WHERE CAREERS THRIVE

When potential is unlocked, talent *thrives*

West Northamptonshire Council

Strategic Lead: Local Area Inclusion

Children's Services

Thank you for your interest in this role. Our vision at West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) is: 'to make West Northants a great place to live, work, visit and thrive'.

We truly stand by this and work hard every day to make this a reality, and at WNC it's about our people. People who thrive with ambition, bring new ideas, demand better ways of working, care about every detail, and who never shy away from a challenge.

Our culture is a gateway for new experiences. A place to forge new opportunities. To empower you in your career and unite you with like-minded people. When potential is unlocked, talent thrives.

West Northamptonshire Council

Purpose and impact:

The Strategic Lead: Local Area Inclusion will provide strategic leadership for the development, mobilisation, implementation and continuous improvement of an integrated Local Area Inclusion model across the 0-25 age range. The role will bring together the Local Inclusion Support Offer and the Experts at Hand model as one coherent, accessible and sustainable graduated offer, enabling children and young people with SEND to receive the right support, in the right place, at the right time.

The postholder will ensure that universal, targeted, targeted plus and specialist support operate as a single continuum, with clear locality arrangements, access routes, pathways, thresholds, response standards and accountabilities. The role will strengthen early identification and intervention, build the confidence and capacity of education settings, reduce duplication and avoidable escalation, and improve equity, inclusion and outcomes for children and young people.

Working across education, health, social care, Family Help, Family Hubs, the Integrated Care Board, providers, early years settings, schools, further education settings, parent carer representatives and the voluntary and community sector, the postholder will provide visible system leadership and secure shared ownership of local area inclusion.

Accountable to:

This role is accountable to the Service Director of SEND and Inclusion within Children's Services at West Northamptonshire Council.

Responsibilities:

A. Strategic leadership and integrated system reform

- Lead the design, development, implementation and evaluation of the Local Inclusion Support Offer and Experts at Hand model as one integrated Local Area Inclusion operating model.
- Translate the SEND and Inclusion Strategy and wider local reform priorities into clear delivery plans, milestones, benefits, dependencies, risks, service standards and measurable outcomes.
- Ensure alignment with the Local SEND Reform Plan, SEND Sufficiency Strategy, Family Help, Family Hubs, Best Start in Life, Youth Strategy and wider SEND and alternative provision improvement activity.
- Provide visible, credible and values-led leadership across the local area partnership, promoting inclusion, professional curiosity, evidence-informed practice and shared accountability.
- Provide expert strategic advice and assurance to senior leaders, elected members, partnership boards and governance forums on performance, demand, workforce, resources, risk and impact.

B. Integrated offer, pathways and operating model

- Develop and maintain a clearly described continuum of universal, targeted, targeted plus and specialist support across early years, school age and post-16 phases.
- Integrate ordinarily available provision, inclusive practice standards, SEND Ranges, the graduated response, locality support and specialist advice within clear pathways that settings and families can understand and use.
- Co-design and implement equitable access routes and front-door arrangements, including access criteria, triage, professional decision-making, thresholds, response standards and support while waiting.

- Ensure clear interfaces between Local Area Inclusion, the Experts at Hand Model, statutory EHC processes, Family Help, Family Hubs, health pathways, social care and other specialist services.
- Lead development of locality-based and team-around-locality arrangements and transition standards from early years through to adulthood.
- Continuously review the integrated model to remove duplication, address gaps, improve timeliness and support successful inclusion in local settings.

C. Leadership of inclusion and specialist services

- Line manage the Service Managers of the following services: SEND Specialist Teachers, IIST, EPS and Post-16 Inclusion Officer, setting clear priorities, objectives and delivery expectations.
- Provide effective supervision, professional challenge and support, ensuring robust performance management, quality assurance, professional development and staff wellbeing arrangements.
- Ensure services have clear remits and complementary roles within the integrated model, with shared ways of working and no unnecessary duplication.
- Maintain continuity, quality and compliance of statutory and specialist functions while reshaping how advice, consultation, intervention and capacity-building support are accessed and delivered.
- Lead workforce planning, deployment, workload and caseload oversight, succession planning and prioritisation to align capacity with locality and phase need.
- Promote consistent standards across localities while enabling proportionate flexibility in response to local context, demand and risk.

D. Partnership, co-production and communication

- Lead multi-agency partnership activity across education, health, social care and the voluntary and community sector to develop and embed the integrated Local Area Inclusion model.
- Build trusted relationships with early years providers, schools, academies, multi-academy trusts, colleges, health providers, social care, Family Hubs, Family Help and parent carer representatives.
- Work with therapy and clinical pathway leads to strengthen multidisciplinary advice, consultation and intervention.
- Embed meaningful co-production with children, young people and families throughout design, communication, implementation, review and improvement.
- Ensure the offer, pathways, access arrangements, expectations and response standards are transparent and communicated in accessible formats.
- Represent the local authority and SEND Partnership at strategic boards, regional forums and relevant national reform activity.

