



## Northamptonshire Children's Trust

### Job description questionnaire

<b>Job title:</b>	<b>Strategic Manager - Safeguarding</b>	<b>Service area:</b>	<b>Prevention and Safeguarding</b>
<b>Reports to:</b>	<b>Assistant Director Safeguarding and Children's Services</b>	<b>Section:</b>	<b>Safeguarding and Children's Services</b>
<b>Job reference number:</b>	<b>3073</b>	<b>Location:</b>	<b>Northamptonshire</b>
<b>Date:</b>	January 2025	<b>Job holder's name:</b>	

### 1. Purpose of job

The post will have management responsibility and strategic leadership for the effective delivery of the statutory functions for safeguarding and supporting children and families to significantly improve outcomes.

To lead and develop services in line with Trust/Council's agency objectives and the national agenda through service leadership and management.

### 2. Job context

Give a short overview of the job context and the key objectives of the part of the organisation where the job is placed.

Reporting to Assistant Director, Safeguarding and Children's Services, as the lead officer for children in need, this role is responsible for managing multiple service areas within an overall child in need portfolio.

The post holder will provide professional management and critical challenge and support ensuring that statutory and regulatory requirements are met in relation to safeguarding children and in relation to the assessment, review, and care planning for children in need and children in care. They will continually drive practice improvements to ensure good practice is embedded across the service.

All services which report to this post are governed by statutory regulation and guidance.

The post impacts on a number of national indicators relating to safeguarding children and the local authority's responsibilities as corporate parent for looked after children; it is instrumental in driving up performance improvement and ensuring the best possible outcomes for children and young people through effective social work practice, supervision, management and policy.

The post holder is responsible for ensuring effective use of resources allocated to the service.

### 3. Main accountabilities

List, in order of importance, the main accountabilities which describe key end result areas of the job. Each should contain an action, what is to be achieved or purpose of the action and what the end result will be. **There should be at least 6 but no more than 9.**

1. Be fully responsible for all aspects of service delivery and performance management for the allocated group of services through agreed and clearly defined outcomes, key objectives and setting short, medium, and long-term business, performance and quality targets. This will include:
  - *Asset and resource management* - accountability for all financial outcomes in relation to the allocated budget
  - *People* – by engendering respect for those we work with and for, add value to the 'talent' of the organisation through people development and management of their performance.
  - *Risk* – ensure the development and management of risk and business continuity strategies within the allocated group of services/strategic priorities.
2. To lead the service area preparation and action planning for OFSTED inspection outcomes, including DFE requirements.
3. To be responsible for ensuring that services are effectively targeted at children in need of protection and children who are looked after. To contribute to the commissioning of relevant services.

To manage admissions of children received into care in line with statutory requirements and good practice.

4. To ensure the management of complaints comply with statutory and local requirements.

5. To be responsible for managing change in response to the Government's Agenda for Social Care. Ensuring the service is fit for purpose and is supportive of a seamless provision of services. Leading in areas of service development in response to national and local policy.
6. To proactively contribute to the work of the Safeguarding Board by ensuring active management participation at task and finish groups and Safeguarding Board Sub Committees.
7. Being ambitious for Northamptonshire, develop and constantly improve service delivery strategies and approaches to ensure they are highly customer-orientated, making paramount the direct views of service users, and are reflective of agreed agency priorities. Establish and develop a culture that delivers results through continual improvement and organisational development, continually checking customers' views and acting on them.
8. Establish and develop a positive climate for direct delivery and managing services in a commissioned and partnership-working environment. Learn and gain from shared experiences to be harnessed and incorporated into service delivery strategies and ways of working through networked governance of public, private and voluntary sectors and by communication and partnership working.
9. Develop and build positive reputation for Northamptonshire Children's Trust by:
  - acting on decisions made.
  - the use of innovation and managerial imagination;
  - demonstrating community leadership through building partnerships;
  - ensuring that all action within the allocated group of services accords with relevant Trust/Council's Policies and relevant Codes of Practice in compliance with legal, health and safety, financial and environmental requirements and
  - supporting the Trust's/County Council's emergency planning, critical incident, and service response arrangements through participation in out-of hours call out and management cover.
10. To participate in on-call duties on a rota basis.

