

SERVICE DIRECTOR

Quality Assurance, Safeguarding & Partnerships



Grade and Tier	Chief Officer – Band 4	Reference:	COFXXX
Reports to:	Strategic Director Children's Services	Job Type:	Strategic Leader
Role Purpose: - To provide strategic leadership and management of quality assurance, safeguarding, and partnership functions across Children's Services, ensuring statutory and regulatory compliance, continuous improvement, and the best possible outcomes for children and young people. - The role will champion high standards of practice, drive service transformation, and foster effective multi-agency working, with a particular focus on the quality of practice, commissioning arrangements and partnership development. - To take a lead on improvement for the directorate including preparedness for assurance. To work closely with our social work, education & skills teams, partners and experts by supporting us to be an outstanding team that delivers for both the council and the public.			
Member of federation consisting of Adults Health & Communities, Children's and Public Health Directorates; encouraging best use of resources, avoiding duplication and silo working, facilitating knowledge transfer across the senior team.			
Statutory and Key Responsibilities/Accountabilities To ensure that all statutory functions in relation to safeguarding and the principle social worker function are fulfilled, and that organisational systems and processes are in place to safeguard young people in Plymouth.			
Key Responsibilities			
Corporate and organisational - Act as the principal policy and professional advisor on Quality Assurance & Safeguarding and provide specific subject matter expertise and advice to Directors, Chief Executive and Members as required. - Provide strong, visible leadership and direction through compelling communication of the Council's vision and values to own Department, and partner organisations. - Representation and promotion of the Council across the city; regionally and nationally in relation to all matters concerning Quality Assurance and Safeguarding. - Ensure own department delivers the policies set by elected members, ensuring all staff understand and act on the aims of the organisation, to meet the needs of the people of Plymouth. - Embed climate change actions across the functions of the team, contributing to core reductions in support of the Council's pledge to become carbon neutral by 2030. - Respond to requests from elected members, scrutiny panels and service-user groups; this may require the chairing of meetings and taking decisions at short notice.			

- Provide strategic leadership for health, safety, and wellbeing across the directorate and Council, ensuring compliance with statutory duties and best practice.
- Provide tactical leadership during emergencies, acting as Duty Tactical Commander or supporting the Council Emergency Management Team as required.

Performance and Finance

- Lead the development and implementation of robust quality assurance frameworks, safeguarding arrangements, and partnership strategies across Children's Services, including Family Help, Education and Commissioning.
- Drive continuous improvement through audit, learning, and performance management, ensuring services are prepared for inspection and meet statutory requirements (e.g., OFSTED, Care Quality Commission (CQC)).
- Develop and deliver strategic plans to support service transformation, sustainability, and improved outcomes for children and young people.
- Oversee the implementation of the Children, Young People & Family Services Delivery Plans and report to relevant boards and panels.
- Strategic responsibility for workforce development and recruitment and retention and delivery of the strategic plans for the children's workforce, including oversight of the Social Work Academy and continuous professional development programmes.
- Provide visible leadership and professional advice on complex and high-risk cases, supporting staff and promoting a culture of excellence, equality, diversity, and inclusion.
- Lead and motivate multi-disciplinary teams, fostering a high-performance culture and positive organisational development.
- Manage significant budgets, ensuring effective financial control and value for money.

Customer and Communities

- Provide strategic oversight of safeguarding functions, including the Local Safeguarding Children Partnership, Independent Reviewing Teams, Allegations Management (LADO, participation and safeguarding in education arrangements).
- To have line management responsibility for the Social Work Academy, performance management team and the statutory role of PSW.
- Ensure and deliver robust systems to monitor and assure the effectiveness of Children's services, including the safety and protection of children, learning from audits and reviews.
- Lead on the development and maintenance of safeguarding policies and procedures, ensuring compliance with legislation and best practice.
- Represent the Council in safeguarding matters with partner agencies locally, regionally, and nationally.

Partnerships and external relationships

- Develop and maintain strong relationships with partner agencies (e.g., health, police, education, voluntary sector) to enable system-wide approaches to safeguarding and service delivery.
- Lead the commissioning strategy and targeted support functions, ensuring services are responsive to identified needs and risks, and deliver value for money.

