

JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title: SEND Practice Manager

Directorate & Section/Unit: Age Disability Service (0-25) – SEND Service

Reporting to: Group Manager for SEND

Management responsibility for (Level 1 Manager and above): Team Managers

Salary Grade: P05

Our People Values:

Our Vision, Mission, and Values define our reason for being. They are indicators of our direction of travel, to guide services and colleagues. This is particularly important for Worcestershire Children Services as our values represent positive change and new opportunities for colleagues and children, young people and families:

- **Children at our Heart** - We will keep children and young people at the heart of everything we do
- **Value Family Life** - We will support and empower parents to care for their own children well
- **Good Education for All** - We will value education as the best start in life for all children and young people
- **Protection from Harm** - We will act in a professional and timely way to protect children from harm

Purpose of job:

The SEND Practice Manager is a strong leader, who will co-ordinate the operational management of Worcestershire County Council SEND casework responsibilities, in relation to the SEND statutory framework ensuring the timely delivery of high quality, child centred plans.

The SEND Practice Manager will oversee and closely monitor the work of the SEND area teams (Pre and Post 14) to ensure that statutory responsibilities are met and that parent carers, children and young people (CYP), educational settings and other professionals experience effective, clear and timely responses when CYP have an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) or a request for an Education Health and Care Needs Assessment is made. They will also work closely with and have oversight of the assessment team, complaints team and the tribunals team. The Practice manager will support the development of the SEND service and ensure that learning from auditing and complaints influences change within the system.

Reporting to the Group Manager SEND (0-25), the post holder will improve consistency and further develop practice within the teams and ensure that staff receive the support, training and supervision they need to be effective in their roles. The Practice manager will act up and support the Group Manager function during periods of absence /annual leave.

The post holder will:

- Have substantial and successful experience of working within a local authority children's service and will have worked in a leadership role within SEND casework previously.
- Be a strong leader, with expertise in the area of SEND, confident in working with complex casework and engaging team members in change and improvement.
- Be insightful about and committed to hearing and learning from the experiences of parents carers and CYP with SEND.
- Be confident in securing and sustaining robust relationships with schools and other educational settings to sustain placements in local provision and raise aspirations for young people with SEND.
- Make decisions that are compliant with the SEND statutory framework and are mindful of the need to account carefully for spend from the High Level Needs Funding budget.
- Work closely with other teams, within SEND and Vulnerable Learners and beyond to ensure as well as educational settings to ensure that the needs of CYP with EHCPs are met.

Main Activities & Responsibilities:

- Provide effective supervision and management of the team managers across the area, teams.
- Working collaboratively with NHS and social care services and other agencies so that EHC Needs assessments of children and young people are of good quality and on time.
- Leading the management and oversight of children and young people casework, ensuring that it meets statutory requirements and builds relationships with partners to promote locality based and inclusive education.
- Proactively maintaining an up to date knowledge of current issues, legislation, policy and practice in relation to SEND casework.
- Maintaining a proactive approach to monitoring complex casework, so that early difficulties are identified, and casework oversight is effectively supervised and supported.
- Ensuring knowledge of and contribution to, system change and effective case management to inform and contribute to the management of the High level needs budget.
- Ensuring that all decision making in relation to EHCNA and CYP with EHCPs is objective and transparent, and takes account of the views of parent carers, CYP, educational settings and other professionals.
- Improve compliance with annual review timescales and statutory duties and ensure that local and national guidance in relation to effective practice is followed.
- Ensuring that providers are held to account for meeting their responsibilities towards those with SEND, through rigorous attention to case review with schools and providers, the SEND annual review process and related administration, support and decision making.
- Monitoring carefully the number of children and young people who attend Out of County Educational settings as part of an enduring approach to build local inclusive high quality provision as part of what is normally available locally.
- Ensure that SEND casework decision making manages demand and pressures on the transport budget, including the costs of transport assistance.
- Work collaboratively with the Group Manager for SEND casework to inform policy, practice and strategic developments needed to improve the experiences of CYP with EHCPs and those who are undergoing EHCNA, as well as the experiences of their parent carers and wider families.
- Lead and learn from regular quality assurance activity to ensure that EHCPs, annual reviews and the EHCNA process complies with statutory duties and meets the needs of CYP with SEND and their families.
- Ensure that communication and complaints regarding CYP known to the SEND casework team are responded to quickly and effectively.
- Attend and represent WCF at SEND mediations and Tribunals where required
- To ensure that strong and effective partnerships are developed and maintained with all internal and external agencies and partners.
- To work with other Managers and ensure that innovative solutions are sought to support improvements and respond to changing needs and challenges.
- To ensure young people and their families are involved in the development, implementation and evaluation of services to meet their needs.
- To ensure the effective implementation and compliance with legislation, Government policy initiatives and guidance.
- Within the areas of responsibility to exercise effective leadership to ensure that:
 - a. Objectives are met
 - b. Managers and staff are appropriately managed, developed and equipped for their role
 - c. A culture of performance management operates
 - d. Budgets and other allocated resources are managed effectively
 - e. IT systems and processes are managed effectively
 - f. Health and Safety legislation, procedures and regulations and inspectorate requirements are observed.
 - g. To ensure safeguarding standards are agreed, understood, implemented and monitored throughout.
 - h. To exercise responsibilities to promote improved achievement for all learners.

