

Thurrock Council job profile

Job title	Head of Service – Children Looked After
Post number	
Grade	I
Directorate	Children’s Services
Responsible to	Assistant Director of Children’s Social Care
Date profile last reviewed	November 2023

Job purpose

- To provide strategic leadership to Children’s Social Care and deputise for the Assistant Director of Children’s Social Care.
- To lead the service for Looked After Children and Care Experienced young people; from case holding teams, fostering services, adoption services, placement provision and educational outcomes and the service for Children with Disabilities.
- To lead and manage significant budgets across the service.
- To work closely with the senior leadership team and Assistant Director within Children’s Services to support the transformation agenda.
- To play a full, pro-active and innovative part in the management and development of the Directorate.
- Represent the Directorate at all relevant health and partner strategic meetings.
- To promote the Council in regional and national forums.
- To provide programme management of significant aspects of the transformation of Children’s Services and contribute to the development of a “whole system approach” working in close partnership with other departments and agencies.

Values and accountabilities

Our values:

1. **ambitious** – by continually improving
2. **collaborative** – by working together
3. **compassionate** – by building relationships based on empathy, respect and dignity
4. **empowered** – by removing barriers to influence outcome
5. **proud** – of everything we do and championing Thurrock Council
6. **inclusive** – by acting in a way that exemplifies what we expect of each other

Corporate accountabilities:



1. To work with colleagues to achieve service plan objectives and targets
2. To comply with data protection legislation and the council's Information Security Policy, including supporting policies
3. To be willing and able to work in a flexible and agile way with regard both to hours of work and location of work, including remote and home working, as required, subject to service needs and requirements
4. To participate in performance development, talent reviews and one-to-ones and to contribute to the identification of your own and team development needs and goals
5. To actively promote and comply with the council's diversity and equality policies
6. To ensure full compliance with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 etc., the council's Health and Safety Policy and all locally agreed safe methods of work
7. To fully understand and be aware of the commitment to Section 17 'Duty of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to prevent crime and disorder'
8. At the discretion of the senior management, to undertake other activities as, from time to time, may be agreed consistent with the grade and nature of the role
9. To undertake and maintain relevant mandatory training in line with legislation

Key service accountabilities:

- To strategically lead and manage the Looked After Children service.
- To provide direct line management and supervision to CATO Service Managers and Team Managers.
- To promote permanency for all children known to Thurrock children's services.
- To deputise for the Assistant Director.
- To lead on the Directorate's relationship with the third sector and statutory partners regarding looked after children, care experienced young people and children with disabilities.
- To actively engage service users in service development and delivery.
- To ensure that looked after children services are value for money and developed within a clear outcomes framework.
- To ensure compliance with statutory requirements in the management of risk and needs at the appropriate thresholds.
- Articulate a clear and compelling vision for vulnerable children and their families.
- Promote diversity, equality and community cohesion.
- To ensure that all budgets are planned and controlled.
- To develop new ways of working to transform services ensuring that improved outcomes are secured within the finances available.
- To lead on representation at relevant regional and national groups.

Person specification

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Directorate	Children’s Services

Information for applicants

The person specification provides an outline of the experience, skills and abilities we expect the successful applicant to possess. You should match your own skills, experience and abilities to those listed below. Tell us in what way you meet the requirements.

Method of testing	Weighting
1 = application form	1 = low importance
2 = interview	2 = medium importance
3 = assessment tests	3 = high importance

Disabled people will be offered an interview where they meet the essential requirements alone

Requirements for this job

Key competencies and behaviours	Method of testing	Weighting
1a. Skills and abilities – essential		
A qualified HCPC registered Social Worker.	1	3
Good negotiating and influencing skills at both strategic and operational levels.	2	3
Good communication skills with the ability to present issues clearly and concisely to a range of audiences and to write effective reports.	1,2,3	3
Demonstrate ability to implement effective changes to operational delivery.	1,2	3
Ability to provide effective leadership to staff.	1,2	3
Ability to manage risk and prioritise.	1,2	3
Ability to manage budgets and use financial information effectively.	1,2	3
Ability to work innovatively and effectively across internal and external boundaries with statutory, independent and voluntary and community sector partners.	1,2,3	3
The ability to assess commissioning strategies to ensure they are meeting local need.	1,2	3
Energy and enthusiasm.	1,2	3
Enjoys working as part of a team.	1,2	3
A strong belief in continuous improvement.	1,2	3

Key competencies and behaviours	Method of testing	Weighting
1b. Skills and abilities – desirable		
Sense of humour	2	1
2a. Special knowledge – essential		
Knowledge of understanding mechanisms for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysing and prioritising need with a range of stakeholders. • Planning and joining resources to achieve effective services to meet agreed need • Monitoring the performance of the service • Evaluating service impact and outcomes 	1,2	2
Understanding of and ability to use information and communication technology and information management systems.	1	3
Decision making ability as Agency Decision Maker	1,2	2
Understanding of and ability to use performance frameworks	2	3
Knowledge and understanding of the relevant legislative and regulatory framework and government Children's and Adults Social Care	1,2	3
2b. Special knowledge – desirable		
None		
3a. Experience – essential		
Significant experience of managing staff in a public sector and social work setting.	1	3
Significant experience of managing the delivery of front line Children's Social Care Services, especially for the range of looked after services within the remit of this post.	1	2
Significant experience of placement planning and sufficiency strategies.	1	3
Significant experience of managing budgets within a volatile context.	1	2
Significant experience of working with, advising and negotiating with senior managers in a complex organisation.	1	2
Substantial experience of strategic planning or service development.	1	3

Key competencies and behaviours	Method of testing	Weighting
Experience of developing consultation techniques and community involvement approaches.	1	3
Experience of using both qualitative and quantitative research methods.	1	3
Proven ability to manage change in complex organisations.	1,2	3
Experience of working across organisational and managerial boundaries to achieve improved outcomes for children and young people.	1,2	3
3b. Experience – desirable		
None		
4a. Other requirements – essential		
To behave in accordance with our values.	1,2	3
Commitment to the principles of agile working including the ability to work flexibly with regards to both hours of work and location of work including remote and home working as required.	1,2	3
A qualified, HCPC registered social worker	1	3
Significant experience of managing front line looked after children Social Care Services at Service Manager or equivalent levels.	1,2	3
4b. Other requirements – desirable		
Evidence of innovation and initiative	1	2
5a. Equalities – essential		
Understanding of and commitment to principles of equality and diversity and compliance with Thurrock Council policies.	1,2	3
Evidence of commitment to equality of opportunity and the ability to demonstrate that commitment through employment practice and in the delivery of services	1,2	3
5b. Equalities – desirable		
Experience of developing Equality Impact Assessments	1	2

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Recruitment safeguarding	Requirement
Will the post holder have substantial unsupervised access to children or vulnerable adults?	No – use standard recruitment process Yes – Use Safer Recruitment process

Is a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check required for this post? Read the Recruitment and Selection Policy for guidance.	No – Not required Yes – Basic check required Yes - Standard check required Yes – Enhanced check required
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