

Buckinghamshire Council

Corporate Director Children's Services

Job Summary

Purpose

To provide strategic leadership, direction, operational management and financial control for Children's Services;

Provide corporate leadership across the Council, working with Members, the Chief Executive and Corporate Directors to shape the Council's culture and deliver its priorities and outcomes.

To act as the Council's principal adviser on children's services, working collaboratively with Cabinet Members, portfolio holders and senior leaders to ensure services are aligned with the Council's priorities.

To provide visible, strategic leadership across corporate initiatives, driving organisational transformation and supporting strong relationships with Members, customers and partners while delivering high-quality, cost-effective services for residents.

The role carries the statutory responsibilities of the Director of Children's Services, as defined by the Department for Education.

The role will lead the Council's response to national reforms across children's social care, SEND, alternative provision and education, ensuring statutory duties are met while transforming services to improve outcomes for children, young people and families and support long-term financial sustainability.

Generic Responsibilities

- To proactively lead the delivery of the key objectives of the Council.
- To build and maintain effective working relationships between colleagues, members and external partners, using well developed interpersonal skills.
- To drive the Council's values and vision internally and externally and to act as an ambassador of the Council at all times. Proactively engage with employees at all levels of the organisation and promote the benefits of working for the Buckinghamshire Council.
- To keep abreast of the changing landscape for public services, exert influence across an extensive range of policy makers, public bodies and suppliers, and ensure that the Council is positioned to implement initiatives and meet new challenges.
- To be prepared to quickly and flexibly react to the needs of the Council, its customers and partners. Develop a culture of continuous improvement that encourages creativity and innovation.
- Work with members to create strategy and policy. Create strategic direction for themselves and others, maintaining focus over the long term and delivering even in the face of significant challenge.

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- Demonstrate a commercial focus, delivering high quality services whilst improving productivity, reducing cost and delivering statutory requirements.
- To actively participate in cross-functional initiatives to deliver modern, efficient, and effective services to the community, creating new customer-centric operating models that ensure equality of access and treatment in service delivery and employment.
- To provide visible, authentic and inspirational leadership, role modelling a high performing, supportive culture. Systematically coach, mentor and develop others to achieve their potential.
- To ensure the motivation and wellbeing of the workforce, delivering high levels of performance and inclusive leadership behaviours. Recognise and celebrate success.
- Champion individual and collective learning and development opportunities, enriching the development of the workforce to maximise engagement and productivity. Publicly invest time in learning and development activities.
- To be part of the Incident Management and / or Crisis Management structure in the event of an incident or emergency, including participating in out of hours arrangements”
- To ensure that the Service is trained and able to respond to emergencies in the community in line with the Civil Contingencies Policy and to ensure that the Service has adequate Business Continuity Management (BCM) arrangements in place in line with the Civil Contingencies Policy.
- The post holder must carry out their duties with full regard to the Constitution and all of the Council’s policies and procedures.
- Take an active role in emergency response/business continuity planning and implementation, which may include out of hours working.

Role Specific Responsibilities

- Strategically lead the Children’s Services function driving the management and delivery of the Council’s Children’s Social Care service and the Education service.
- Lead the partnership across Buckinghamshire to deliver ambitious outcomes for children and young people;
- Lead the development, promotion and delivery of effective partnership arrangements that engage with all of the key partners and agencies in delivering our ambitions for Children and young People.
- Strengthen partnerships with health, voluntary and community sector organisations to deliver integrated services and maximise outcomes.
- Responsible for ensuring high standards of performance for children’s services validated by external inspection are improved and maintained.
- Responsible for ensuring that services comply with statutory requirements and are targeted to deliver improved outcomes for children and families, particularly narrowing the gap for vulnerable groups.
- Lead the strategic implementation of children’s social care reform, with a focus on early help, family support, safeguarding, placement sufficiency, permanence and improved outcomes for children in care and care leavers.
- Ensure the Council is well prepared for external inspection and assurance arrangements across children’s social care, SEND and education, with clear evidence of impact, continuous improvement and effective partnership working.

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- Ensure the Council fulfils its statutory responsibilities in relation to education and schools.
- Manage the range of budgets made available to the function and ensure that resources are deployed to best effect; provide value for money; are well monitored and controlled; and that services are managed within budget and appropriate audit trails are developed for existing and new funding streams.
- Act as change champion to translate organisational ambitions into real achievements. The role has to balance internal and external focus to ensure the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of the Council.
- Agree and implement GDPR transparency requirements, including Privacy Notice, Subject Access Requests and Data Protection Impact Assessments.