- i. To deputise, as required, for the SEND group manager.
- j. Implementation of developments within the Written Statement of Action, SEND strategy and All Age Disability programme.

Generic Accountabilities:

- To maintain personal and professional development to meet the changing demands of the job, participate in appropriate training activities and encourage and support staff in their development and training
- To undertake other such duties, training and/or hours of work as may be reasonably required and which are consistent with the general level of responsibility of this job
- To undertake health and safety duties commensurate with the job and/or as detailed in the Directorate's Health and Safety Policy
- The duties described in this job description must be carried out in a manner which promotes equality of opportunity, dignity and due respect for all employees and service users and is consistent with the Council's Equality and Diversity Policy
- Working with some vulnerable children, young people and adults can, at times, be emotionally challenging for which appropriate support will be provided through management supervision. The post holder must be able to deal with such mental demands.
- This post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act and / previously met the definition of Regulated Activity (as defined by the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006) and is therefore subject to an enhanced Criminal Records Check (Via the Disclosure Barring Service, DBS) (as defined by the Police Act).
- This post meets Regulated Activity (as defined by the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 as amended by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012) and is subject to an enhanced Criminal Records Check (Via the Disclosure Barring Service, DBS) and the relevant children and/ adults barred list(s) checks.

Contacts:

In all contacts the post holder will be required to present a good image of the Directorate and the County Council as well as maintaining constructive relationships.

Internal: Worcestershire County Council, the SEND Service, the Virtual School, Early Help Service, Children's Social Care Services, Transport Services

External: Headteachers and other staff in schools and academies and academy trusts, school Governing Bodies and Trusts; Early Years Education and Childcare providers; Colleges of Further Education; Lead provider of commissioned services and sub-contracted agencies as appropriate; non-maintained and independent settings that provide for vulnerable learners and those with SEND (0-25); Families in Partnership – the Parent Carer Forum; SENDIASS; the SEND Improvement Board; senior staff in partner agencies such as Health Trusts, District Councils, other Local Authorities, Police, Probation, Youth Justice Service, voluntary and community organisations; service user groups, including those for parents and young people; DfE, Ofsted, HMI, RSC, press and media.