#### 4. Organisation structure

(a) Please provide an organisation chart on a separate document to this questionnaire showing this job, its supervisor, colleagues who also report to the same supervisor and the jobs managed by the postholder, giving full job titles and job reference numbers. **Please do not indicate grades.**

See appropriate chart

(b) Please provide the job reference numbers and job titles of any posts which are line managed by the postholder and briefly describe the major responsibilities for each.

Service Managers responsible for the leadership and management of Safeguarding Teams  
Managers managing social work teams. (not including innovate teams x 3)

(c) Please provide the job reference number and job title of the line manager's post and briefly describe the key differences between this job and the line manager's role. Do not simply list the responsibilities of the line manager.

Assistant Director Safeguarding and Children's Services (2893)

This line manager has much wider strategic responsibility for the leadership and development of specialist services to children and for safeguarding across the council. It also has much wider operational responsibilities which include all children's social care services.

## 5. Knowledge, experience and training

What is the minimum knowledge/training/experience needed for the effective performance of the job? (This is not about the postholder's own experience/ qualifications but the minimum requirements for performance of the job). It may help if you think about this as if you were recruiting to the post - what you would require from applicants. Please do not indicate how many years of experience are required.

- Appropriate professional qualification e.g. DiPSW,CQSW,CSS, Degree
- SWE Registration
- Knowledge of Statutory responsibilities in children's social care, including that of a regulated setting under national minimum standards
- Extensive experience of managing at a senior level in a social care or related setting
- Experience in the strategic development of services in a social care or related setting
- Detailed knowledge and understanding of the government's agenda for improving children's services
- The ability to forge, maintain and develop positive working relationships with stakeholders
- The ability and willingness to participate in an out of hours rota ☐
- Excellent interpersonal and written communication skills:
- INTERPERSONAL: Sufficient to impart understanding and gain acceptance of new concepts and proposals
- WRITTEN: the preparation of complex reports, guidance, presentations, and correspondence to stakeholders
- Able to provide a service to a diverse range of service users, partner organisations, staff etc to promote good relations and equality
- Experience of handling conflict and managing sensitive issues to achieve positive outcomes
- Experience of motivating and developing others
- Ability to establish and design services via commissioning and partnership work
- Understanding the importance of and commitment to incorporating the public, private and voluntary sectors in service delivery
- Ability to give clear direction and role model Northamptonshire Children's Trust Leadership Competencies & Commitments
- Experience of working extensively with a diverse range of community groups
- Experience of adapting services in response to customer needs / feedback
- Ability to shape services to address corporate priorities and customer needs and outside the council area as required
- Experience of effectively managing the performance of individuals, teams, and services through effective performance management systems

- Ability to creatively manage finance and other resources to deliver priorities efficiently
- Ability to establish and develop monitoring systems for the continuous development of people and services
- Ability to assess risk whilst effectively developing and managing services / strategic priorities
- Ability to work outside normal office hours
- Ability and willingness to travel both inside and outside of Northamptonshire

## 6. Supervision and work planning

(a) How does work get allocated in this job, i.e. what is the pattern of the work cycle (daily, weekly, monthly, annual, etc).

The workload reflects the strategic priorities set within the business planning cycle, which includes budget setting and development/delivery of a service plan. The post holder will be responsible for developing this plan and ensuring that it is aligned to all other relevant strategic plans.

The post holder will be responsible for assessing the capacity required for each element of the service, being mindful of statutory and local changes which impact on demand and making adjustments to how the service works accordingly. They must also ensure that there is capacity within the service to meet statutory timescales for response within the context of peaks and troughs in demand.

