	All Wards
Portfolio:	Children, Schools and Families		
Is this a Key Decision:	Yes	Included in Forward Plan:	Yes
Exempt / Confidential Report:	No.		

Summary:

- To provide the Cabinet Members with an overview of the proposed changes to the Children’s Social Care staffing structure and to provide the rationale for those proposed changes.
- To provide the cost implications for the structure which will ensure that matters are dealt with within budget for this year.
- To seek Cabinet approval for the proposals and approach to be adopted.
- The recommended proposals provide roles for all permanent staff.

Recommendation(s):

It is recommended that:

- (1) Approve all the structural and staffing changes detailed in this report, including the development of the new service areas (subject to the necessary consultation with staff affected, Trade Unions and the application of existing policies and practices as they apply to employees)
- (2) Approve that any prioritisation in implementation will be delegated to the Cabinet Member (Children’s Schools and Families) within the approved budget for the Service.
- (3) Note that the review of Market Supplements will be completed within 4 months of the structure (excluding phase 2) being implemented.
- (4) Approve the virement of £2.450m within the Children’s Social Care budget between the Placements and Packages budget to the Service’s staffing budget.

Reasons for the Recommendation(s):

To put into place a structure and approach which gives better service delivery and outcomes to children, young people, and families in respect of Children’s Social Care and its improvement Journey.

There are no redundancies, and the Council is creating jobs to support the service whilst also creating opportunities for staff in terms of resilience, stability, support, training, development, and advancement.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected: (including any Risk Implications)

The current staffing arrangements could continue without implementing the recommended changes however, this will have a detrimental impact on the quality and efficiency of the service delivery and outcomes to children, young people, and families, it will also prevent the Service's improvement journey as opposed to the approach within this report.

The current structure is supported by additional posts which are currently filled by agency workers due to the posts not forming part of the substantive staffing structure. Continuation of these high-cost interim would create a pressure on current and future budgets for children services.

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

(A) Revenue Costs

The costs associated with the re-structuring of the (core funded) Children's Social Care Services would be met from the current children services budget.

This new structure creates an increase of £2.450m in the current allocated staffing budget. The structure this budget funded was unsuitable for achieving better outcomes for children including supporting more children to remain at home. This has been evidenced by both the ILACS inspection in February 2022 and rising numbers of children receiving state intervention including coming into the care of the local authority.

The increased costs of the restructure will be met by viring budget from Residential Care which has seen a significant reduction in costs (see section 10).

There are several posts that are still subject to Job Evaluation and therefore hold an indicative Grade.

The additional academy team in Safeguarding, Review and Quality Assurance will remain vacant until the front-line teams end on 31st August 2024.

Market Supplements will continue with a full review being completed within 4 months of the structure (with exception to phase 2) going live.

(B) Capital Costs

None are applicable.

Implications of the Proposals:

Resource Implications (Financial, IT, Staffing and Assets):

Finance and Human Resources implications are detailed in this report.

Legal Implications:

Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992, Employment Rights Act 1996, and Equality Act 2010.

Equality Implications:

The equality Implications have been identified and mitigated.

Impact on Children and Young People: Yes

See main body of the report (Section 1 and 2 of background information)

Climate Emergency Implications:

The recommendations within this report will:

Have a positive impact	No
Have a neutral impact	Yes
Have a negative impact	No
The Author has undertaken the Climate Emergency training for report authors	No

There are currently no impacts on climate due to the actions of this report. All staff members will continue to work their normal business hours and from their normal place of work.

Contribution to the Council's Core Purpose:**Protect the most vulnerable:**

The approach within this report provides for a greater cohesion in Children's Social Care related matters improving partnership working and providing improved services and outcomes for the most vulnerable children, young people, and families, which in turn will make a valuable contribution the Councils Core Purpose.

Facilitate confident and resilient communities:

Reflecting an enhancement of Children's Social Care Services and outcomes for children, young people, and families within our communities.

Commission, broker, and provide core services:

Core services within Children's Social Care will be improved, in line with the Services improvement plan, which will lead to improved outcomes for children, young people, and families.

Place – leadership and influencer: NA
Drivers of change and reform: Ofsted inadequate rating and Sefton’s ongoing improvement Journey.
Facilitate sustainable economic prosperity: NA
Greater income for social investment: NA
Cleaner Greener: NA

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

(A) Internal Consultations

The Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services (FD.7650/24) and the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer (LD.5750/24) have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

Consultation on the proposed changes to the structure detailed in paragraph’s 6.1 – 6.3, Section 7 & 8, have taken place with the JTU. Full consultation with JTU and Staff will follow.

(B) External Consultations

Consultations have taken place with Karen Bradshaw who is the current DFE advisor for Children Services.

Implementation Date for the Decision

Following the expiry of the “call-in” period for the Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting.

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Appendices:

This report does not have any appendices.

Background:

1. Rationale

- 1.1. In February 2022 Sefton Children Services was graded as Inadequate across all areas following an OFSTED inspection. The report highlighted drift and delay in practice, gaps in service delivery and high rates of agency staff across all services. The service was working with high numbers of children and families and increasing numbers meant greater need for more social workers and other front-line practitioners.
- 1.2. The structure was focussed on risk assessments and due to a reactive decision at the front door whole services such as assessment and intervention did not have any substantive posts. This meant that much needed positions had to be filled by high-cost agency workers.
- 1.3. This unstable service created pressures throughout children services with extremely high numbers of children both in care and on child protection plans social workers were working with up to 60 children at any one time.
- 1.4. Over the past 12 months children services have focussed on “cooling the system” by strengthening thresholds for statutory services, creating alternative interventions which sit outside statutory services and reviewing children and families who appeared to be drifting.
- 1.5. This approach has led to reduced numbers of children and families receiving a statutory intervention and more children in the care system residing in a family setting. Greater focus has been placed on practice improvement and short-term agency staff have been contributing to the steady improvements.
- 1.6. New teams have been created, such as MYS.P.A.C. E., Family Group Conferencing and Team Around a School which have supported better partnership working and giving support to the most vulnerable children in Sefton. To help support the ongoing and steady improvement a restructure of children services is required.
- 1.7. There are three priorities behind the proposed structure.
 - 1.7.1. That resource is allocated to correct service areas to respond to the changing picture of how children and families are receiving an intervention in Sefton and the realignment of Early Help with Children Services.
 - 1.7.2. To create substantive posts to allow permanent staff to be recruited to post to create further stability and reduce agency spend.
 - 1.7.3. To intervene at the right level for children and families and ensure that children remain in family settings where it is safe to do so and that these children in our care receive the very best service.
- 1.8. Due to various organic changes that have occurred over several years many job descriptions and job titles need revision. To ensure that delivery of services, including statutory and non-statutory are covered and support the Services journey of improvement, the Director of Children’s Social Care and Education considers change is necessary.

2. Service Areas

2.1. Early Help, Support and Protect.

We have created clearly defined service areas for each of the service managers. The restructure recognises the developing approach to working with Children with Complex Needs and the future planning of creating a 0-25 service. The structure also creates permanent lines of accountability between the Assistant Director and Service managers in Early Help.

2.2. Cared for and Care Experienced Cared for and Care Experienced

Each service manager now takes accountability of both CLA and Care experienced teams to support greater consistency in practice and service delivery.

2.3. Safeguarding and Quality Assurance

A new post has been created to lead the participation team which recognises the importance of including the views of children and families in our work. This role will also focus on collaborative approaches with children and families in areas such as practice improvement and service development.

The Social Work Academy has been in operation since September 2022 and has helped support over 20 social workers into permanent posts and therefore reducing the need for high-cost agency staff. With a reducing need for permanent social workers the SW Academy will reduce from 5 to 2 teams which will allow the transfer of to the current Service manager for QA.

3. Summary

The structure will bring the ability to recruit permanent posts to roles which are currently held by agency workers. This will bring both a stability in the workforce and a consistency in service delivery.

The structure addresses the gaps in practice highlighted in the OFSTED ILACS inspections and creates specific teams with a focus on supporting families to remain together.

Multi-agency teams which have been piloted over the previous 12 months have created improved outcomes for vulnerable young people. Other teams have supported families staying together and therefore led to reductions in the number of children being taken into the care of the local Authority. This structure makes these teams a permanent part of the service delivery.

4. Children's Social Care proposed Structure.

4.1. For the purposes of this report the reference date to current structure filled with staff is 1st May 2024.

- 4.2. The organisation charts relative to each area of the revised structure are detailed in section 5.2, 6.4 and 9.
- 4.3. With paragraph's 6.1 – 6.3, Section 7 & 8 highlighting what is proposing to change in the structure applicable to staff.
- 4.4. It should be noted that Market Supplement are attached to posts within the CSC current structure. It is proposed that a full review of Market Supplements will take place and be completed within 4 months of the structure (with exception to phase 2) going live.