Additional Information:

- This post is politically restricted under the terms of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989
- Worcestershire County Council reserves the right to alter the content of this job description, after consultation to reflect changes to the job or services provided, without altering the general character or level of responsibility
- Reasonable adjustments will be considered as required by the Equality Act

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Job Title: SEND Practice Manager

Directorate & Section/Unit: All Age Disability Service – SEND

Salary Grade: P05

EXPERIENCE:

It is **essential** that the post holder has:

- Substantial experience of working at a senior level in a state funded / public sector / Local Authority funded organisation, in a role associated with the statutory SEND process.
- Substantial experience of recent, relevant and successful management / leadership in the period following SEND Reforms (2014).
- Substantial experience of working in a management role in a SEND service / organisation / setting.
- Substantial of designing and co-producing services, plans, provision or other, with parent carers and young people.
- Substantial experience of effective working as part of a management team / leading teams towards improving performance, through structured improvement programmes.
- Substantial experience of using information and communication technology and information management systems to monitor pupil outcomes at school/setting and LA level and to develop accountabilities including for externally commissioned providers.
- Significant experience in high challenge areas of SEND to include dispute resolution, SEN appeals, complaints and mediation and relating to Looked After Children, those missing education and exclusions.
- A proven track record of interpersonal impact with others, including experience of successfully building internal and external relationships with a diverse range of stakeholders.

It is **desirable** that the post holder has:

- Additionally, experience of working as a teacher or in the teaching profession would be advantageous.

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES:

It is **essential** that the post holder has:

- Expert knowledge and understanding of relevant legislative and regulatory frameworks and Government initiatives relating to SEND.
- Expert knowledge of how to interpret a wide range of legislation, regulations and guidance and to apply them effectively
- Expert knowledge and understanding about the frameworks and their contributions to supporting children and families.
- Expert knowledge of the respective roles and responsibilities of children and adult social care, early help, paediatric and therapy services, mental health services, transport
- Specialist knowledge and understanding of a Local Authority's responsibilities in relation to Education services, including, but not exclusively, admissions, exclusions, school funding, high needs funding, school improvement, Looked After Children
- Specialist knowledge of how to prepare for and effectively represent Worcestershire County Council at mediations and tribunals
- The ability to apply the statutory SEND process in a manner that ensures statutory compliance and enables relationships with schools and settings, and parent- carers to be developed, improved and sustained

- Ability to analyse situations and scenarios quickly and effectively and to apply that thinking to the development of plans, solution or options appraisal.
- Advanced analytical skills and the ability to apply a forensic approach to casework management.
- Possesses the resilience and empathy to work in a system that can be emotionally charged and where user expectations are not always able to be met.
- Can make difficult decisions and communicate these effectively
- Leads by example, developing an approach to decision making that is embedded throughout the system, and that engages stakeholders and parent-carers and young people
- Ability to listen and learn from parent-carers, and enable their participation through pushing boundaries on existing practice where necessary
- Excellent communication skills with the ability to communicate effectively for different reasons and using different styles with a wide range of stakeholders
- Excellent planning and organisation skills and an ability to apply these at different levels – from strategic and improvement planning to individual casework planning.
- Working knowledge of how to manage and deliver training programmes
- An approach to management and support that enables a coaching approach to underpin service and staff development, and as a tool to develop robust case analysis and case management.
- Ability to demonstrate successful people management and leadership experience, demonstrating the ability to motivate, challenge, support and develop individuals and teams to deliver outcomes.
- The ability to relate effectively and sympathetically to a wide range of people including parents, Headteachers and Governors
- Effective negotiating and influencing skills at an operational level
- Ability to build effective relationships and work co-operatively with colleagues, professionals from partner agencies and other stakeholders
- Ability to make active and effective contributions to operational development and sustainability of local partnerships and inter agency working

QUALIFICATIONS/TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT:

It is **essential** that the post holder has:

- A relevant professional qualification and /or a relevant management qualification or evidence of former and ongoing management development.
- A level 6 qualification (e.g. degree level or equivalent qualification in a relevant subject)
- Evidence of continuous personal professional development in a discipline or area relevant to the role.

It is **desirable** that the post holder has:

- Qualified Teacher Status or experience of working in an educational setting

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

It is **essential** that the post holder has:

- The ability to travel throughout the county (and occasionally beyond), including areas where there is limited public transport and be able to reach, including but not limited to, families, young people, internal and external clients and within a timely manner