- Act as the strategic link to partnership boards, including Youth Justice, Corporate Parenting, and Children in Care Council. Governance - Ensure robust performance management, data analysis, and reporting systems are in place to drive service improvement and inform strategic decision-making. - Ensure compliance with all legal, audit, health and safety, and information governance requirements.	
Role Accountabilities	Role Outcomes
Corporate and Organisational - Lead the Quality Assurance, Safeguarding & Learning & Development teams - Build a consistent approach to leadership styles across the organisation to derive an empowered leadership culture. - Representation and promotion of the Council across the city; regionally and nationally in relation to all matters concerning Quality & Safeguarding across Children's Services. Performance and Finance - Management of people, services, resources and budgets (c. 42 staff, £2.6m) making decisions on structure and efficiency as required. Overseeing the budget for learning & development services, ensuring resources are allocated effectively. - Leadership across Children's Services ensuring quality, value, performance and direction in line with Governmental, Corporate, and Strategic targets - Monitoring and evaluating the quality and effectiveness of services, making improvements where necessary. - Ensuring that services meet regulatory standards and are compliant with relevant legislation.	- Teams are high-performing, cohesive, and deliver consistently excellent services. - A unified, empowered leadership culture is embedded, with leaders modelling the Council's values and driving positive organisational change. - The Council's reputation is enhanced locally, regionally, and nationally as a leader in safeguarding and quality practice, evidenced by positive external feedback and recognition. - Organisational vision and values are clearly communicated and understood, resulting in staff alignment and engagement. - Services operate within budget, with resources allocated efficiently to maximise impact and value for money. - Continuous improvement is evidenced through audit, inspection, and performance management, with services consistently meeting or exceeding statutory and regulatory requirements (e.g., Ofsted, CQC). - Strategic plans are delivered, supporting transformation and improved outcomes for children and young people. - The workforce is skilled, motivated, and well-supported, with effective recruitment, retention, and professional development (including oversight of the Social Work Academy).

- Supporting the recruitment, training, and development of staff within Children's Services and specifically children's social care. Customer and Communities - Collaborating with service users, families, and other stakeholders to gather feedback and improve services. Partnerships and External Relationships - Develop, support and lead strategic partnerships within the city, focused on improving the wellbeing of the citizens of Plymouth Governance - Overseeing Quality, Safeguarding and Learning & Development, to ensure compliance with statutory functions.	- High-risk and complex cases are managed effectively, with robust professional advice and support for staff. - Performance management systems drive service improvement and inform strategic decision-making. - Service users, families, and partners are actively engaged in service design and evaluation, with feedback mechanisms leading to demonstrable improvements. - Safeguarding functions (including the Local Safeguarding Children Partnership, Independent Reviewing Teams, and LADO) are robust, transparent, and responsive to community needs. - Policies and procedures reflect best practice and are regularly updated in response to learning from audits, reviews, and stakeholder input. - Strong, effective partnerships are established and maintained with key agencies (health, police, education, voluntary sector), enabling system-wide approaches to safeguarding and service delivery. - The Council is recognised as a strategic leader in partnership boards (e.g. Youth Justice, Corporate Parenting, Children in Care Council), influencing city-wide priorities and outcomes. - Commissioning strategies and targeted support are responsive to identified needs and risks, delivering value for money and improved outcomes for children and families. - All statutory functions are fulfilled, with robust systems in place for performance management, data analysis, and reporting. - Services are fully compliant with legal, audit, health and safety, and information governance requirements. - The directorate is well-prepared for external assurance and inspection, with evidence of continuous improvement and learning.
Essential Qualifications and Experience	Essential Skills and Behaviours

Qualifications - Professional qualification in Social Work (or equivalent) and registration with Social Work England. - Evidence of continued professional development; management qualification desirable. Experience - Extensive experience of strategic leadership in children's services, safeguarding, and quality assurance. - Proven track record of leading multi-disciplinary teams and partnership working across agencies. - Experience of commissioning, service transformation, and managing large budgets. - Experience of preparing for and managing regulatory inspections. Knowledge - In-depth understanding of safeguarding, quality assurance, commissioning, and partnership working in children's services. - Thorough knowledge of relevant legislation, statutory guidance, and regulatory frameworks. - Awareness of current policy drivers and best practice in children's social care and education. Other Requirements - Enhanced DBS check required. - Ability to work flexibly, including evenings and weekends as necessary. - Commitment to the Council's values, behaviours, and corporate parenting responsibilities.	- Able to be a collaborative system leader across council with focus on culture change and transformational leadership. - Able to effectively manage and motivate a diverse team of employees, enabling them to deliver quality customer services. - Able to translate complex strategies into what is required to deliver cultural, organisational and technological improvements. - Able to work as part of a high-functioning non-silo'd Directorate Team - Able to translate vision, complex concepts, financial information, principles and practices into clear compelling organisational strategies and plans. - Business planning skills - including analysing demand, priorities, trends and predicting future customer needs. - Commercial acumen to be able to interpret and interrogate complex financial and other information. - Ability to think innovatively to identify income generation opportunities/income streams in own Department in line with Council vision. - Able to understand performance management systems and methods to drive continuous improvement for customers. - Ability to influence, coach and mentor others to improve and build a high-performance culture. - Authentic and effective communication skills. - Ability to challenge in a constructive manner, not afraid to tackle difficult behaviour and situations. - Stakeholder management skills within the public and private sector. Ability to develop and maintain effective dialogue and develop trust with stakeholders including other Service Directors, Directors, CMT, politicians and partners who provide of key public services, to protect and promote the best interests of the city. - Ability to deal with competing interests while maintaining effective working
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	relationships and a productive work environment. • Advanced negotiation and influencing skills, with the ability to establish pragmatic solutions and agreed outcomes. • Political awareness and acumen. • Innovative and able to challenge traditional ways of doing things in a positive, constructive way.
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