

WHERE
CAREERS
THRIVE

When potential
is unlocked,
talent *thrives*



West
Northamptonshire
Council

Job description and person specification

Director of Children's Services (DCS)

People Directorate

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.



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Purpose and impact:

The purpose of this role is to fulfil the statutory requirements of the role of Director of Children's Services for the Council, providing Leadership and oversight of the provision of children's services, which address the local needs of all children and young people, including the most disadvantaged and vulnerable, and their families and carers and provides high quality, value for money services in a joined up way.

It is responsible for;

- the contract management and delivery of service outcomes of the Children's Trust; ensuring the effective delivery of Children's social care services across West Northants.
- The delivery of the Education and SEND functions of the local authority.
- The provision of Early Help and family Hubs.

The role works closely with the Head of Paid Service, Members and peers to drive forward the Council's vision, strategic priorities and objectives; ensuring the needs of children and young people and Trust service delivery plans are aligned to these.

Accountable to:

This role is accountable to the Executive Director of People and Deputy Chief Executive as a Council Statutory Officer. It is responsible for the direct line management of the Assistant Director of Education, Strategic Lead for Early Help and Family Hubs and accountable for the delivery of Children's Social Care via a Children's Trust. The role sits within the People Directorate in West Northamptonshire Council and is part of the Directorate Management Team. Additional accountabilities will develop as part of the council's improvement Journey and long term strategic intentions in relation to supporting Children and Young people to have the best start in life.

Role Specific Responsibilities:

1. Strategic Leadership & Management

- Engage with senior political and managerial leaders to ensure Children's Services meet legal and statutory obligations and effective and transparent scrutiny arrangements are in place.
- Lead on the contract management of the Children's Trust contract; managing the client relationship, developing relationships with the Children's Trust Board and monitoring service delivery outcomes/ performance in accordance with statutory requirements, agreed operational plans and KPI's.
- Lead on and ensure appropriate provision around Education and SEND across West Northamptonshire.
- Be a fully participating member of the Council's senior management team, driving strategy and performance, reporting upon the performance of Children's Services; and championing the delivery of the Council's vision and strategy with Councillors, partners, community representatives, and colleagues.
- Drive transformational change, fostering and leading a culture of continuous improvement that reflects the values of the Council and encourages creativity and commercial acumen within a public service ethos.
 - With a particular focus on the development and mobilisation of Early and help and family hubs alongside the future on the Council's 0-19 Public health Contract

2. Core Responsibilities

- Discharge the responsibilities of the statutory Director of Children's Services as defined by the Department for Education to ensure that the Council effectively meets its statutory duties as a Corporate Parent; in accordance with section 18(2) of the Children Act 2004.
- Professional leadership, oversight and contract management of Children's social care services delivered through the Children's Trust, operating in a multi-agency context, meeting the Council's legal and statutory obligations and ensuring communities across West Northamptonshire have access to high quality children's services that reduce the need for statutory intervention.
- Ensure that all direct delivery services and commissioned arrangements for education and Early Help services achieve best value for the Council and are focused on improving outcomes for West Northamptonshire's Children and Young People
- Responsible for the delivery of the Education and SEND services across West Northants.
- To ensure appropriate provision and service standards for children and young people with SEND
- To work in partnership with head teachers, school governors and academy trusts, MATs and others, and support the drive for high education standards for all children and young people.
- To develop effective early intervention and prevention strategies with our partners to employer children and their families to makes changes to improve their outcomes and lived experience. Focusing on Early Help and family hubs.
- Work closely with the Children's Trust, Adult Services, Public Health and other external partners to ensure effective and integrated mechanisms are in place to support vulnerable children transitioning to adulthood.
- Fulfil the Councils' statutory responsibilities in respect of partnership working, including in relation to the Local Safeguarding Children's Partnership arrangements, the Health & Wellbeing Boards and Community Safety Partnerships.
- Ensure that Children's Education and Early years services are designed and delivered to the highest Ofsted standards and within legislative requirements; whilst providing value for money and maximising available resources.
- Develop and lead a culture of continuous improvement and customer focus within services, setting targets, managing and monitoring performance and putting in place improvement plans that provide value for money, cost effective systems and improved outcomes for children and young people.
- Demonstrate improvement in services to external regulator and inspection bodies such as Ofsted.
- Lead on the children's safeguarding agenda for the council that promotes the welfare of children and young people in the area and ensures that safeguarding is a corporate and universal priority.
- Build productive working relations and collaborative arrangements with a wide range of stakeholders and partners; including private, voluntary and other public sector organisations.
- Provision of high quality and timely advice to Elected Members, Regulators, senior leadership colleagues and other stakeholders/partners on best practice, external factors affecting Children's services, legislative changes; and any issues relating to Council services which have a children's service related impact on the Council.
- Foster and encourage a working environment which encourage creative thinking, innovative practice and risk based decision making.
- Manage the Council's Children's services budgets, including the financial performance of the Children's Trust to ensure that financial targets are met and systems are in place to identify pressure areas and respond appropriately; taking remedial action where necessary.
- Develop robust governance and control, performance management and reporting, which supports effective decision making and delivers assurance.