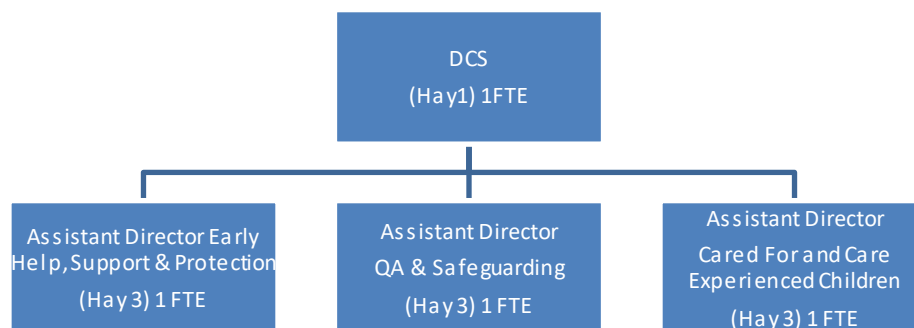
5. Senior Management Structure

Key

Contracted Posts	Casual Posts	Health Funded	Temporary Posts	Secondments	Business Support out of the BS Unit
Agency Posts	Business Support Unit Posts	Turnaround funded	Posts on Hold	Volunteers	Frontline Funded

5.1. The Leadership structure remains unchanged. Therefore, posts holders are expected to transfer into the new structure in their current roles working under the reviewed Job Description.

5.2. Structure Chart for Senior Leadership.



6. Children's Social Care Middle Management Structures

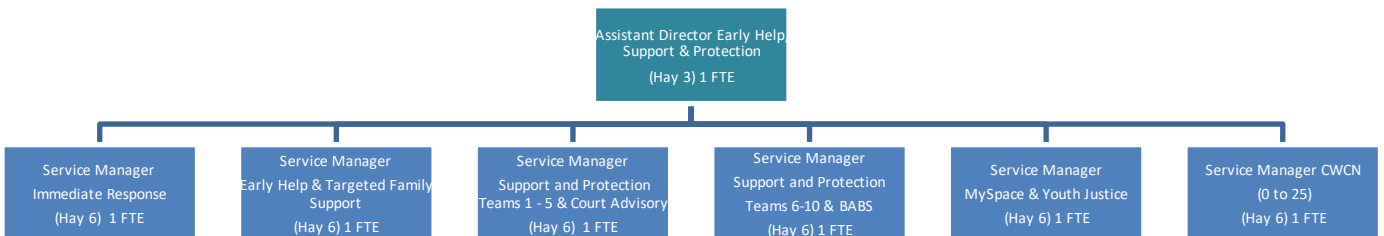
- 6.1. The middle management structure consists of 11 FTE Service Managers covering 11 specialised areas. Within the current structure there are 10 FTE permanent Service Managers employed and 1 FTE Service Manager Post (for the residential area) vacant. The vacant post will be deleted, and this will mean that there will be 1 FTE Service Manager position that will be advertised.
- 6.2. It is proposed where possible to transfer existing Service Managers into posts in which they are currently the Service Manager overseeing that area of specialised work. Where

this approach cannot be achieved, the remaining posts will be ringfenced and staff will be asked to indicate which posts they would like to be considered for. Where there is more than one member of staff expressing an interest to one post, a competitive interview to select.

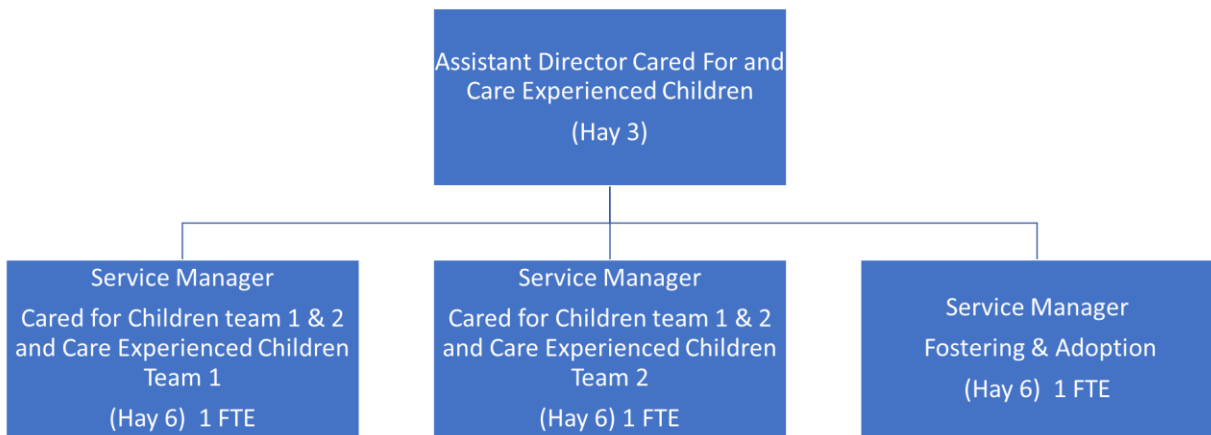
6.3. Each Service Manager post Job description and person specification has been written up generically with role specific duties, responsibilities and requirements added to make the JD individual to the specified role in the proposed structure.

6.4. Below of the proposed structure charts for middle management.

6.4.1. Early Help Support and Protect



6.4.2. Cared for and Care Experienced



6.4.3. Safeguarding and Quality Assurance



7. Area Structures

- 7.1. Throughout the following areas there are posts for all permanent staff with opportunities to progress. Where progression opportunities exist, the Executive Director of Children Services is confident that the skills, experience, and expertise already exists within the department for many of the opportunities available.
- 7.2. For many of the area's there will be little change as the Service has been introducing initiatives and trailing said initiatives for a period, and after their success, this structure will put in place those initiatives on a permanent basis.
- 7.3. Business Support currently sits within designated teams, however most posts, except for those in AiM, Aiming High, Early Help and Youth Offending Team, fall under the remit of the Business Support Manager. The review and restructure of business support will take place as phase two of the whole service restructure therefore for the purposes of this report, the area remains unchanged.

8. Proposed changes to the Area Structures

- 8.1. New initiatives that have been implemented for a short period of time, due to the positive impacts already made, will be made permanent in the proposed structure. These teams include, Team around a School (TAS), Team around a Baby (BABS), Children's Help and Assessment Team (CHAT) and Family Advice and Support Team (FAST).
- 8.2. Children in Need (CiN) Independent Reviewing Officers have also been piloted and have proven to have a positive impact. Therefore, it is proposed that the 2 FTE posts, currently filled by Agency, are to be made permanent posts within the structure and filled with permanent staff.
- 8.3. MySPACE, will be transferred to sit under the remit of the Service Manager for MySPACE, Youth Justice and Springboard VAS and the 0.5 Audit Officer Post will transfer into practice improvement.
- 8.4. In the current structure we have 20.89 FTE Team Managers (Grade K), in the proposed structure we have 31 Team Managers Grade K leaving 10.11 FTE Vacant.
- 8.5. In the proposed structure Assistant Team Managers have been reintroduced into many teams providing 19 FTE posts. In the current structure we have 5 FTE Assistant Team Managers & 4 Practice Assessor Lead (Academy). This creates 10 FTE Vacancies.

- 8.6. In the current structure we have 111.73 FTE Social Worker (Grade H & I) (plus a Social Worker Pre-Qualification employed as Early Help whilst awaiting certification) in the proposed new structure we have 152.36 Social Workers, therefore the new structure will carry 39.63 FTE Vacancies.
- 8.7. In the current posts within the structure, we have 19 FTE Family Support Workers (Grade G) and in the proposed structure we have 29 FTE Family Support Worker posts (Grade G) providing 10 FTE vacancies.
- 8.8. The Youth Justice Service Model and structure remains unchanged, however there will be an additional team named the Springboard Vulnerable Adolescent Service. There will be the opportunity for Senior Early Help Workers, Grade I, to express an interest in the VAS Lead, Grade I, and Early Help Workers, grade G, will be able to express an interest in the VAS Early Help Workers and will remain at Grade G.
- 8.9. The Early Help model is to operate under a revised Hub Model and as such there will be changes around the way Early Help is provided to Sefton. As part of this model, due to the rearrangement of operations, this area will see changes to titles, e.g. Early Help Workers will be retitled Family Hub Workers.
- 8.10. New posts in Early Help consist of 1 FTE Hub Manager Talking Therapy (Grade J), 2 FTE post of Community Youth Connector (Grade F), 2 FTE Play Therapists (Grade G), 6 FTE Talking Therapists (Grade G), 1.5 FTE Insight Worker posts (Grade E), Premises 1 FTE (Grade E)
- 8.11. Business Support for Early Help currently consists of 5.43 FTE Administration Officers at Grade D. These posts will be retitled as Receptionist. An additional 3.57 FTE Posts will be added to the structure.
- 8.12. The 2 FTE Family Time Manager posts are Temporary posts within the structure. These posts will be made permanent.
- 8.13. Family Time Workers (Grade E) will be retitled to Link Workers and the new structure will hold 1.55 FTE Link Worker Vacancies.
- 8.14. The current structure holds 3 FTE Principal Early Help Workers (Grade J), currently 1 FTE post is vacant with a Senior Early Help Worker acting up to cover. These posts will be retitled under the new hub model as Hub Operational Manager. Currently 1 FTE vacancy. It is the view of the Executive Director for Children's Services, that talent exists within the department for promotion opportunities to Hub Operational Manager.
- 8.15. In the current structure we have 9.39 FTE Senior Early Help Workers, however 2 FTE are seconded into Family Time Manager posts which are proposed to be made permanent in the proposed structure. The proposed structure will have 5 FTE Hub Manager posts (Grade I), it will also have 2 FTE VAS Lead posts, 1 FTE Senior Early Help Post in the FAST Team. All posts will carry out work of the same kind.
- 8.16. It should also be noted that it is expected, upon Waterloo Primary transferring to an Academy (scheduled for 1st September 2024) that 0.61 FTE Senior Early Help Worker

(Grade I) and 1.5 FTE Early Help Workers and 0.7 FTE Early Help Worker (Term time Only) will transfer back into the LA under TUPE. Due to transfer of staff into the Service by the proposed implementation date. The postholders will be included in the restructure and any connected consultation.