E. Programme governance and delivery

- Lead relevant multi-agency workstreams, chairing or co-chairing meetings and maintaining clear actions, owners, deadlines and escalation routes.
- Maintain delivery grip through robust programme plans, risk and issue management, dependency tracking, benefits realisation and regular reporting through the SEND and Inclusion Strategy governance cycle.
- Develop shared accountability arrangements across partners and ensure decisions are supported by clear evidence, options and recommendations.
- Identify and escalate strategic risks relating to demand, workforce, finance, statutory compliance, service continuity, partnership delivery or implementation.

F. Quality assurance, performance and impact

- Develop and maintain an integrated outcomes, performance and quality framework covering access, timeliness, equity, activity, outcomes, locality variation, family and setting experience, and impact on escalation.
- Use dashboards, audits, case sampling, peer review, service reviews, feedback and learning loops to identify strengths, risk, inconsistency and opportunities for improvement.
- Monitor the contribution of inclusion activity to attendance, exclusions, EHC needs assessment requests, placement stability and support delivered without statutory plans.
- Ensure practice is evidence-informed, legally compliant and aligned with the SEND Code of Practice, Equality Act duties, safeguarding requirements and relevant professional standards.
- Prepare clear reports, briefings and presentations for senior leadership, partnership governance, SEND and AP Board and inspection readiness activity.
- Lead corrective action where evidence indicates delay, inequity, inconsistency, poor experience or insufficient impact.

G. Commissioning, finance and resources

- Manage delegated budgets and resources effectively, ensuring value for money, transparent prioritisation and alignment with reform outcomes.
- Contribute to commissioning, service redesign, workforce planning and business cases relating to inclusion support, specialist expertise, traded and non-traded services, and partnership delivery models.
- Use demand, capacity, performance and lived-experience evidence to inform deployment and commissioning decisions.
- Identify opportunities to reduce duplication, improve productivity, strengthen prevention and increase the number of children and young people successfully included in local settings.

H. Safeguarding, equality and corporate responsibilities

- As part of the SEND and Inclusion Directorate, provide strategic leadership for safeguarding across the education and SEND system, ensuring statutory safeguarding, child protection, corporate parenting and Keeping Children Safe in Education responsibilities are met.
- Promote effective safeguarding practice, manage risk for vulnerable children and young people, and work with partners to achieve safe and positive outcomes.
    - • Use Microsoft 365 and council systems effectively to work efficiently, collaborate with others and manage information safely, including storing, sharing and handling data securely in line with council policies.
    - • Actively challenge and seek to eliminate any directly or indirectly discriminatory practice or behaviours
    - • Demonstrate awareness and understanding of other people's behavioural, physical, social and welfare needs and ensure that reasonable care is taken at all times for the health, safety and welfare of yourself and other persons.

This job description reflects the major tasks to be carried out by the post holder and identifies a level of responsibility at which they will be required to work. In the interests of effective working, the major tasks may be reviewed from time to time to reflect changing needs and circumstances. Such reviews and any consequential changes will be carried out in consultation with the post holder.

Person specification:

The requirements for the role are outlined below and will be part of the selection process. Each of the criteria listed below will be measured by:

(**A**) Application Form, (**T**) Test, (**I**) Interview, (**P**) Presentation, (**D**) Documentation.

Minimum levels of knowledge, skills experience and qualifications required for this job.

Skills and abilities:	Essential / Desirable	Measured by
Visible, credible and values-led strategic leadership, with strong programme and change management skills to translate partnership outcomes into integrated operating models, delivery plans, measurable benefits and managed risks.	Essential	A, I, P
Ability to lead, motivate and manage multidisciplinary professional teams, balancing professional autonomy with clarity, consistency, supervision, wellbeing and accountability.	Essential	A, I
Ability to integrate universal, targeted and specialist services through clear pathways, standards, access routes, thresholds and shared accountability arrangements.	Essential	A, I, P
Exceptional influencing, negotiation, relationship-building and communication skills, including presenting complex information clearly to families, practitioners, senior leaders, boards and elected members.	Essential	A, I, P
Ability to analyse quantitative and qualitative evidence, performance information, professional intelligence and lived experience to inform priorities, resources, commissioning and improvement.	Essential	A, T, I
Strong co-production, facilitation and engagement skills with children, young people, families, settings and diverse stakeholder groups.	Essential	A, I
Sound financial and commercial awareness, including business cases, commissioning considerations, resource prioritisation and value for money.	Essential	A, I
Ability to sustain personal resilience, sound judgement and delivery focus in a complex and changing environment.	Essential	A, I
Confident use of digital tools for programme, performance, communication and collaborative working.	Desirable	A, I

Knowledge:	Essential / Desirable	Measured by
Comprehensive knowledge of SEND legislation, policy and practice, including the Children and Families Act 2014, SEND Code of Practice, inclusive education, graduated responses, ordinarily available provision and emerging national reforms.	Essential	A, I
Knowledge of education, health and social care systems across the 0-25 age range, including partnership governance, system leadership, shared accountability and joint commissioning arrangements.	Essential	A, I
Knowledge of Educational Psychology, specialist teaching, inclusion and intervention services, and how specialist expertise can improve outcomes and build capacity in settings.	Essential	A, I