- Lead on service user/children and young people involvement in order to meet the diversity of local needs and achieve a more customer- centred service delivery model.
- Secure the effective development of initiatives and funds to enable change and improvement in services.
- Continually review the impact of local and national policies and develop appropriate strategic response that enables the Council to consistently meet its statutory obligations and organisational priorities.
- Represent the Council at regional and national networking forums; keeping abreast of latest research and best practice.

3. Political Interface and Member Relations

- Develop and maintain effective working relationships with elected Members to foster a positive and productive interface between Members and officers across the council.
- To support Members in formulating strategic policy, direction and performance of services, providing professional advice, reports and briefings to members on all matters relating to Children's Services.
- Regularly provide feedback to members regarding the performance and contract monitoring outcomes in regards to services delivered by the Children's Trust.
- Promote a culture of political awareness amongst officers to help translate political will into appropriate future strategies and delivery of objectives.
- Develop and build strong and productive relationships with councillors of all groups and to ensure that councillors are offered timely high-quality professional advice and guidance.

4. Leading Partnerships, Collaboration and Managing Reputation

- Build, nurture and maintain effective relationships with local, regional and national partners including Central Government and Ofsted, to optimise the Council's strategic objectives.
- Influence a range of policy makers, public bodies, partners and suppliers to ensure the Council is well positioned to meet existing objectives and new challenges.
- Develop and maintain excellent partnership and other working arrangements with key stakeholders and regulators (both internal and external to the Council).

5. To maximise personal productivity, minimise duplication and errors; and manage our information efficiently and securely to reduce risk, through effective use of Office 365 and our internal IT systems and applications.
6. Actively challenge and seek to eliminate any directly or indirectly discriminatory practice or behaviours.
7. 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.

Director Standard Responsibilities:

1. **Culture & Wellbeing**

Responsible for the establishment and maintenance of a positive organisational culture, incorporating safety into all activities, fostering a culture that priorities the wellbeing of all colleagues in the service.

2. **Compliance**

Ensure that all activities within the service comply with the council's Constitution, finance and contract procurement rules and safeguarding responsibilities, and that effective systems operate within the service to manage performance and risk.

3. **Resources/Financial Management**

Ensure spending is contained within the allocated budget, exercising strong budgetary control and prioritising use of resources and assets to support the delivery of the council's corporate vision, upholding your responsibility to deliver value for money.

4. **Governance**

Ensure Compliance with the Council's governance framework in particular the documents set out in the Council's Code of Corporate Governance, supporting the Council in preparing its Annual Governance Statement in relation to the service area.

5. **Health & Safety**

Responsible for ensuring compliance across the service(s) with corporate health, safety and wellbeing strategy, policies and procedures; relevant legislation and regulations; overseeing the assessment of risk and implementing preventative measures to safeguard colleagues and service users.