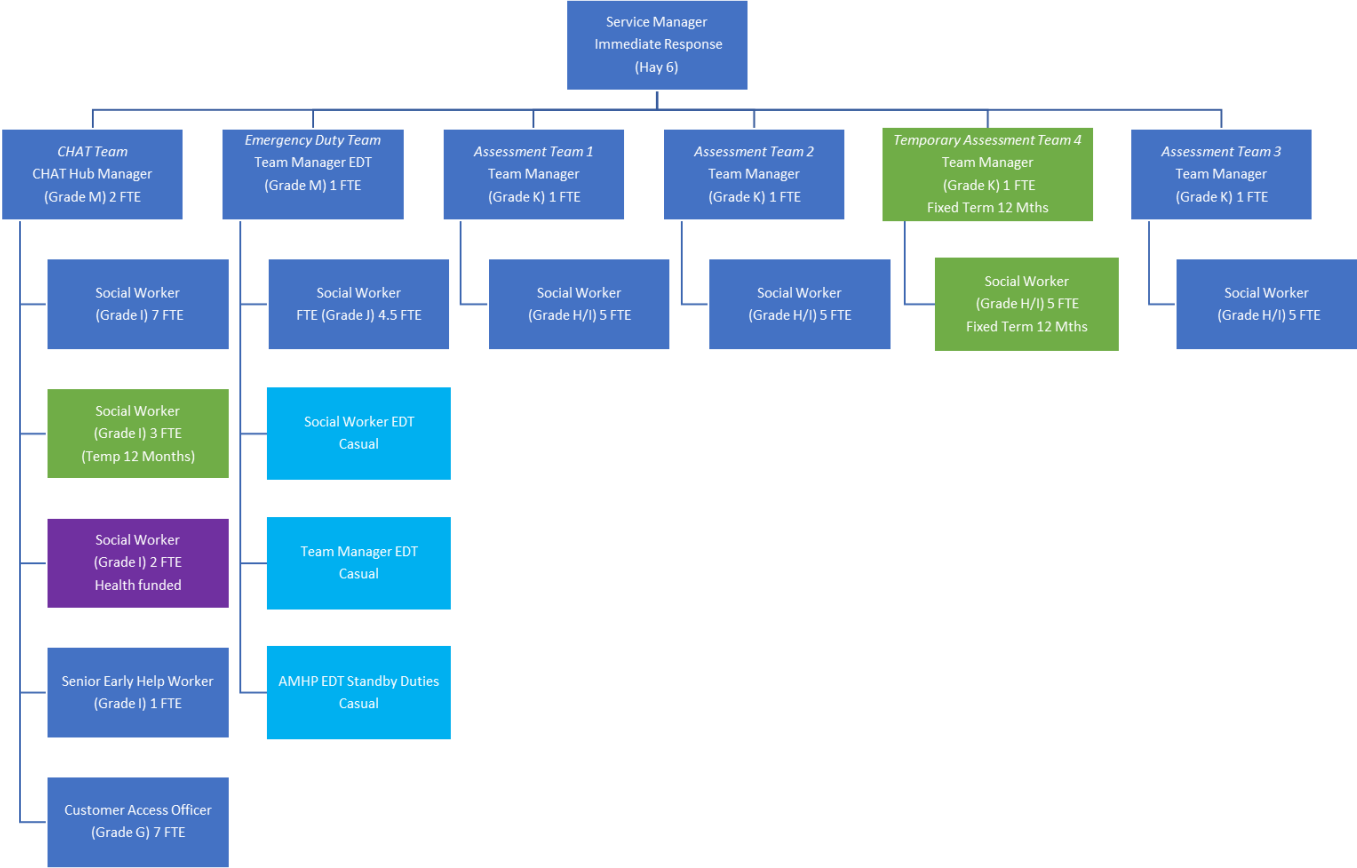
- 8.17. In the current posts we have 36.35 FTE Early Help Workers (Grade G) posts, in the proposed Structure we have 12 FTE VAS Early Help Worker posts (Grade G) and 30 FTE Family Hub Worker posts (Grade G), all of which will be carry out work of the same kind.
- 8.18. A new post (1 FTE) of Legal Support Officer (Grade E) sits within Help and Protection Court Advisory Service.
- 8.19. Posts of Personal Advisors (Grade G) in the current structure are filled with 11 FTE. 1 FTE Employability Officer (Grade G), 2 FTE Family Connector (Grade G) All doing work of the same kind. Moving forward, the proposed structure will operate with 14 FTE Personal Advisor posts. The structure going forward will also hold 6 FTE Agency PA posts for a period of around 12 months.
- 8.20. The Fostering Team will see a slight reorganisation of how services are delivered which will be aligned to three areas; Fostering Assessment and Recruitment Team, Fostering Supervision and Support and Connected/Kinship & Support. Fostering will also see the introduction of 2 FTE Fostering Receiving Officer posts which will be filled with apprentices.
- 8.21. The current structure comprises of 6.6 FTE Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) posts, the new structure will see 9 FTE posts which will provide 2.4 FTE Vacancies.
- 8.22. The proposed structure sees the evolvement of the Participation Team. Currently the Participation Lead is a temporary post. This will be made permanent with the current post holder assimilating into this role permanently. This will vacate the 1 FTE post of Participation Officer within the current Structure, with growth of an additional 1 FTE Participation Officer post, 1 FTE Early Help Participation posts (Grade F) and 1FTE Business Support Apprentice post.
- 8.23. Within the Academy, the proposed structure features one Team comprising of a Team Manager (Grade K) and 4FTE Social Worker posts (Grade H). The Frontline Consultant Social Worker posts are due to cease on 31st August 2024, following which the Structure, subject to funding, will see the expansion of the academy by 1 additional Team structured identically.
- 8.24. Due to demand and workload, it the Director of Children's Services feels it necessary to increase the role of the LADO by 0.5 FTE. This will provide a vacancy to recruit permanently to.
- 8.25. The Quality and Performance Manager will be retitled Information Analyst with the grade and work remaining like for like.
- 8.26. The Sefton Safeguarding Partnership Team will remain unchanged. The Manager's role is currently vacant.

8.27. Currently the structure comprises of 2 FTE Practice Improvement Manager. Moving forward the proposed structure will comprise of 1 FTE Practice Improvement Manager (Grade L) who will hold responsibility for managing a team. It will also hold 1 FTE Practice Improvement Project Manager (Grade L) who will be responsible for projects. Both posts are currently filled by permanent staff, therefore both staff members will ring fenced to the two posts and a competitive process will be carried out to fill both posts if required.

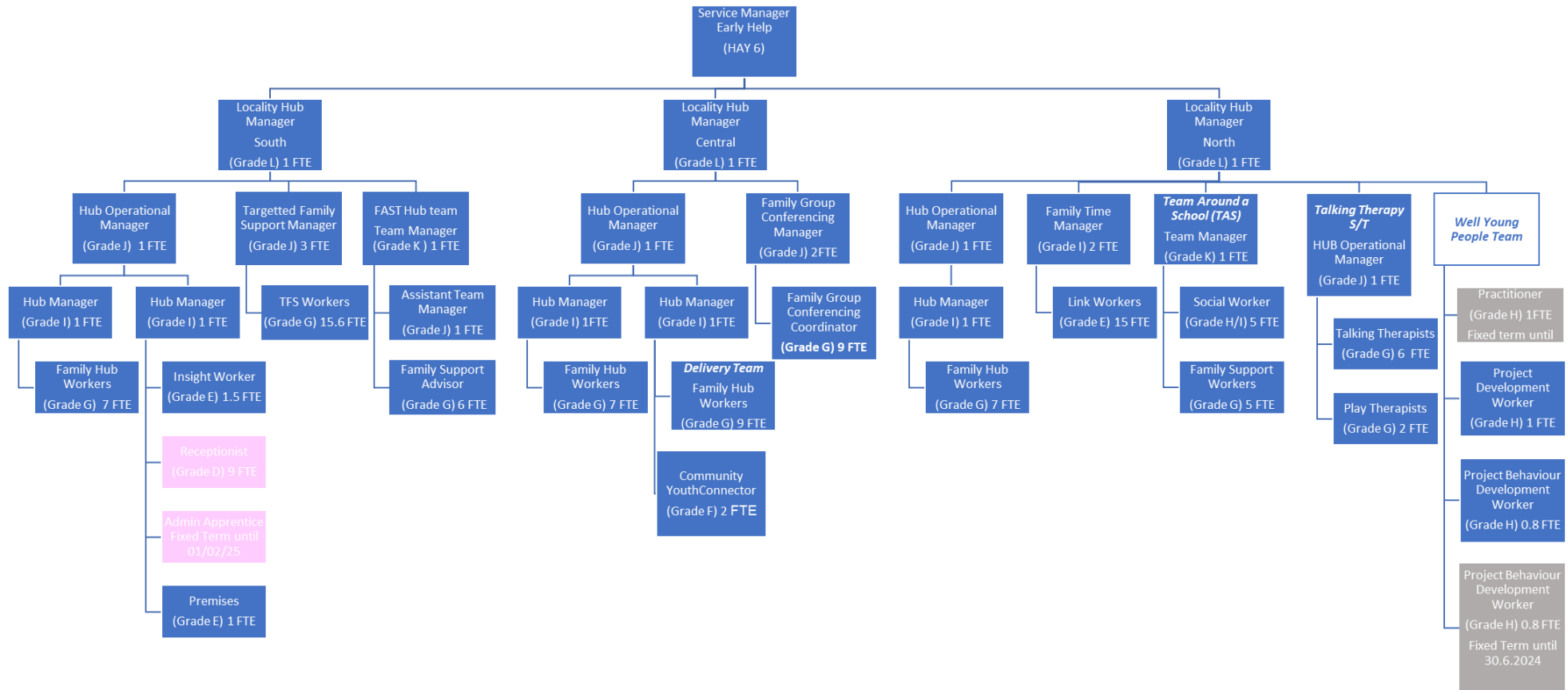
8.28. Proposed Area Structure Charts are detailed here:

8.28.1. Early Help, Support and Protect.

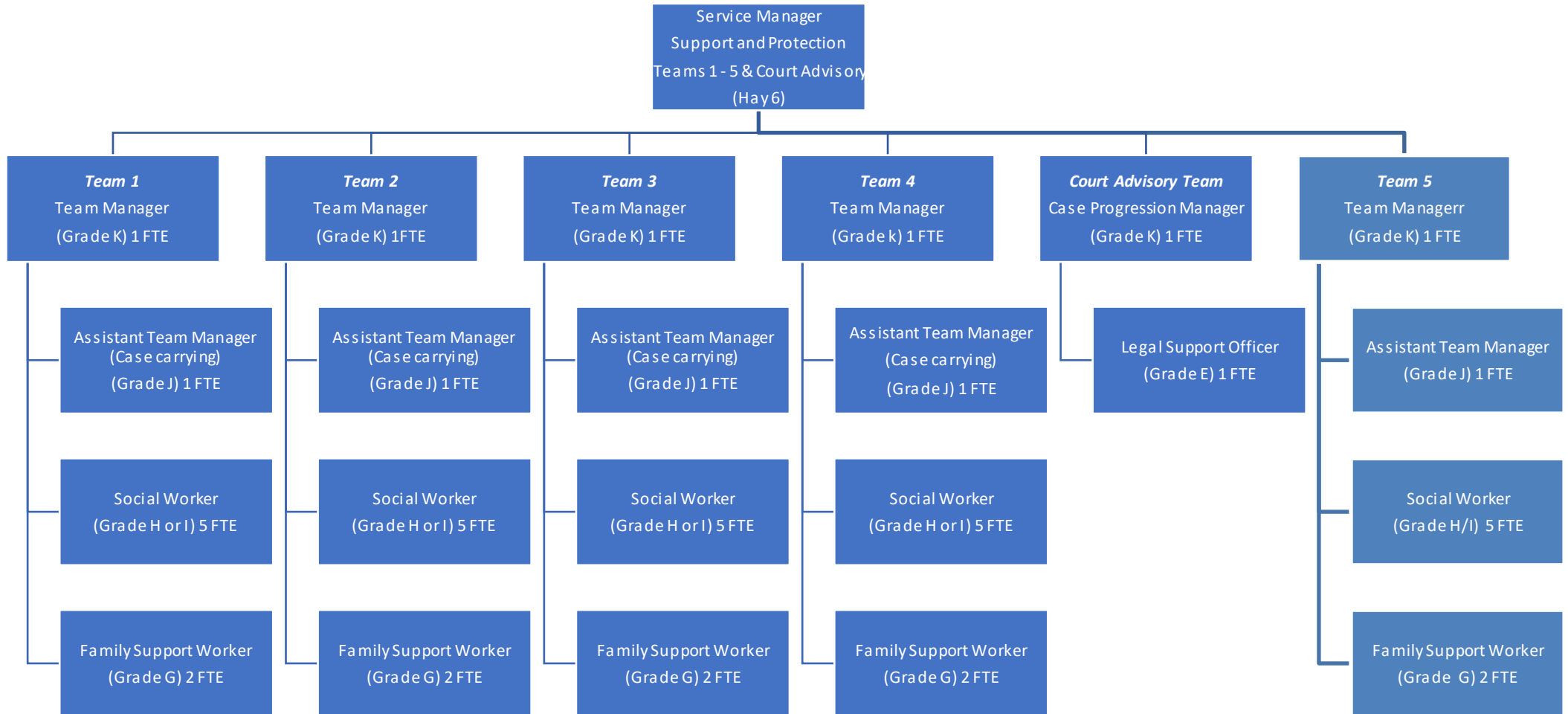
8.28.1.1. Immediate Response



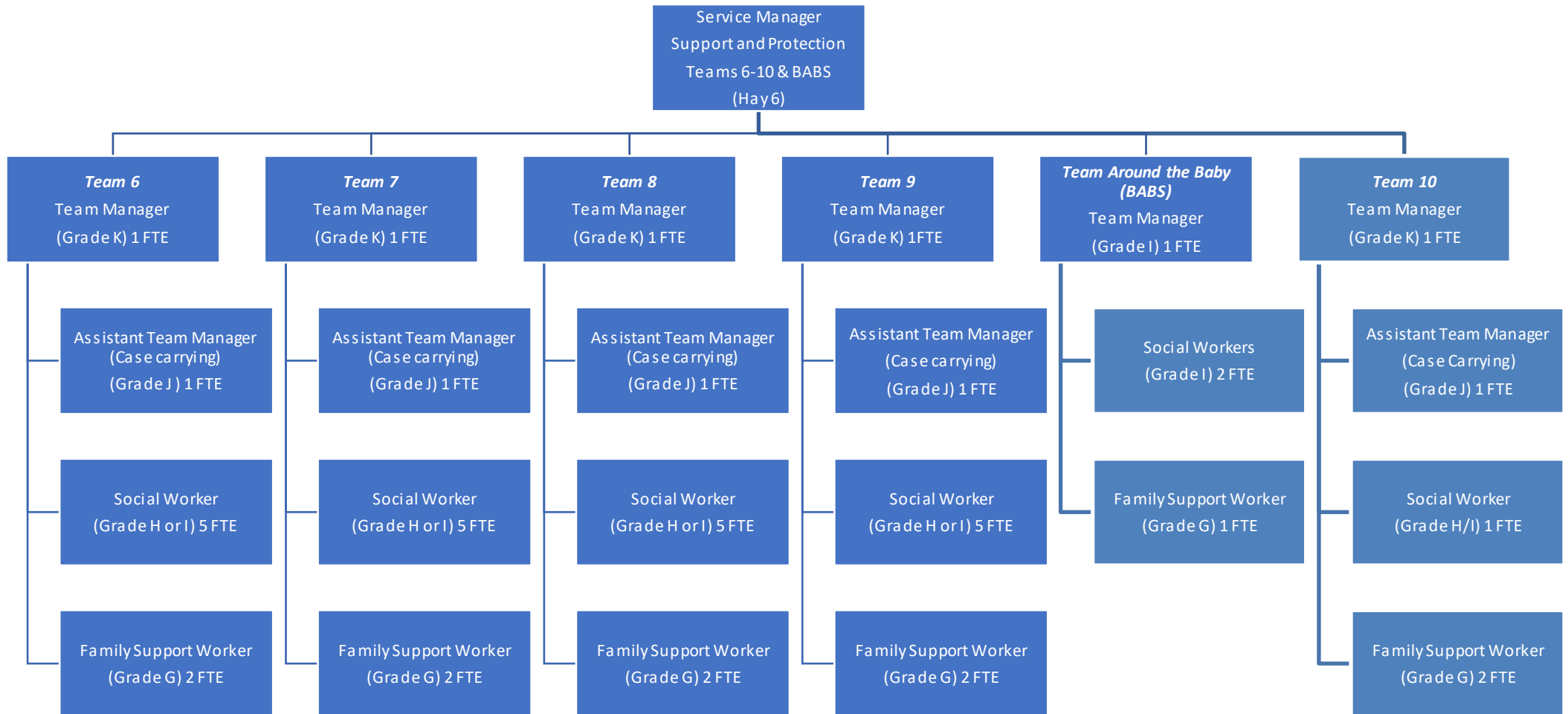
8.28.1.2. Early Help



