

# CANDIDATE PACK

Director of Schools and Employability



 RESET

 RESHAPE

 RESTART

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## ABOUT THE ROLE

Are you ready to make a meaningful impact on one of the most critical periods of Birmingham City Council's future? In a city facing unprecedented financial challenges, Birmingham City Council is seeking dynamic individuals who demonstrate the expertise, determination, and unwavering resilience required to ensure the delivery of vital services to our citizens. Our city, like many others, is grappling with complex economic realities. We recognise the daunting hurdles ahead, but we also firmly believe in the potential for transformation and progress. The economic pressures underscore the urgency of our mission – to safeguard and enhance the wellbeing of our residents.

Our Children and Families leadership team is moving at pace, and we have created a new post that will significantly increase our ability to make a difference to Birmingham's children and young people.

This is your opportunity to help us to continue to develop strong relationships of trust and confidence across our City – relationships which tap into and build upon Birmingham's outstanding community spirit.

Birmingham is attracting much publicity right now and we are keen to ensure continued service delivery to our citizens and successful decision-making – that's why we need people like you to join us to foster and ensure the delivery of essential frontline roles that benefit the lives of children and young people. Great councils need great leaders and our quest to deliver essential services to our citizens means that we want to hear about your strengths, skills, and experience and how you'll contribute to our improvement journey.

If you are challenged by succeeding in complexity and/or ambiguity, then we'd like to hear more about your strengths and how you like to contribute.

## DIRECTOR OF SCHOOLS AND EMPLOYABILITY

This role requires a dynamic and strategic leader to focus on the high-profile strategic agendas of the city relating to education, skills, and employment. This role brings together all the teams in Children and Families that work directly with schools, colleges, post 16 training providers and Birmingham's universities, to lead a strategic partnership focussed approach to ensure our young people can access appropriate and diverse education and employment pathways which enable them to thrive.

The role will take lead responsibility for the provision of a portfolio of services that includes:

- Achievement for all children  
Lead for relationship with the Regional Schools Commissioner/DfE/Ofsted
- Lead for relationship with BEP and all schools
- Pupil Place Planning, Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG)

- Schools Forum, School and Governor Support
- School Admissions, Attendance, Local Authority MAT Development
- Education Infrastructure Lead, for example: Property, cleaning, capital projects, Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education, Youth Skills and Employability Service, Youth Service,
- 14-19 Participation, 14-19 Progression Pathway for young people with Special Educational Needs, Youth Hubs, Family Learning.

The role also encompasses policy and strategy formation focussed around Breaking Down Barriers, digital inclusion (where it intersects with service delivery) and work focussed on regeneration/inclusive growth, linking with the West Midlands Combined Authority.

The role requires a relentless focus on achieving the best outcomes for all Birmingham's young people, and the capacity to innovate as we develop our inclusive libraries and lifelong learning strategies.

The Director of Schools and Employability will provide strategic leadership for all aspects of Schools and Employability within the Children and Families Directorate and more widely within the organisation. Particularly, to be responsible for:

- Joint Inclusion lead
- Lead for School Places
- Sufficiency strategy
- Lead for School Improvement strategy
- Lead for relationship with Birmingham Education Partnership (BEP) and all schools
- Statutory Youth Skills and Employability Service
- Adult Employability and skills (Careers Service)
- 14-29 Progression Pathway for young people with Special Educational Needs
- Youth Service including youth hubs

This accountability extends to leading our Education Infrastructure team, which includes the planning and delivery of capital projects and leading our 14-19 and post 16 teams with a focus on skills and employability and develop strong relationships with Birmingham's universities and FE sector.

Playing a key part in delivering the City's regeneration agenda, this is your opportunity to work across a fast-moving council to ensure that delivering employment and skills opportunities for young people are at the heart of strategic planning.

Policy and strategy formation is a critical element of this role as is Breaking Down Barriers, digital inclusion (where it intersects with service delivery) and work focussing on regeneration/inclusive growth, linking with the West Midlands Combined Authority.

We want to achieve the best outcomes for all of Birmingham's young people, and welcome innovative and focussed leaders as we develop and deliver our directorate redesign.

