

Job Description

Job Title: Head of Service Children's Commissioning

Grade: L1

Overall purpose of the job

This is a unique role within Cambridgeshire County Council with responsibility and accountability for budgets in excess of £56 million per annum.

Forming part of the Commissioning Service leadership team this dynamic role brings together senior accountability for a range of services that are commissioned or directly delivered by the council, to improve outcomes for vulnerable children and young people who are on the edge of care, in care and leaving care. The post-holder has responsibility for commissioned provision for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities [SEND], children with disabilities / complex needs and children & family services. Many of these services are high risk in terms of ensuring that vulnerable children and young people are safeguarded, have their assessed needs comprehensively met and outcomes achieved whilst maintaining the reputation of Cambridgeshire County Council and ensuring the Council is able to fulfil its statutory duties and responsibilities.

The services for which the post-holder is accountable include a combination of commissioned and a variety of directly delivered services. Those that are directly delivered are provided at 'arm's length' from mainstream children's services, however, in terms of delivering improved outcomes and value for money, need to be managed as commissioned service provision..

Examples of services that the post-holder is responsible for securing sustained, good quality delivery, impact, outcomes and value for money include, but are not limited to:

- Independent Fostering Agencies commissioned Dynamic purchasing System [DPS] arrangements.
- Independent Children's Homes and Residential Special Schools DPS arrangements
- Post 16 Accommodation and Support Services commissioned framework arrangements.
- Out of school tuition services
- The Regional Adoption Agency, the joint regional arrangement between Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council.
- Strategic management, leadership and oversight of the Access to Resources [ART] brokerage functions for all externally commissioned placement service provision [Children in care and Independent Special Schools], ensuring quality, and that the established financial and contract quality and compliance processes continue to be wholly embedded within the practice and culture of the team.
- Directly delivered service provision including: Supervised contact , Family Group Conferencing, Clinical Services provision and Positive Behaviour Support Services
- Inhouse residential services provision [short breaks and children in care]
- Advocacy services for children and young people in care
- Independent visitor services for children and young people in care.
- The out of hours Emergency Duty Service.

The scope of management and leadership responsibility for children's commissioning within Cambridgeshire is extensive, demanding and rewarding. The role requires excellent strategic ability, emotional intelligence, and proven ability to successfully manage a diverse range of stakeholders and partners to continue to ensure improved outcomes for our most vulnerable children, young people and their families.

The Head of Service will contribute to and be accountable for ensuring successful collaborative strategic delivery of agreed priorities across the ICS whilst achieving value for money, improved outcomes, and proactive management of demand.

This post will not only lead providing advice and guidance to Council Members and senior officers but will also manage a diverse and highly skilled commissioning team responsible for delivering the following functions:

- Development and delivery of a clear vision and set of strategies in collaboration with partners.
- Service review and analysis
- Delivery of the commissioning cycle
- Key commercial negotiations
- Market development and engagement
- Capitalise on market driven opportunities and efficiencies.
- Delivery of the Council's financial savings targets.

Main accountabilities

	Main accountabilities
1.	<p>To be responsible for leading and managing all commissioned activity in relation to children in care, children with disabilities and special educational needs for Cambridgeshire ensuring accountable demand management strategies are effectively employed to reduce the financial impact of escalating need.</p> <p>Ensure managerial and strategic leadership of the services and functions that are set within the scope of this role. Promote managerial responsibility for cross-organisational team working, and across boundaries with other agencies and partners, to improve services and solve problems in a coherent and integrated way.</p> <p>Lead commissioning accountability and responsibility for the Regional Adoption Agency.</p> <p>Provide strategic and operational leadership of the Council's Access to Resources Teams.</p> <p>Promote relationship and managerial accountability for the delivery of improved outcomes across the looked after children population.</p> <p>Provide accountable leadership across the authority and wider partnerships, embedding an approach to service delivery and innovation that inspires a sense of purpose, promotion of the rights of our most vulnerable children and young people whilst continually pushing the boundaries of practice and operation to improve effectiveness, efficiencies and outcomes.</p> <p>To be responsible for the effective management of the Children's Social Care and Special Education Needs and Disabilities commissioning functions, ensuring the highest of standards and ability to deliver within timescale and budget allowances.</p> <p>To be accountable for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Market management, development, procurement, and contract performance management of both commissioned, and in-house service delivery. • The development and evaluation of strategic commissioning plans to meet identified need, and developing the capacity and capability to sustainably meet those needs. • Sufficiency strategies, action and implementation plans per portfolio area