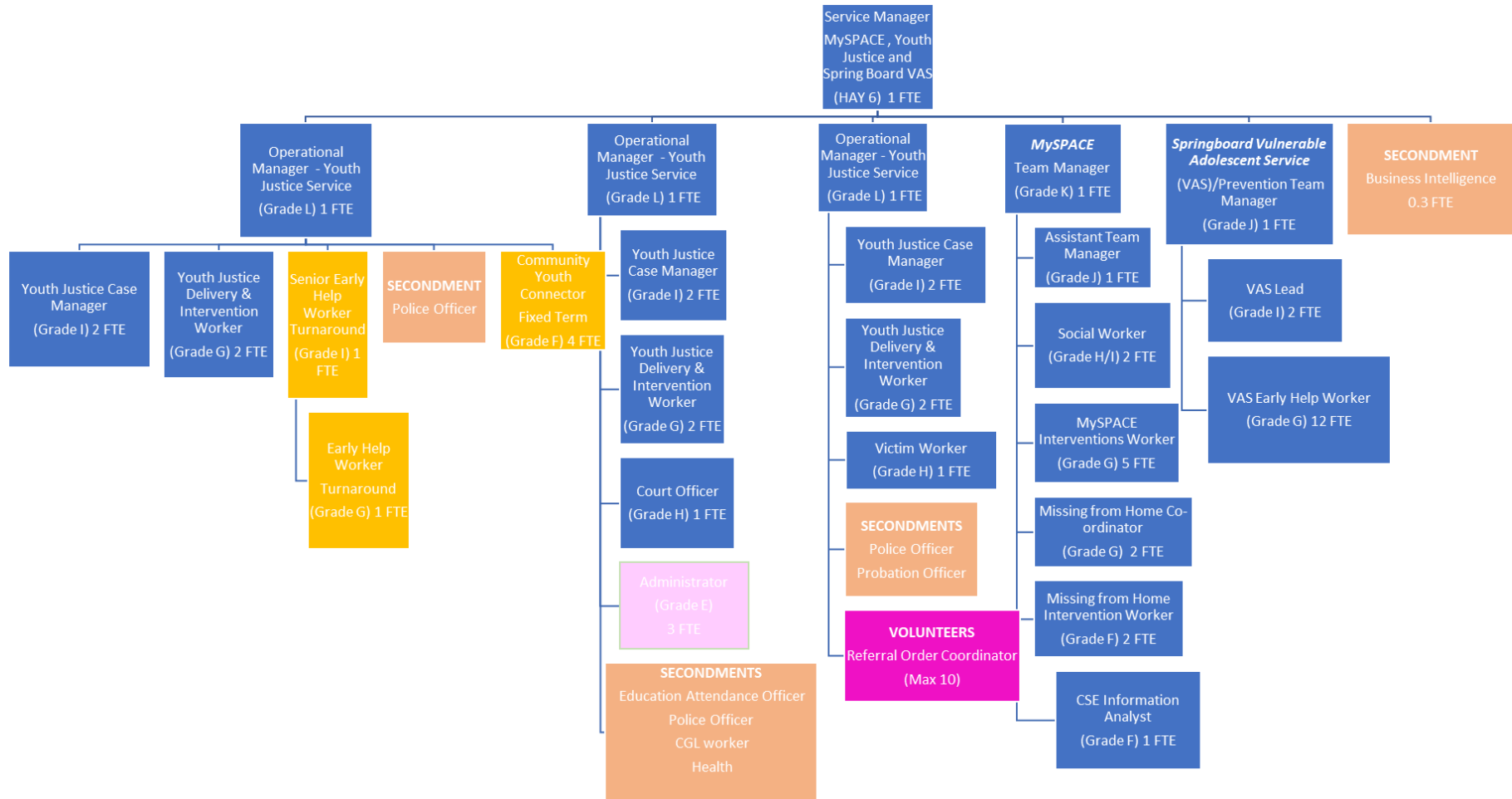
8.28.1.3. Support and Protect Teams 1 - 5 & Court Advisory



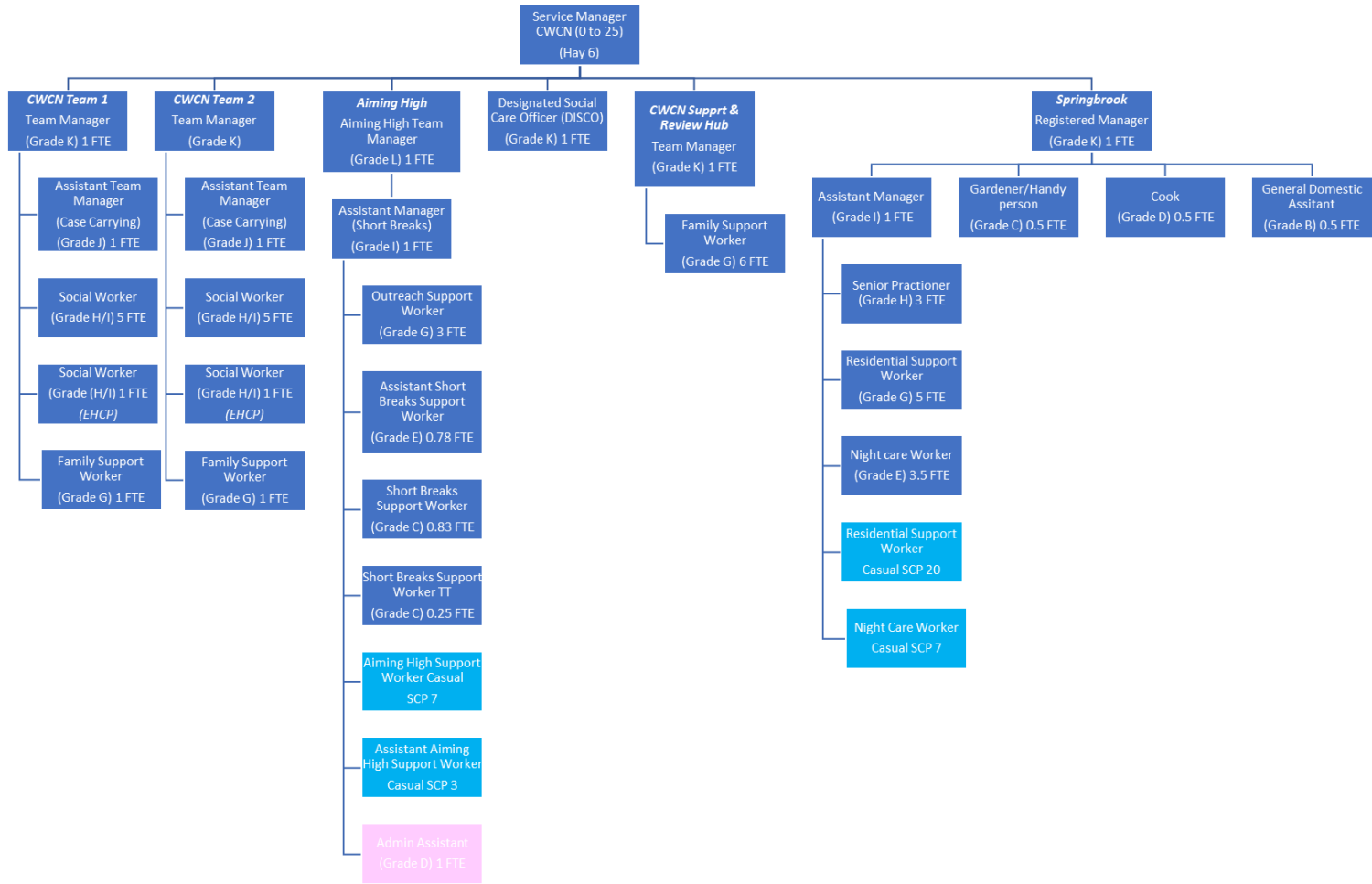
8.28.1.4. Support and Protection Teams 6-10 & BABS