Essential Qualifications

- Relevant degree or professional qualification, or relevant professional experience.
- Evidence of work-related continuing managerial and professional development.

Knowledge & Experience

- Significant senior management experience within children's services is essential, with demonstrable experience of leading complex statutory services and delivering improvement across children's social care, SEND and/or education.
- Experience of managing within a complex and diverse organisation which operates within a political environment.
- Detailed knowledge and understanding of the statutory, policy, strategic, and service delivery framework in which local government operates, and the major issues facing local government.
- Detailed knowledge and understanding of the national reform agenda affecting children's social care, SEND, alternative provision and education, and the ability to translate policy change into effective local strategy, service improvement and delivery.
- Experience of successfully working with elected or board members on complex issues, and the ability to work productively and closely with members and provide clear advice on policy decisions.
- A successful track record in corporate performance management and participation in the formulation of corporate objectives, policies and strategies.
- Demonstrable experience of partnership working, including the ability to influence and lead corporate and multi-agency projects and initiatives effectively.
- Experience of successfully promoting, leading, and managing transformation programmes involving structural and cultural change.

Essential Personal Attributes

- A high degree of political awareness and sensitivity, and commitment to working closely with all councillors, local organisations and communities.

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- Highly developed diplomatic skills, particularly in motivating, negotiating and persuading others outside the span of control, including partner organisations.
- A collaborative personal style, highly effective interpersonal skills including strong emotional intelligence; and highly effective presentational skills.
- The ability to work corporately and manage resources effectively in a complex environment, including the ability to interpret and understand complex financial and budgetary information, and to negotiate and influence to direct resources.
- Model and uphold the values and behaviours of the Council at all times.
- Positive, committed, adaptable, robust and confident approach.
- Ability to work under pressure and to motivate others to work quickly, without undue stress, and demonstrate a duty of care.
- Innovative and creative approach to change and acts as a role model for change.
- Personal integrity.
- Drive and self-motivation; a 'can-do' attitude.
- The ability to think creatively and innovatively in developing, recommending and leading strategic initiatives and policies to assist in the achievement of organisational goals.
- Sound judgment in devising and evaluating options and dealing with complex issues.

Contacts

1. Members, the Chief Executive, Corporate Directors, Service Directors and equivalent levels in external bodies, private sector and partner organisations in order to advise, discuss, challenge and influence. Establish and lead partnership working with internal / external services / organisations and liaise with national bodies.
2. Manage complex political relationships. Manage relationships with key stakeholders and delivery partners including negotiation of complex political / strategic / commercial issues.
3. Direct management of:
 - Children's social care
 - Education services

Planning and Decisions

- Set the long-term direction for Children's Services within the Council's overall strategy, ensuring that plans are realistic, financially sustainable and capable of responding to changing demand, national reform and inspection expectations.
- Make significant decisions where there is no single clear answer, balancing statutory duties, safeguarding responsibilities, political priorities, financial pressures and the needs of children, young people and families.
- Use evidence, professional judgement and risk assessment to advise the Chief Executive, Members and Corporate Leadership Team on complex and sensitive issues affecting children's services.
- Prioritise resources and activity across a large, complex service area, making choices that support improved outcomes, value for money and the Council's wider ambitions.
- Anticipate future risks and opportunities, including changes in legislation, policy, demand, workforce and partner capacity, and adjust plans accordingly.

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- Ensure decisions are made in a way that reflects a corporate, “one council” approach, with clear links between service priorities, partner contributions and wider council outcomes.

Accountable

- Accountable for performance, budget and outcome delivery
- Scope of impact includes delivery of the whole Council’s strategic objectives.
- Responsible for the effective performance and delivery of the service provisions aligned within the Children’s Services function.
- The role has prime responsibility for a budget of c£300 million and for significant numbers of staff.

The above job summary is intended to describe the general nature and level of work performed by employees in this role. It is not intended to be a detailed list of all duties and responsibilities which may be required. This job summary will be supplemented and further defined by annual objectives, which will be developed in conjunction with the post holder. It will be subject to regular review and the Council reserves the right to amend or add to the accountabilities listed.