# Director of Childrens’ Services

## Join us – make a difference in our communities

West Sussex as an area is rapidly changing with increasing pressures from our demographics, continuing challenges to provide our residents and communities with greater levels of choice to support improved outcomes in their lives and of course we need to do this within tighter financial constraints. We recognise therefore, in common with most of local government, our organisation, working with and alongside our partnerships, has a challenging time ahead.

Our vision is to ensure that all our children achieve their full potential by putting the child first in everything we do. This involves rethinking how we see children in their family setting, how we really listen to and act upon what they are telling us, and how we keep children safe, respond to their needs and act with care and compassion. Key to our approach is to work with children and families using a strengths-based relationship model across the department, focussed on supporting children and families to achieve sustainable outcomes. The work to embed these approaches has had a tangible impact on the services we provide.

Following the ‘inadequate’ rating by Ofsted in its inspection of services in West Sussex for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers in May 2019, the County Council made a public commitment to change. Significant progress has been made and the foundations have now been put in place to deliver the best service for our children and young people, but the work to realise our ambitions in full continues.

## About the job

You’ll provide professional leadership for the County Council’s statutory social services functions for children. You will work in collaboration with local partnerships and networks and be accountable for co-ordinating services across a diverse range of needs including, children’s social care, life-long services, children’s safeguarding, high risk adolescents and integrated prevention and earliest help.

We aim to address inequality in education and learning, and level up the quality of provision where it does not meet the needs of all. This means that you will provide leadership in securing the strategic direction in collaboration with schools and education providers to achieve joint ambitions.

Our SEND and Inclusion Strategy describes our vision for all children and young people (0-25 years) in West Sussex, irrespective of their learning needs or abilities, to gain the skills and confidence to live well in their community. To realise this, you will ensure that our plans to address areas identified following our recent Area SEND inspection are delivered alongside our partners.

Working with elected members and as a member of our Executive Leadership Team, the successful candidate will continue our improvement journey to ensure better outcomes for individuals and communities across our five core priority outcomes;

1. Best start in life, essential

2. Prosperous place,

3. Strong, safe and sustainable places,

4. Independence in later life, and

5. A council that works for the community

The successful candidate will continue our improvement journey and build upon the work undertaken to address previous concerns.

## What you’ll need to succeed

* Credibility and evidence of success as a senior leader in children and family services, working collaboratively to lead a performance focussed culture, which delivers high quality outcomes within our available resources.
* A proven track record of leading colleagues to transform services and achieve significant, sustainable, service improvements and better outcomes for children and families.
* Extensive experience of operating successfully at a strategic and corporate management level, leading, shaping and influencing innovative and high-quality practice in high performing teams and services.

## Job details

Grade: Senior Manager Group

Directorate Group: Children, Young People & Learning

Location: Chichester

* DBS check is a requirement of this post
* This is a politically restricted post

## Accountable to

Chief Executive

## Key responsibilities

Discharge all statutory responsibilities of the Director of Children’s Services, with responsibility for all matters relating to children’s social care, life-long learning, children’s safeguarding, high risk adolescents and early help.

Provide leadership for the further transformation of services for which you have responsibility, providing economically sustainable solutions.

Strategic lead for delivering on our ambitions and outcomes for giving children the best start in life and the associated key performance indicators.

Establish, develop and maintain effective partnership working with all partners, key stakeholders and other statutory and voluntary agencies delivering services to families, children’s and young people.

Leading on all aspects of Corporate Parenting to ensure excellent outcomes are achieved for looked after children.

Provide guidance and support to Cabinet and Members in translating their political objectives and priorities into coherent initiatives that will deliver their intended outcomes for West Sussex.

Create a cohesive, responsive management team who are able to drive through change, work with partners and achieve best value for money and positive outcomes for residents.

Provide strong, visible and motivational leadership across the Council and its partners to build a culture of high performance.

Inspire and support the delivery of the County Council’s ambitious objectives and deliver outcomes in line with the West Sussex Plan ensuring the health, safety and wellbeing of children and young people in the county.

Working collaboratively with all Executive Directors and Assistant/Deputy Directors to ensure the delivery of agreed priority outcomes for individuals, communities and collaboration and partnership.

As a member of the Executive Leadership Team, you will be expected to lead by example, role modelling our values and work collaboratively and cohesively to deliver the West Sussex Plan. Leading with value-based behaviours, you will create a workforce who are committed to our organisational values and cultural aspirations.

## Our Values

You will lead, promote and demonstrate the values of our organisation.

* Trust and Support
* Listen and Act Upon
* Customer Centred
* Honest and Realistic
* Genuinely Valued

You will lead, promote and demonstrate the cultural ambition of our organisation:

*“We have an inclusive and supportive culture, work in partnership and reward individual and team contribution”*

##  Person Specification

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| Criteria | Essential (E) or Desirable (D) | How assessed:Application (A),Interview (I), Assessment (As) |
| Qualifications |
| Relevant professional qualification (incl. professional body registration where applicable) with substantial evidence of relevant continuing professional development | E | A |
| Knowledge and experience |
| Broad knowledge and understanding of public sector service delivery and strategic commissioning approaches. | E | A, I |
| In-depth knowledge and effective application of the national agenda relating to children and young people. | E | A, I |
| Substantial experience of commissioning and managing at a senior level in Children’s Services. | E | A |
| Experience in all aspects of change management. | E | A |
| Recent experience of successfully leading delivery and transformation in a large public sector organisation. | E | A, I |
| Experience of leading successful transformational change programmes working with a wide range of stakeholders, including practitioners, staff and residents.  | E | A, I |
| Evidence of successfully managing competing budgetary priorities within the tight financial limits, with increasing demand and delivering effectiveness and value for money.  | E | A, I |
| Key Skills & Abilities |
| Excellent interpersonal, communication and negotiating skills. | E | I, As |
| Commercial/business acumen and strong awareness of changes in the external environment. | E | I, As |
| Structured, and able to set and meet tight deadlines. | E | A, I |
| Able to work effectively within a political environment. | E | I, As |
| A commissioner and collaborator who can develop productive relationships with a varied and broad range of stakeholders and communities. | E | I, As |
| Able to motivate and develop staff and promote team working. | E | I, As |
| Innovative and influential | E | I, As |
| Consultative leadership and encouraging style | E | I, As |
| An effective corporate team player | E | I, As |
| Ability to network and establish effective relationships and influence them to adopt required policies and standards | E | I, As |
| Additional Specific Requirements |
| Willingness and ability to travel inside and outside of the county | E | A |
| Confident manner and resilience | E | I, As |

JD Code:

Standard Occupational Code:

Date: August 2024