8.28.1.5. Youth Justice Service, MySPACE and Springboard (Vulnerable Adolescent Service)

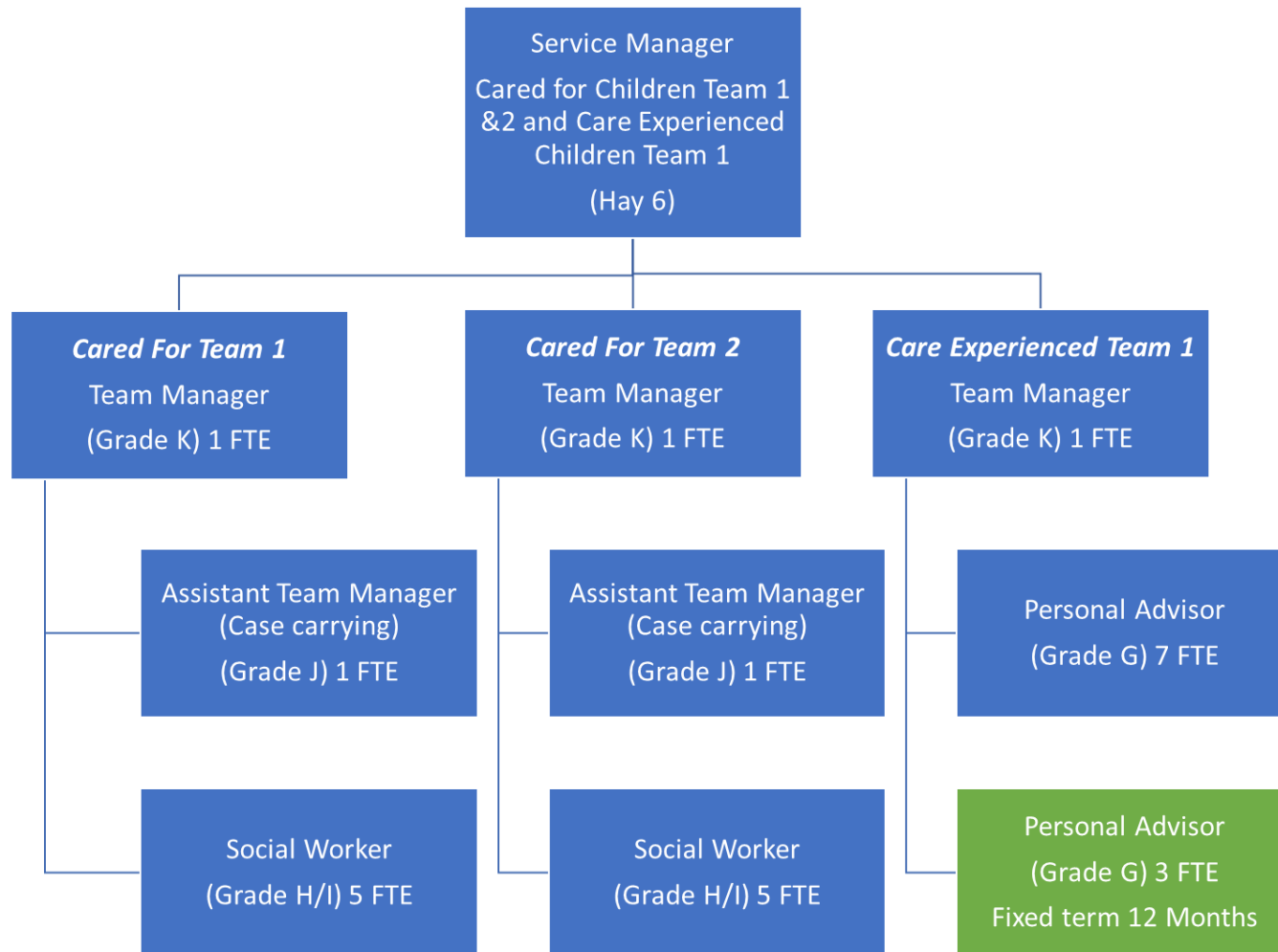


8.28.1.6. Children with Complex Needs

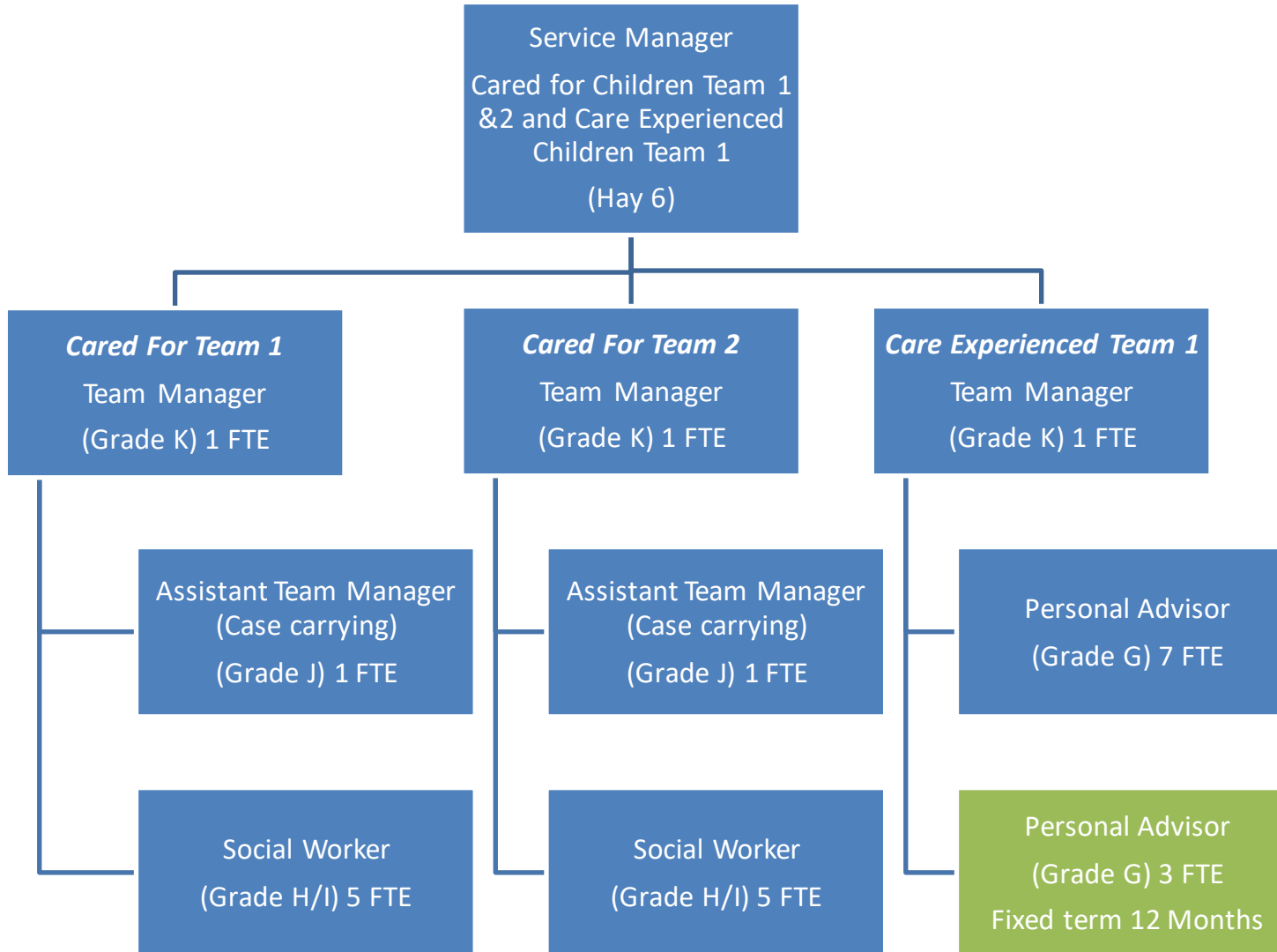


8.28.2. Cared for and Care Experienced Children

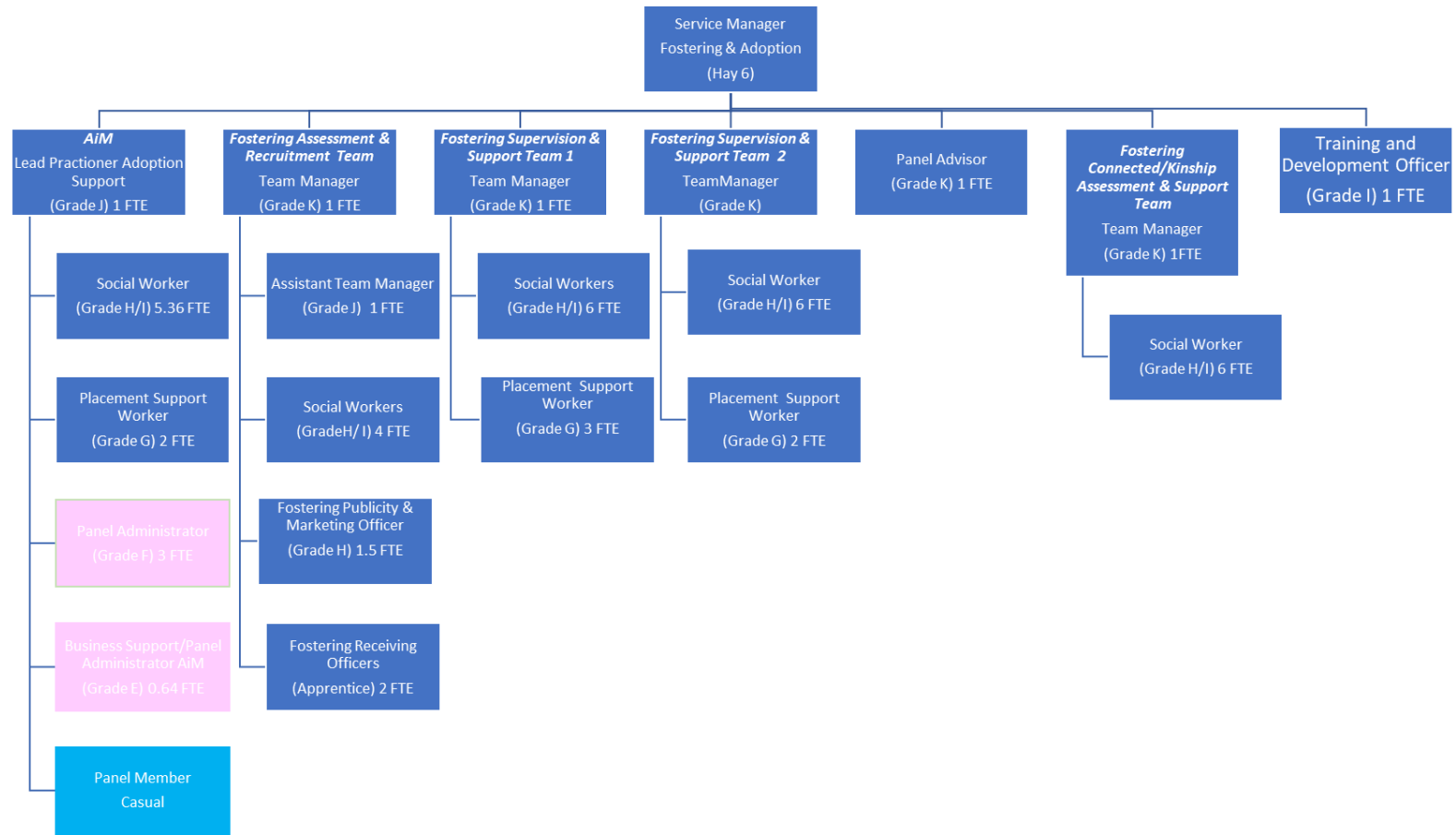
8.28.2.1. Cared for Children team 1 & 2 and Care Experienced Children Team 1