Understanding of equitable front-door, triage, thresholds, response standards, support-while-waiting and locality-based deployment models.	Essential	A, I, P
Knowledge of outcomes frameworks, quality assurance, performance management, benefits realisation and use of dashboards, audit and lived-experience evidence.	Essential	A, I, T
Knowledge of safeguarding, data protection, equality and inclusion legislation and the application of neuroaffirming, relational and trauma-informed practice.	Essential	A, I

Relevant experience:	Essential / Desirable	Measured by
Significant senior leadership experience in SEND, inclusion, education, psychology, children's services, health or a related field within a complex multi-agency environment.	Essential	A, I
Experience of designing and delivering strategic plans, service transformation programmes and integrated operating models that improve access, consistency, efficiency and outcomes.	Essential	A, I, P
Substantial experience of managing professional or multidisciplinary teams, including performance, quality, risk, workforce deployment, supervision, resources and service priorities.	Essential	A, I
Experience of strategic partnership working across education, health and social care, including collaboration with early years providers, schools, academy trusts, further education settings and system leaders.	Essential	A, I
Experience of using data, audit, performance information and lived experience to target resources, address variation, provide assurance and demonstrate impact.	Essential	A, T, I
Experience of meaningful co-production with children, young people, parents and carers in service design, delivery or improvement.	Essential	A, I
Experience of reporting to senior governance forums and providing clear advice, assurance, challenge and escalation.	Essential	A, I
Experience of overseeing or working closely with Educational Psychology, specialist teaching, early years or school-age inclusion, intervention or advisory support services.	Desirable	A, I
Experience of inspection readiness, complaint learning, councillor or MP enquiries, or high-profile improvement programmes.	Desirable	A, I

Education, training and work qualifications:	Essential / Desirable	Measured by
Degree or equivalent level professional qualification and/or substantial relevant professional experience at a senior level.	Essential	A, D
Evidence of continuing professional development in SEND, inclusion, system leadership, safeguarding, service transformation or programme management.	Essential	A, D

Postgraduate, recognised leadership, management, programme or project management qualification, or relevant professional registration, accreditation or membership.	Desirable	A, D

All appointments are subject to standard pre-employment screening. This will include identity, references, proof of right to work in the UK, medical clearance and verification of certificates.

Additional pre-employment checks specific to this role include:
Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check,

Day-to-day in the role:

Job family & salary band:	Strategic Management Band 12	**Worker type:**	Flexible
People management responsibility:	Up to 8	**Budget responsibility:**	N/A

Current pay scales and other benefits are published on the Jobs and Careers section of West Northamptonshire Council's internet.

Working conditions & how we work:
This role has been identified as a flexible worker type, this means that you will be able to work flexibly dependent on business needs (e.g. attending CYP participation groups) and work from a range of locations, including the office.

Our organisational values and behaviours

Everything we want to achieve for West Northants depends on having the right people in place and doing the right things and we want all colleagues to THRIVE, both personally and professionally. Our values and our behaviours framework underpin how we work and what partners and customers can expect from us. We want to do our very best for our residents, service users and businesses and for our staff – we want everyone to THRIVE.

T	Trust	We are honest, fair, transparent and accountable. We can be trusted to do what we say we will.
H	High Performing	we get the basics right and what we do, we do well. We manage our business efficiently.
R	Respect	we respect each other and our customers in a diverse, professional and supportive environment.
I	Innovate	we encourage curiosity, we are creative and seize opportunities to grow individually as an organisation and as an area.
V	Value	We continually strive for best practice and ways of improving existing procedures, practices and systems and thereby promoting efficiency and cost effectiveness
E	Empower	we believe in people, will listen, learn and trust them to make decisions. We help people to realise their ambitions.

"Valuing colleagues as individuals and encompassing our different perspectives to deliver our collective ambitions. One West inclusive culture."

Should you require this document in another format or language, please contact: Careers@westnorthants.gov.uk

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Choose a career that offers you a true sense of achievement, fills you with pride and challenges you in a positive way, everyday.

The benefits of a career at WNC include:

- **People** are at the centre of everything we do. Without our people, we wouldn't be able to deliver services to the people in our community.
- **Ambition** runs through everything we do at West Northants Council, we nurture and develop our people's ambition and willingness to succeed, to continually improve the service we provide to the community.
- **Care** is at the heart of West Northants Council, we care in so many ways; seen and unseen, helping our colleagues and community to thrive.
- **Flexibility** is key, we know work-life balance is critical to wellbeing, so we work hard to make sure our benefits package promotes and improves wellbeing; from annual leave, sick pay, family leave and flexible working, financial security offered by a local government pension scheme and life assurance, and discount schemes which make a difference to your day-to-day life, through to employee helplines offering free legal, health, financial and wellbeing advice and support.

We want you to have balance and be happy.

West Northamptonshire Council