You can view the entire job description [here](#)

## WELCOME LETTER FROM SUE HARRISON, STRATEGIC DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Dear applicant,

There are a lot of great things happening in Birmingham Children's Services right now – it's a very exciting place to be.

Significant progress in Children's Social Care is recognised by Ofsted and a 'Good' rating has given everyone involved in children's services a huge boost.

Birmingham has now been accepted on to the UNICEF Child Friendly Cities programme, which provides an excellent opportunity, not to mention a brilliant reflection on where we want to be.



With funding secured for this new post, as a key part of our directorate redesign, we aim to increase significantly our ability and capacity to make a positive difference to Birmingham's children and young people. This is a great opportunity to re-shape our education system, in partnership with our school and post 16 provider leaders, putting children at the heart of everything we do.

We are keen to develop new relationships with schools and colleges, providing real system leadership. We need to improve school attendance, increase the attainment of young people with SEND and to co-create inclusive learning environments across our city. We have a large and vibrant further education offer which includes high-achieving colleges and universities, and yet we have too many unemployed young people in our city.

The Children and Families directorate has an ambitious savings target for the next two years with savings of £55.5m for 2024/25 and £57.7m for 2025/26 to be made across the service. The directorate has commissioned a review of the BCC Youth Service, Careers Service and 14-19 (25 EHCP) Participation and Skills that delivers statutory requirements and the Council's priorities, set in the context of the broader Birmingham youth offer. The aim is to develop a blueprint for a sustainable model of service delivery, with a reduced financial envelope. This redesign will enable the best use of the funding available to be made, whilst looking at how best we can deliver or facilitate others to deliver the support that we must provide as a council and to our Youth offer.

With strong foundations developing as a result of our comprehensive improvement journey and the resources to shape our future, this is an excellent opportunity to collaborate with terrific people and brilliant leaders across Birmingham. Leaders who will support you to partner with great schools, colleges, and a thriving voluntary sector.

We need a strategic thinker full of ideas and ambition who has the ability and desire to make a difference in the biggest local authority in the country. We're looking for a confident, visible, and experienced leader who can inspire, collaborate, and deliver with empathy and resilience; someone with a strong track record of developing inclusive

school to school support systems, putting children and young people at the heart of everything - enabling them to thrive and reach their full potential.

These are exciting times for our city as we look to provide the best possible opportunities for our children, young people, and their futures. If you think you are the leader we are looking for and are someone who wants to join a skilled and experienced senior team, I would be delighted to have a conversation with you.

**Sue Harrison, Director of Children's Services**

# ABOUT THE CHILDREN AND FAMILIES DIRECTORATE

## THE DIRECTORATE:

- Supports 320,000 children and young people with universal services, of which 11,421 have an Education, Health and Care Plan
- Supports 4,700 children and young people through the Virtual School for vulnerable children (as at September 2022)
- Works with a total of 446 schools (295 primary schools, 82 secondary schools, one 16-19 free school, 7 all through schools, 27 special schools, 27 maintained nursery schools, six alternative provision free schools and one pupil referral unit). Of these, 214 are maintained schools and 209 are academies. We also have 21 free schools, one studio school and one university technical college.
- Has over 26 service areas across a range of professional disciplines including regulated front-line roles and clinical services
- Works across early years, SEND and inclusion, education safeguarding, universal education services, schools, careers, Youth services, 14-19 education, to employability and skills.
- Employs 1,339 staff
- The Directorate is committing to getting the basics right by:
  - having well-managed teams with manageable workloads
  - ensuring staff have the right tools to get the job done
  - being underpinned by robust quality assurance
- Culture is also high on the Directorate's agenda with a Directorate ethos whereby:
  - everyone is a leader, everyone is a learner and everyone is accountable
  - we listen to children, recognise their lived experience and aim high
  - we establish the council's role in leading and shaping Birmingham's children's services
- The Directorate is also committed to achieving better outcomes by:
  - delivering a clear strategy and Children's Plan for the children and young people of Birmingham
  - ensuring partnership working by default – working well with partner organisations
  - ensuring Delivery Plans have clear, measurable milestones.