There will therefore be an annual business cycle within which the production of budget proposals, annual reports and the service plan must be produced. Performance data must be produced monthly and quarterly, analysed appropriately for a range of audiences. Staff must be formally supervised on a minimum of monthly and the post holder will also be required to be available for advice and consultation in the intervening period.

(b) How regular is supervision and broadly what issues does it cover?

Supervision of this post holder takes place monthly within the framework of the Trusts performance appraisal and personal development system. Objectives are set within that process and progress against those objectives is reviewed in 1:1 meetings. The demands of the role frequently impact personally and therefore personal reflection and support are part of the supervision process. The post requires someone who is self-motivated and can deliver within the parameters of strategic direction in supervision. However, detailed analysis of wicked issues which require support at a higher level will also feature as will the post holder's contribution to wider strategic and operational issues.

(c) Please give two examples of the sort of priorities which the postholder is able to set themselves.

The post holder is able to make independent decisions with regard to:-

- How the team delivers its operational responsibilities, including allocation of all work and prioritising within the parameters set within the strategic plan and performance management framework

- Delegation of duties to other team members, within parameters set by the skills and qualifications required for the role and statutory parameters for delegated authority of certain decisions

(d) Please describe the procedures or systems the job has to work within and how this affects the level of discretion the postholder is given. Or you could give two examples of procedures or systems they have to work within.

OFSTED national standards for children's services

Child protection system as determined by the Local Safeguarding Children's Board  
The Council's business and Service Plan planning cycle and will work to the council's standing orders

(e) Describe how the postholder controls the work of people they manage in their team if applicable, i.e. weekly/monthly meetings, or setting tasks on a daily basis.

The post holder will conduct management meetings at least monthly and more likely to be of greater frequency. They will be responsible for putting systems and processes in place which enable others to manage the workload on a weekly and daily basis and will have oversight of that workload through weekly reports and where necessary daily on a 'need to know' basis.

They will provide formal supervision to all direct reports on a monthly basis and conduct appraisal and performance review twice yearly.

The service plan will set the operational objectives for the service which will be reflected in the performance objectives for direct reports and all staff within the service within the council's PADP process.

(f) Does the postholder co-ordinate sub-functions of the service or service areas or set priorities for them? If so please give details and say why the co-ordination role is needed.

Yes, the postholder has substantial leadership responsibility for the children in need service.

## **7. Communication/contacts**

Please detail the nature of the interpersonal skills the postholder has to use. Give two examples of the nature of interpersonal skills used. (Do not just list the people the postholder has to come into contact with).

- The post holder will be responsible for engaging a wide range of internal and external partners in ensuring that they understand their responsibilities for children in need. This includes liaising with elected members on sensitive case matters, engaging senior officers in adults and children's services partnerships to challenge performance. They may also be responsible for liaising with the regulators, Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission on particular children in need matters, and also the Department for Education and Department of

Health. They will be responsible for engaging with regional and national networks relating to their area of responsibility.

- They have a significant line and team management responsibility for performance and service improvement through behavioural change.

## **8 Problems encountered**

- (a) Please give two examples of the problems encountered in this job and how they might arise. For the examples given, detail the steps you would expect the postholder to take to find the solution to the problem.

Problems will arise in two main areas:

- Developing policy and practice in response to a rapidly changing national and local landscape to ensure that the council meets its statutory duties to safeguard children and vulnerable adults for example the impact of changes in welfare benefits on families.
- Ensuring critical issues arising from practice are identified through a rigorous system of audit and effective operational actions plans are put in place that can demonstrate practice improvement as part of the OFSTED improvement plan.

- (b) How does the postholder decide at which point they need to refer a problem on?

Inherent in the role is a level of expertise and experience which enables the post holder to know what needs to be referred to the next line of management. The need for additional resources would be one such example but first they would have to evidence that they are not able to mobilise resources within their service area.