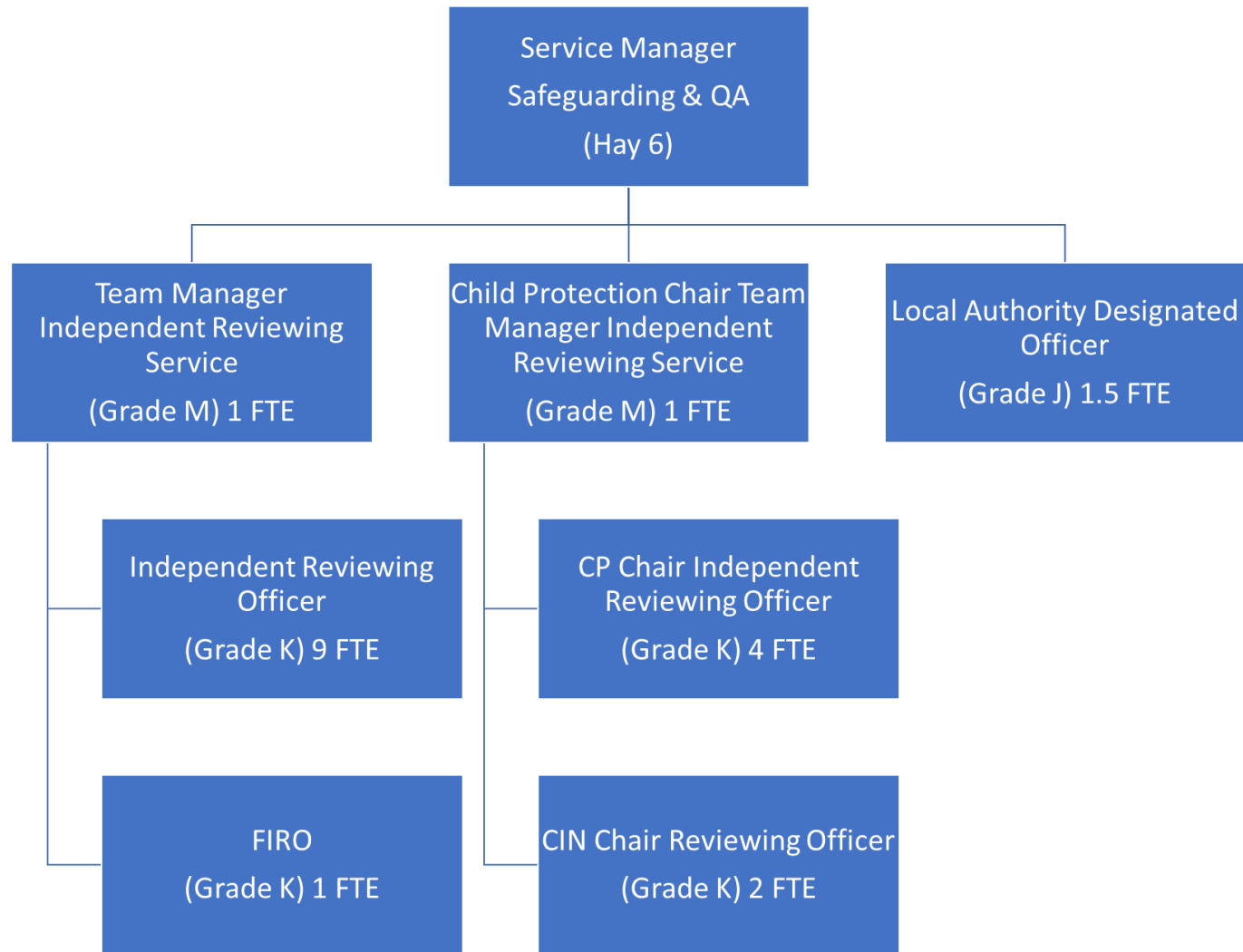
8.28.2.2. Cared for Children team 1 & 2 and Care Experienced Children Team 2



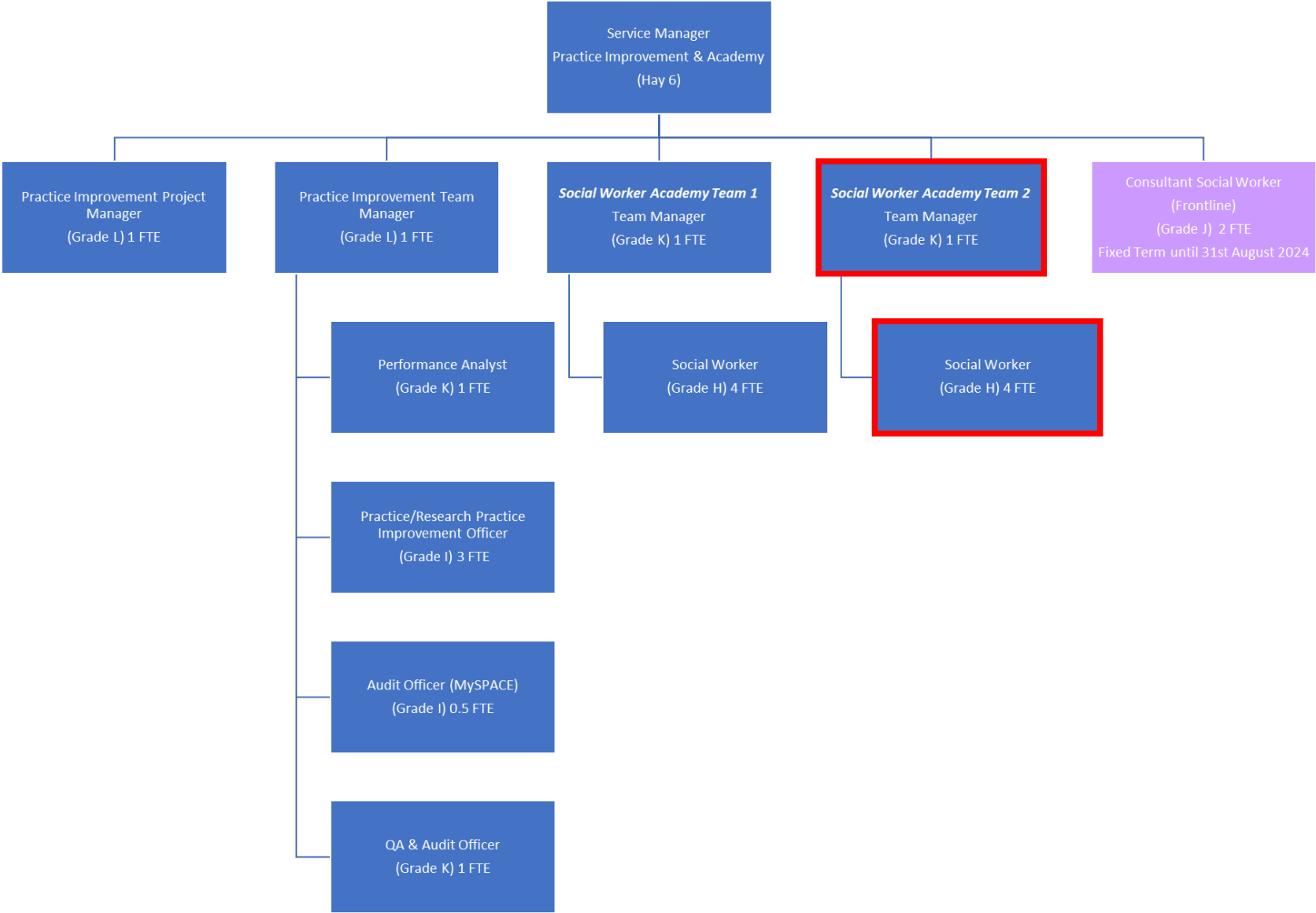
8.28.2.3. Fostering & Adoption



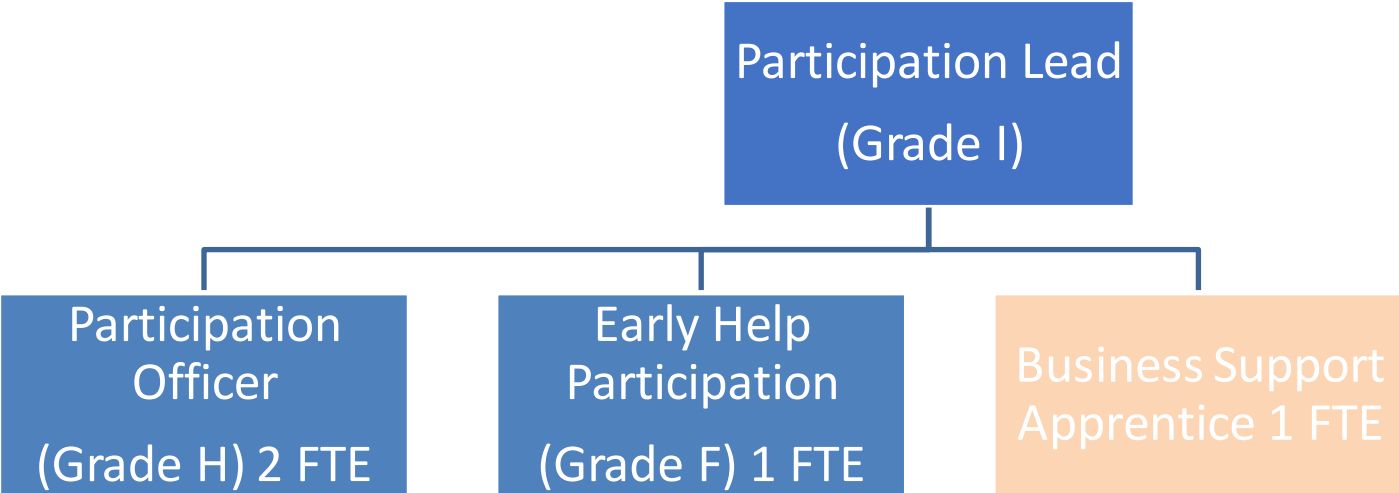
8.29. Safeguarding Review and Quality Assurance
8.29.1. Safeguarding Review and Quality Assurance