At the heart of the service is our vision that Birmingham Children Thrive and that all children and young people in the city are Safe, Healthy, Included, Confident and Achieving. They are supported by a Children's Services Directorate that has strong governance and management, engaged staff, and a clear strategy, and by partnership organisations across the city that work together as one system putting children and families at the heart of everything they do.

In 2022, in addition to funds for transformation the Council signalled strong support for the Directorate in the creation of an additional three new leadership posts: an Assistant Director for SEND Transport, a Director for Strategy, Commissioning and Transformation and a Director for Thriving Children and Families as well as further investment.

In 2023 the Council has made a significant financial budget uplift to services for children and families and as a result, resources are now in place to enable the recruitment of key permanent staff within the directorate. This is a significant step along our improvement journey and demonstrates the Council's commitment towards children and young people.

This investment is already having an impact. Front line services provided by SENAR and the Children and Young People's Travel Service are improving and exceeding, meeting, or beginning to meet national and council standards and have continued to do so. But there is still much to do: we are eighteen months into our ambitious five-year Improvement Plan. Whilst the directorate is transforming, we also have a commitment in the medium to long term to explore ways to reduce spend. We are doing this by delivering in different ways, exploring different delivery models and income generation opportunities.



## RESET, RESHAPE, RESTART - BENEFITS OF WORKING WITH US

**Fair, inclusive, and green, this sets our ambitious and strategic vision to create a vibrant, prosperous, and future-focussed environment where people thrive. We're proud to deliver services to our citizens in ways that help them to be successful. After all, they are our customers.**

Our colleagues, our partners and our communities are all realising the benefits of collaboration and service. With our ambitious leadership team, our City Council has the determination to build a bright, more prosperous city for all. It follows that we need an equally courageous workforce made up of people like you with different strengths and ambitions to deliver the Council's services.

### WHAT IT'S LIKE TO WORK HERE

**We're committed to creating an environment that promotes diversity and inclusivity, healthy lifestyle choices, wellbeing, and balance. We're keen to support you and your ambitions at every stage of your career with us and we're proud to give you access to:**

- A range of benefits
- Learning and personal development opportunities
- Employment policies (processes and procedures)

#### **We're a socially responsible employer:**

- Paying the Living Wage Foundation recommended rates of pay applied as a minimum hourly rate (1st Apr 2023 £10.42 per hour)
- Paying our apprentices the same rates of pay as their colleagues
- Creating the Clean Air Zone in Birmingham City Centre and aspiring to be a carbon neutral city by 2030 and supporting our employees to achieve this by offering a range of benefits

### LET'S TALK HEALTH AND WELLBEING

- **30 days annual leave** – Increases to 33 days after 5 years and 35 days after 10 years, plus option to purchase additional leave
- **Access to voluntary benefits providers that support health, wellbeing and making the most of your leisure time**
- **Family friendly policies e.g., maternity/adoption, paternity, shared parental leave, carers' leave**
- **Health and wellbeing support networks** e.g., independent, and confidential employee assistance and counselling, occupational health, etc.
- **Employee communities and support groups** including Corporate Black Workers Support Group, Disability and LGBT+ Networks, Menopause Support Forum, etc.
- We are a **disability confident employer**
- We subscribe to the **Vercida** jobs platform, which encourages potential colleagues to **find out what it's like to work here**

## MOVING TOWARDS BEING AN AGILE ORGANISATION

If you're thinking of joining us, then you'll need to know where you'll be working. We're proud of what we've achieved already, although some changes are ongoing. Here's what you need to know:

- Opportunities for **24/7 flexible working**, compressed hours or term-time working may be available
- **Remote** working and **home** working
- Locality-based work hubs with **touch down facilities**, workstations, **collaboration, and breakout spaces** for **teamworking and socialising**
- We utilise **Microsoft collaboration tools** and software; training is available
- Many of our **office locations are within the City centre**, close to all public transport options and other amenities
- **Relocation assistance may be available** for colleagues needing to relocate to the City