## **9. Making decisions**

Please give two examples to show the 'thinking challenge' in the job, i.e. is there a set process to resolve the problem, does the postholder choose a solution based on their past experience or does the postholder have to seek more information to determine the extent of the problem, or use creative thinking to develop new concepts.

## **10. Freedom to act**

- (a) Please give two examples to show areas that the postholder has discretion over.

This is a third tier post within a county council directorate with freedom to act in accordance with delegated authority. They will have delegated authority to suspend, to discipline and to dismiss.

The post holder will also have discretion to deploy resources within their service to meet peaks and troughs in demand. They will be expected to plan and manage the

workload for the service accordingly, to deploy their staff to greatest efficiency and effectiveness and to identify both short and long term solutions to capacity issues.

- (b) What kind of systems, procedures or 'rules' are set around the job which prevent the postholder having total discretion as to how to undertake the job.

The rules are predominantly set around meeting statutory requirements and ensuring that safeguarding practices and practice in relation to looked after children are developed and continually evaluated and improved. The post holder therefore has complete freedom to organise the services within the usual terms and conditions for Trust employees and within the statutory, policy and procedural requirements for the various functions within the service.

The post holder will also lead practice on the basis that their services will identify performance deficits which need to be addressed. They will be required to keep abreast of national developments and best practice elsewhere and to incorporate these into service planning and delivery.

## 11. Area and type of impact

There are two ways of looking at the type of impact the job has upon the council.

- **The first is where the jobs impact can be expressed in financial terms** (annual income or expenditure). If you think the job falls in this category complete section a.
- **The second is where there is no relevant financial dimension to the job.** If you think the job falls under this category, please complete the following section b.

Please note that you must complete either **a) or b)**. Please complete section **(c)** for all jobs.

(a) Which parts of the organisation are most clearly influenced by the job's objectives? Please indicate current year income, expenditure and capital budget, if appropriate, and state the impact on each figure given, i.e. is there a controlling impact; or partnership/ joint accountability for the area (if so with which other jobs). Or is the impact indirect because the job is advisory and influences decisions taken in the area of impact?

The post is directly responsible for a budget of c£10m need to check this with finance?

However, the role impacts on the whole of the budget for children's social care services of £54m need to check this? due to the direct connection of the service to costs for children in care; delays in care planning add significantly to costs for looked after children and decisions about placements are crucial in ensuring that children's needs are met within a value for money framework.

or



(b) What kind of support services are delivered by the job - does it involve processing information, interpretation/analysis of information, supervision of others, or acting in an advisory/specialist capacity?

**and**

(c) Is there any statistical information that can add to the understanding of the job, i.e. it is useful to know whether a Payroll Officer deals with 50 or 50,000 payslips and whether they pay people weekly and/or monthly. Figures for their own sake are no help, but those directly relevant to the purpose of job are useful. e.g. providing a daily home care service to ten clients.

## 12. Physical effort and/or strain

Describe whether the job requires physical effort and/or strain more than is normally experienced in a routine office environment, i.e. lifting heavy objects, how heavy are the objects, how are they carried, for how long and how often would this happen?

None

## 13. Working environment

Does the job require working outdoors, or being exposed to objectionable, uncomfortable or unfavourable working conditions and is the postholder able to predict or plan for the elements faced?

Flexible working and office based with the ability to visit multiple sites within the county and across borders.

## 14. Change statement

Please briefly outline why the job is presented for job evaluation. For jobs that have changed, describe the **major** differences between the old and new job descriptions.

<b>Agreed by:</b>	<b>Print name:</b>
<b>Job holder(s):</b>	
<b>Completed by:</b>	<b>Print name:</b>
	<b>Signed:</b>
	<b>(line manager)</b> <b>Date:</b>
<b>Approved by:</b>	<b>Print name:</b>
	<b>Signed:</b>
	<b>(Corporate Director or Service Head Date:</b>
	<b>)</b>