

London Borough of Sutton



Children, Young People and Learning Directorate Executive Head of Education and Early Intervention: Colin Stewart

My Ref: CS/ HT/120
email: colin.stewart@sutton.gov.uk

Telephone: 020 8770 5605
Fax: 020 8409 7082

Colin Stewart
Executive Head of Education and Early Intervention
The Grove
Carshalton
Surrey SM5 3AL

To Whom It May Concern:

Re: Marilyn Smyth

I have worked with Marilyn Smyth in both my current and previous Local Authorities on a large number of HR related investigations covering a range of different aspects of children's services and across a range of processes from disciplinary matters to grievances and sickness hearings

On every case, Marilyn's work is characterised by an impressive depth of knowledge in all aspects of HR practice and procedures, she is always quick to assimilate local policy to legislative frameworks and requirements and uses this to produce reports which are relevant, clear and accurate.

In my previous authority Marilyn made a large contribution to addressing a backlog of cases characterised by drift, inappropriate delays and limited pace of delivery. Under her control they were quickly transformed into investigations which were timely, coherent and well balanced in both depth and range. Additionally, her charges were always reasonable and her charging integrity evident. The Council had undertaken a costs v benefits exercise over a 6 month period, with the result that it was 3.8 times cheaper to have Marilyn do the investigations involving suspensions, than to have them done in-house (due to the speed with which the case was finalised and the employee no longer being paid whilst suspended). Because Marilyn is a practising Tribunal Member and considers the Tribunal view within her report-writing, the potential savings in having her investigate a case cannot be over-stated.

Her written reports are exemplary. The summary reports are always succinct, yet sharp and well referenced to relevant sections within the evidence base. In every case that evidence base was comprehensive, thorough and well organised.

In addition to her knowledge and undoubted ability in the delivery of HR case investigations, Marilyn also demonstrates a genuine ability to analyse a case accurately, focus in on the relevant key issues for exploration and her ability to both synthesise information as well as responding to it, demonstrating an exceptional degree of flexibility and adaptability in the process.

I would willingly endorse and recommend Marilyn Smyth for investigation work of this nature. In my experience her contributions are always instrumental in addressing the issues and in providing any hearing officer with well balanced, well structured reports which are critical to work of this nature. In my view her work is exemplary, consistently so, and I am happy to provide this testimonial as an endorsement of that work.

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Colin Stewart". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Colin Stewart
Executive Head of Education and Early Intervention

Strategic Director
Tolis Vouyioukas

Chief Executive
Niall Bolger