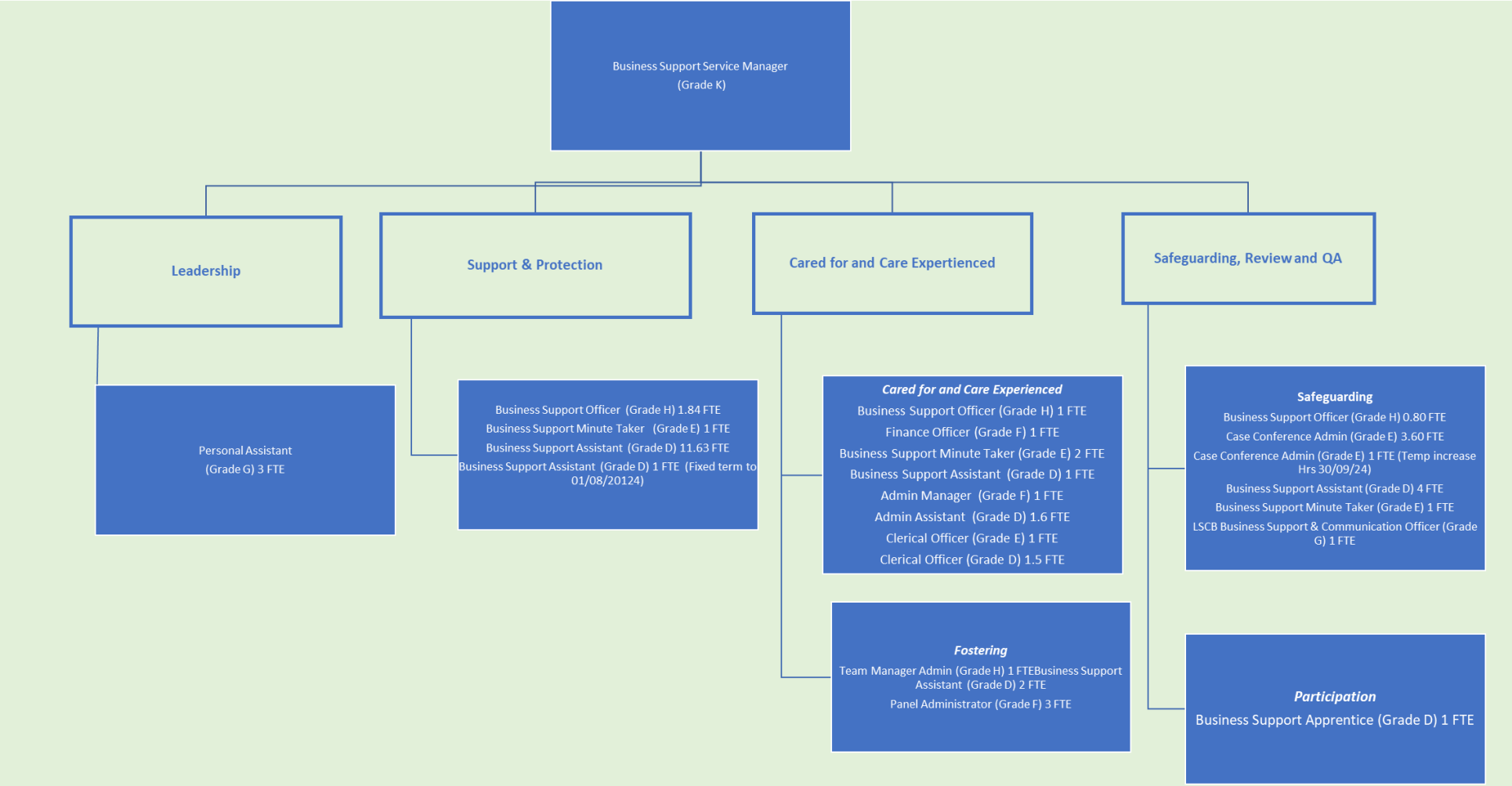
8.29.2. Practice Improvement & Academy



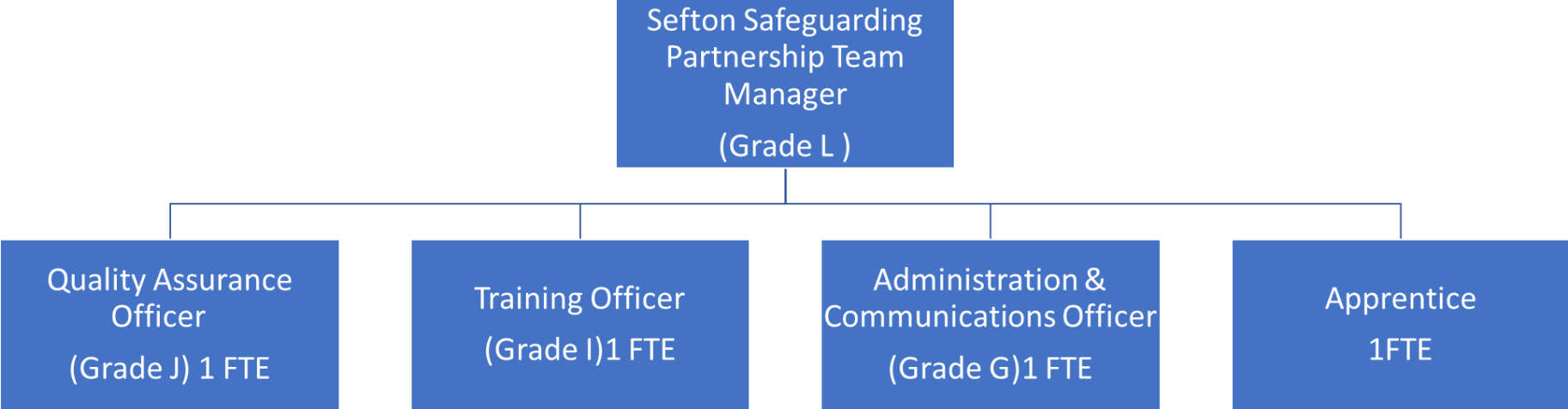
8.29.3. Participation



8.29.4. Business Support



8.29.5. Sefton Safeguarding Partnership Team



9. Financial Implications

The staffing structure proposed within this report totals £28.000m. The previous staffing structure approved by members totalled £25.550m, thus this structure represents a budget increase of £2.450m. It is proposed that this gap will be met from within the service, with a corresponding reduction in non-staffing budgets, particularly around the residential budget.

Over the last 12 months and as a result of the improvement work being undertaken, the number of children within residential homes and the costs linked to this, have reduced and this is forecast to continue. For example, during the remainder of 2024/25, 15 children currently in residential care will reach 18 years of age and will transition out of the service. This saving, and previous reductions in residential care costs, is estimated at £5.5m for the year, with a further reduction of another 20 children in 2025/26 amounting to a further £2.6m cashable budget reduction.

Whilst the residential care budget is reducing there are other budgets that have come under financial pressure over the last two years including Children with Disabilities, Personal Needs, Special Guardianship Orders and Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children. The first call on the residential saving will need to be realigned to these budgets permanently for 2024/25 and beyond.

Based on the work undertaken the cost of this realignment will be £4.7m. The service has £1.0m growth from the 2024/25 budget process thus a residual amount of £3.7m will have to be taken from the residential saving- this leaves approximately £1.8m left to support the staffing budget increase proposed.

In making this budget transfer there are a number of important issues to note as follows: -

- Any new Residential Placements that arise would need to be offset by a different child leaving Residential care, effectively net zero, or would be placed in Cherry Road.
- Those children turning 18 in residential homes will replace children who turn 21/25 in Staying Put / Independent Living /Leaving Care
- There is no further budget pressure in non-staffing budgets, for example, Personal Needs
- There is a £1m agency budget within the service -in 2024/25 the service are proposing to use this to fund a further £1.6m of temporary resource (in addition to using £0.5m of Leeds Family Values funding) that will support the Improvement Plan- if the service have any vacancies in the new structure or other more expensive external agency / consultant costs covering proposed posts, then these will have to be met from the existing budget envelope as there is no additional funding to cover them. This will need to be agreed before appointment.

The service has stabilised financially in 2023/24 as a result of a more stable workforce and following the principle of children remaining at home, with the overspend arising mainly from cost incurred in the early part of the year. However, this substantial transfer between budgets for 2024/25, requires informed decision making on staff recruitment and robust financial management and control across the service supported by the finance business partner model as it is predicated as stated on no cost increases in non-staffing budgets following re-alignment and no additional residential costs. This key principle and proposed approach is based on current

performance information and forecast information signed off by the Service and will need to be delivered.

After applying this budget transfer, a residual gap of £0.650m exists and it is forecast that following the number of children being placed in residential homes reducing due to the transitions, a further number will also move from residential homes resulting in further savings to meet this gap and thus this staffing proposal can be afforded but again this will require robust budget management and monitoring.

In addition, for 2024/25, an exercise will need to be undertaken to determine if any staffing cost pressure exists for the period 1 April to when this structure is implemented - this will be done as part of early year monitoring and reported to Members together with a planned funding solution from within the existing approved budget.