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
Demonstrable leadership skills; specifically the ability to 'take people' with you and promote organisational vision and values.	E	A, T, I, P, D
Highly developed interpersonal, advocacy and communication skills, including strong report writing and presentation skills, with ability to engage a range of audiences and positively represent the Council.	E	A, I, P
Demonstrate effective use of Office 365 (incl. Teams, OneDrive, etc.) or willingness to undertake training during the probation period.	E	A, I
Ability to see the big picture, interpret it and develop relevant strategies, plans and deliverables.	E	A, I, P
Ability to encourage and engender collaborative working and build positive relationships with external agencies, partners and internal and external stakeholders.	E	A, I, P
Political awareness and the ability to work successfully within a political environment through effective working relationships with Elected Members.	E	A, I, P
Ability to challenge delivery practices and where appropriate, champion and drive alternative solutions that align to the Council's vision and strategy.	E	A, I,
Ability to learn from experience and to share that learning through future actions to improve service delivery and performance.	E	A, I,
Strong management skills, with ability to lead and influence others, make informed decisions and build and maintain successful relationships and networks.	E	A, I,
Ability to respond quickly and innovatively in order to manage and enhance the Council's reputation.	E	A, I,
Strong influencing and negotiating skills.	E	A, I,
Flexible and able to meet competing demands and challenging circumstances.	E	A, I,
Highly developed analytical and problem-solving skills, able to work strategically and apply sound judgement	E	A, I,
Passionate about putting children and young people at the heart of service delivery.	E	A, I, P
Positive role model for behaviours and culture.	E	A, I,
Collaborative and strategic leader – able to motivate and work across boundaries and achieve performance/results through others.	E	A, I, P
Sound judgement in devising and evaluating options and dealing with complex issues.	E	A, I,
Ability to work under pressure and deliver outcomes at pace.	E	A, I,
Robust and resilient, with drive and self-motivation.	E	A, I,
Personality and credibility that engages and commands the confidence of all stakeholders.	E	A, I, P

Innovative and forward looking with a 'can-do' attitude.	E	I
Commercially / financially astute and customer focussed	E	A, I
Ethical, accountable behaviour including a personal commitment to equality, diversity and inclusivity.	E	I
Ability to build rapport and relationships with ease, quickly gaining trust.	E	A, I

Knowledge:	Essential / Desirable	Measured by
Excellent current working knowledge and understanding of local government issues and statutory requirements.	E	A, I
Knowledge and understanding of Children's Services national agenda; including knowledge of relevant regulatory and inspection frameworks and the ability to translate this into local solutions.	E	A, I
Strong financial and budget management knowledge	E	A, I

Relevant experience:	Essential / Desirable	Measured by
Significant post-qualification experience gained either in the public, private or voluntary sector operating in a senior role, with a proven track record of delivering successful Children's Services in a multi-disciplined and complex environment.	E	A, I
Extensive experience of strategic planning and service delivery within local or central government or private sector, with demonstrable and proven record of achievement in same. This will include experience of developing and implementing planning, commissioning and performance frameworks in a multi-disciplinary and partnership environment.	E	A, I
Experience and success in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • leading organisational/ transformational change and driving through service improvement; including the re-engineering of services in response to changing needs and demands; • Leading and developing high performing, professional teams; • effective partnership working, networking and collaboration; developing and maintaining positive and productive relationships with a range of internal and external stakeholders and strategic partners; • Driving cultural change and organisational vision and values; • Operating in a political environment, providing professional advice and guidance to and building effective working relationships with senior managers and elected Members; • Developing strategic financial and risk based policies and plans. 	E	A, I
Demonstrable achievement in successfully managing budgets in a demanding public arena	E	A, I
Demonstrable experience of successful contract management and customer relationship management.	E	A, I

Education, training and work qualifications:	Essential / Desirable	Measured by
Educated to degree-level or equivalent in a relevant subject, or equivalent by experience.	E	A, I D
Educated to Relevant post-graduate or professional qualification in a relevant subject.	E	A, D
Evidence of continuous professional development.	E	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:

Hours:	37	Primary work base:	Northampton
Job family band:	Strategic Management	Worker type:	Flexible Part-flexible Fixed Field-based worker
Salary range:	£118,243 – 126,656	Budget responsibility:	DSG £475M General Fund £5.3m
People management responsibility:	Assistant Director of Education, Early Help Lead, Childrens Trust Commissioner and future Assistant Director for Early Help and Best start in life		

Working conditions & how we work:

For example: This role has been identified as a part-flexible worker type, this means that you will be able to worker from other work locations and when not working from an office you will be working remotely for up to 3 days a week (including from home).

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”

When potential is unlocked, talent *thrives*

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.