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The development and application of commercial approaches to all aspects of the commissioning cycle to ensure services are developed and delivered in a financially sustainable way, and maximising opportunities for efficiencies. • Identifying and maximising financial contributions from statutory agencies towards placement and service costs. • Developing evidenced based commissioning approaches that target need and maximise resource opportunities. <p>Embed a performance culture that inspires a sense of purpose and celebrates the achievement of identified individual, and collective outcomes.</p> <p>To enable and actively encourage innovation and creativity across the services managed and commissioned.</p> <p>In all of the above:</p> <p>Provide effective leadership, professional responsibility and accountability for the quality, sufficiency, sustainability, value for money of these services and the evidence based impact of such services at individual, organisational and strategic levels</p> <p>To support the Service Directors in realising the delivery of children's services' vision, values and strategic objectives for vulnerable children and young people.</p> <p>Take a lead role on the development of relevant strategies, policies, procedures, programmes and projects across the service and wider partnership networks.</p>
2.	<p>Develop and embed a performance culture that delivers results through open rigorous challenge, personal accountability, disciplined execution and continual improvement internally within the authority, as well as across other providers, including those directly commissioned.</p> <p>Provide managerial leadership to the improvement of performance by ensuring that resources are targeted at the Council's priority areas.</p> <p>Ensure that the aims and objectives of innovative projects and commissioning activities are widely understood across the Council, strategic partnerships and the provider markets. Enable and facilitate a culture of collaboration for the purposes of improved outcomes and financial accountability.</p> <p>Ensure that all activities within the scope of the role actively promote the reputation of the Council.</p> <p>Ensure effective risk management strategies are robust and clearly understood to minimise the opportunities for the Council to be exposed to risk and uncertainty.</p> <p>Actively promote and ensure compliance with the Council's code of conduct for those resources within scope of the role.</p>
3.	<p>Ensure the Council performs its duties and functions in fulfilment of all statutory obligations relevant to the role. Ensure that all senior managers and their relevant staff are informed of the Council's changing legal obligations as these relate to the safeguarding of vulnerable children, young people and young adults.</p> <p>Ensure systems and processes are in place to manage resources effectively.</p>
4.	<p>Improve and sustain the overall reputations of and act in the best interests of the Council through effective representation locally, regionally, and nationally.</p>

	<p>To act as an ambassador for the Council, promoting and developing our image, vision and objectives, forming strategic alliances and developing effective working relationships on a local, regional and national basis.</p> <p>To network and establish necessary strategic, professional business relationships with both internal and external stakeholders and providers in order to maximise opportunities to deliver quality and efficiencies and promote effective change across the system.</p>
5.	Support the Executive Directors and Service Directors for Commissioning and Children's services in building and maintaining effective relationships with and between, local statutory and voluntary agencies as well as the independent and private sector that embeds joint approaches to identifying and meeting need, whilst facilitating discussion, challenge, and shared learning.
6.	<p>Ensure all services are designed, delivered, and optimised to improve outcomes in a financially sustainable way whilst fulfilling statutory responsibilities.</p> <p>The post-holder must also ensure the team is operating within legislative requirements and both of the Council's corporate procurement policy and contracts regulations and ensure relevant governance structures are in place to support this.</p> <p>To work with senior colleagues to build a balanced and ambitious budget which balances financial requirements with the requirement to address risk and need. The post-holder will be expected to strategically manage budgets ensuring a balanced position can be achieved and any risk is proactively addressed.</p> <p>To advise the officer level board, and Member Committees and external organisational forums as appropriate on the developments within the service and how to improve outcomes and efficiencies.</p>
7.	<p>Ensure that commissioned activity delivers sustained improvements in performance as demonstrated by measurable improvements in the overall quality and effectiveness of commissioned and provided services.</p> <p>To oversee the robust contract and performance management of all contracts commissioned to support the service areas outlined above in order to ensure quality, for value for money and needs are met within the available budget. Directly manage any significant or serious performance and quality issues as escalated.</p>
8.	<p>Promote a culture that celebrates the diversity of the populations we serve.</p> <p>Ensure that the voice of children and young people is heard at every level within the organisation, and that this drives related improvements in practice amongst commissioned and other provided services.</p>

Safeguarding commitment *(Include for roles involving work with children/vulnerable adults)*

We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people/vulnerable adults. We require you to understand and demonstrate this commitment.