## AND NOW WE'VE GOT YOU INTERESTED, WE ALSO OFFER

- **Membership of job-related pension scheme**, West Midlands Pension Fund or Teachers' Pensions, with generous employer contributions
- Job-related **allowances** paid
- Payment of your **professional fees** where it is a legal requirement of the role
- Access to 'My Rewards' – **over 800 individual brands providing discounts and savings** including high street stores, supermarkets, utility, and insurance providers, as well as great days out ... to name but a few!
- Opportunities to join great **salary sacrifice schemes** e.g., Cycle to Work, Annual Travel and Car Parking, as well as making the most of Tax and National Insurance savings (additional schemes to launch soon)

## TO HELP WITH YOUR LEARNING AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

**We actively promote annual appraisals for all and support you to be the best that you can be through access to:**

- Training and development programmes to meet your needs and the needs of our Services
- Coaching and mentoring programmes
- Our online learning platform offering a broad range of accessible e-learning modules and courses
- Secondment opportunities to support your development

## VIBRANT BIRMINGHAM

Birmingham is a great place to live and work. Not only are you in the heart of the UK's busy and exciting Second City, but the countryside is just a short journey away. As the cultural heart of the West Midlands, every community contains an eclectic variety of culture, opportunities and experiences.

We work closely with them to ensure that 'Brum' is a positive, inspiring place for everyone.

Conveniently placed in the centre of England, Birmingham has excellent transport links with the rest of the country, with major cities such as London, Manchester and Bristol just a train ride away. We have an ever-expanding tram network, one of the country's best bus services and Birmingham International Airport is just on our doorstep. As the youngest city in Europe, there is always something going on here.

Many of the things to do are intertwined with our history, with many brilliant museums and art galleries, including the Black Country Living Museum – one of the filming locations for the acclaimed Peaky Blinders. You can also take a trip to Cadbury World or savour some brilliant entertainment at any of our Arenas. If you enjoy shopping, The Bullring contains stores from the biggest chains in fashion, including Selfridges, while Digbeth has an array of unique independent businesses to explore. There is also food for all tastes, with Birmingham being home to a number of Michelin star restaurants, the Chinese Quarter and the world-famous Balti Triangle.

The city contains and is nearby some beautiful landscapes. Birmingham boasts 35 miles of canals, which can be explored by foot or by boat and features landmarks showcasing our Industrial history. We are also only a short journey from some of the best green spaces to explore in the Midlands, including Sandwell Valley Country Park and Sutton Park. Cannock Chase and the Malvern Hills Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty are also easily accessible.

There is a variety of housing available in Birmingham, both to rent and buy. Some of the best value places to live are Edgbaston, Harborne and Moseley, all easily accessible from the city centre, while slightly further out are picturesque locations including Water Orton and Four Oaks. We have over 400 schools, 15 universities and three university colleges within one hour's drive of the city.



## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For more information please follow the links below:

### **Birmingham City Council**

For information on the day-to-day running of the Council, please visit the [BCC Website](#).

While there, you can take a look at [Our Future City: Draft Central Birmingham Framework 2040](#), which outlines the next stage of the Council's plans to redevelop the City.

You can also read the Council [Corporate Plan and Budget](#), view the Council's [Vision and Priorities](#), and read their commitment to [Equality](#). [Birmingham City Council's 2022 Gender Pay Gap Report](#) is also available to read in full.

You can also view the work of the [Birmingham City Observatory](#).

### **Children's Services**

View information on the Council's most recent [Ofsted Report](#).

### **Tourism**

For information on some of Birmingham's best attractions, visit [Visit Birmingham](#) and [Things to do in Birmingham](#).

### **Relocating to Birmingham**

For more information on availability of housing in Birmingham and the best places to buy or rent in the City, visit [Rightmove](#) [Zoopla](#) and [White & Co - Best Places to Live in Birmingham](#).

### **Living and Working in Birmingham**

For information about the [Birmingham Enterprise Community](#).

## APPLICATION PROCESS

**Closing date for applications:** Monday 22 April 2024

**Technical Interviews:** Wednesday 1 May 2024

**Final Interviews:** Thursday 23 May 2024

**For a confidential discussion please speak to:**

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## TO APPLY

**Director of Schools and Employability** [click here](#)