Person Specification

Qualifications, knowledge, skills and experience

Minimum level of qualifications required for this job

Qualifications Required	Subject	Essential/ Desirable
Degree or equivalent qualifications	Any relevant subject	Essential
Post graduate management qualification	Any relevant subject	Essential

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

Identify	Describe	Essential/ Desirable
Knowledge		
Commissioning, Contracts Management, Procurement, and Partnerships	<p>Thorough understanding of commissioning processes and associated activities.</p> <p>Thorough commercial and financial understanding of commissioning, market management/shaping and development. A thorough understanding of the legislative and regulatory framework of multi-agency statutory children's services.</p> <p>Thorough understanding of the principle responsibilities and key challenges facing local government in securing high quality, sustainable services that deliver improved outcomes in challenging financial times.</p> <p>Demonstrable understanding of the children's services market economy.</p> <p>Sound knowledge and understanding of best practice methodologies, local, regional and national policy developments in all areas within scope of the role.</p> <p>Strong appreciation and understanding of the needs of diverse communities and how these are translated into culturally appropriate service provision.</p> <p>An understanding of the NHS strategic policy changes and drivers, particularly the role, function and breadths of responsibility of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough ICB.</p>	Essential
Skills		
Leadership, Change Management,	Ability to lead and inspire confidence, trust and respect of members, colleagues, partners and wider networks and communities.	Essential

<p>Negotiations, Communications, Thinking, Commercial</p>	<p>Demonstrable track record in innovation to drive improvements in the quality of services delivered to vulnerable children and young people.</p> <p>Excellent leadership skills that encourage and inspire commitment from others and promote a positive, motivated organisational culture.</p> <p>Excellent change management skills and ability to reflect and consolidate learning to improve future application.</p> <p>Excellent communication skills and the ability to articulate complex information in a variety of media, to a variety of audiences, at a level that will be clearly understood.</p> <p>Excellent negotiation and influencing skills and the ability to effect change through reasoning, persuasion and tactful dialogue.</p> <p>Ability to competently listen to the voices of looked after children and young people, ensuring their views and opinions are fully integrated into service design, delivery, review and evaluation.</p> <p>Evidence of successful partnership working, engagement and delivery to meet strategic objectives.</p> <p>Ability to identify and deliver challenging 'cashable' savings targets whilst minimising any detrimental effects.</p> <p>High level of analytical and appraisal skills to enable an effective and swift assimilation and evaluation of information/data and statistics to inform astute decision making.</p> <p>Strategic and logical thinker and decision-maker able to provide practical and creative solutions to the management of commissioned, partnership and organisational issues.</p> <p>Highly developed emotional intelligence and self-awareness.</p> <p>Strong financial and budgetary awareness with the ability to manage finance and other resources within a robust performance management culture.</p> <p>Ability to use [and research alternative information technology options] that deliver improved service delivery and reduced costs.</p> <p>Demonstrable continuous development and improvement of own leadership and professional practice.</p> <p>Highly motivated, demonstrating energy, commitment, drive and ambition to ensure the requirements of the role are comprehensively delivered.</p> <p>Effective ability to demonstrate core leadership qualities in managing teams to deliver agreed priorities/objectives.</p>	
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	Ability to act decisively and authoritatively in assessing and analysing risk in highly pressured situations.	
Experience	Give an idea of the type and level of experience required do not specify years of experience.	
Commissioning, Management, Service Design, Service Improvement, Stakeholder Management, Project Management.	<p>Extensive experience and a proven track record at senior management level of successfully commissioning people services including joint commissioning, and collaborative working with a range of stakeholders and partners in a complex and often challenging environment.</p> <p>Extensive experience in effective market management and development.</p> <p>Extensive experience of delivering strategic objectives within timeframe in the context of a transformation/change process.</p> <p>Experience of decommissioning services and managing risk.</p> <p>Experience in the design and development of each of the processes within the commissioning cycle to achieve strategic and quality initiatives.</p> <p>Extensive commercial experience that demonstrates ability to develop, design and deliver innovative concepts that drive quality and financial improvements.</p> <p>Extensive experience of managing staff and teams from varying organisational cultures to deliver strategic imperatives.</p> <p>Extensive experience of successfully providing leadership and direction to, and across a diverse range of teams, services and organisations.</p> <p>Evidence of successful partnership development/initiatives that contribute to the achievement of strategic medium – long term goals.</p> <p>Experience of working in a political environment with an ability to demonstrate high levels of political awareness, sensitivity, confidentiality and understanding.</p> <p>Significant experience of delivering service improvements through change management, capacity building, workforce modernisation and organisational reform.</p> <p>Experience of managing complex stakeholder environments including those that pose potentially serious reputational and financial consequences for the authority.</p> <p>Significant experience of the preparation, management and control of budgets for a large complex organisation, ensuring the prioritisation and targeting of resources to achieve maximum value for money and opportunities for income generation.</p>	Essential

	Experience of utilising a variety of performance and quality management tools to improve service effectiveness and efficiencies. Evidence of a personal commitment to diversity in the workplace and in the shaping of service outcomes.	

Disclosure level

What disclosure level is required for this post?	None	Standard x
	Enhanced	Enhanced with barred list checks

Work type

What work type does this role fit into? (tick one box that reflects the main work type, the default workers type is flexible)	Fixed	Hybrid x	Field	Home
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