

Job Description and Person Specification



Executive Director of Childrens Services - Childrens Services Directorate

Salary:	£140,683 - £151,033
Job Family:	SM16
Working hours:	37 hours per week.
Work base:	The Cube, in Corby.
Responsible to:	Chief Executive North Northants Council

We are delighted that you are considering joining our team at North Northamptonshire Council.

By recognising that our employees are our greatest asset, we invest in, value and develop them to progress our ambition to be an employer of choice. Our corporate values and behaviours also encourage customer focus, efficiency and support our employees to achieve.

Main Purpose

As a member of the Corporate Leadership Team, the post holder will:

- Undertake the statutory duties of Director of Children's Services (DCS) for North Northamptonshire Council.
- Provide leadership and oversight of the provision of Children's Services, to address the local needs of all children and young people and ensure a joined-up high quality, value for money services are provided. This includes the most disadvantaged and vulnerable, their families and carers.
- Be responsible for the contract management and effective service delivery of the Northamptonshire Children's Trust (NCT), working closely with the DCS for West Northamptonshire.
- Be responsible for the delivery of the Education functions of the local authority.

- Work closely with the Chief Executive, Members, and peers to drive forward the Council's vision, strategic priorities, and objectives; ensuring the needs of children and young people and Children's Trust service delivery plans are aligned to these.
- Lead officer for Ofsted and inspections.

Role Responsibilities

Strategic Leadership and Management

- Engage with senior political and managerial leaders to ensure Children's Services meet legal and statutory obligations and effective and transparent scrutiny arrangements are in place.
- Lead on the contract management of the Children's Trust contract; managing the client relationship, developing relationships with the Children's Trust Board and monitoring service delivery outcomes and performance in accordance with statutory requirements, agreed operational plans and KPI's. As part of this management, liaise with the DCS of West Northamptonshire Council where applicable.
- Be a fully participating member of the Council's corporate leadership team (CLT), to drive strategy report on Children's Services performance and champion the delivery of the Council's vision and strategy with Councillors, partners, community representatives, and colleagues.
- Drive transformational change, fostering and leading a culture of continuous improvement that reflects the values of the Council and encourages creativity and commercial acumen within a public service ethos.

Core Responsibilities

- Discharge the responsibilities of the statutory Director of Children's Services (DCS) for North Northamptonshire Council as defined by the Department for Education to ensure that the Council effectively meets its statutory duties as a Corporate Parent, in accordance with section 18(2) of the Children Act 2004.
- Fulfil the Councils' statutory responsibilities in respect of partnership working, the Local Safeguarding Children's Partnership arrangements, Health and Wellbeing Boards and Community Safety Partnerships and lead on the children's safeguarding agenda. Act as the office holder under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act of 2006.
- Professional leadership, oversight and contract management of Children's social care services to meet the Council's legal and statutory obligations and reduce the need for statutory intervention.
- Operate in a complex multi-agency environment, building productive working relations and collaborative arrangements with the Children's Trust, internal and external partners to ensure effective and integrated mechanisms are in place to support vulnerable children transitioning to adulthood.
- Ensure that all direct delivery services and commissioned arrangements for Education and Early Help services are focused on improving outcomes for Northamptonshire's Children and Young People and achieve best value for the Council.
- Ensure that Children's Education and Early years services are designed and delivered to the highest Ofsted standards and within legislative requirements; involving service users to achieve a more customer-centred service delivery model whilst providing value for money and maximising available resources.
- Demonstrate improvement in services to external regulator and inspection bodies such as Ofsted, by developing robust governance and control, performance management and reporting, which supports effective decision making and delivers assurance.
- Responsible for the delivery of the Learning, Skills and Education services across North Northamptonshire and lead pupil place planning and the capital programme to support the delivery of plans in cooperation with schools.
- Develop and lead a culture of continuous improvement and customer focus within services, develop employees by setting targets, managing, and monitoring performance and putting in place improvement plans that provide value for money, cost effective systems and improved outcomes for children and young people.

- Manage resources efficiently and effectively, to ensure that there are sufficient financial, human, and other resources to deliver high quality services and creates a working environment which encourages creative thinking, innovative practice and risk-based decision making.
- Manage the Council's Children's services budgets, including the financial performance of the Children's trust to ensure that financial targets are met, systems are in place to identify pressure areas, respond appropriately and take remedial action where necessary.
- To develop initiatives and secure funds to enable change and improvement in services.
- Represent the Council at regional and national networking forums, keeping abreast of latest research and best practice and continually reviewing the impact of local and national policies to develop appropriate strategic responses to ensure the Council meets its statutory obligations and organisational priorities.
- Attend meetings in the evenings and act as 'Duty Director' in the case of emergencies as determined by the CLT rota.

Political Interface and Member Relations

- Develop and maintain effective working relationships with all elected Members to foster a positive and productive interface between Members and officers across the Council.
- Provide high quality, timely professional advice and guidance to Elected Members, Regulators, senior leadership colleagues and other stakeholders on any legislative changes and issues that have a children's service-related impact on the Council, including the performance and contract monitoring outcomes of Children's Trust services.
- To support Members in formulating strategic policy, direction, performance of services, providing professional advice, reports, and briefings to members on all matters relating to Children's Services.
- Promote a culture of political awareness amongst officers to help translate political will into appropriate future strategies and delivery of objectives.

Leading Partnerships, Collaboration and Managing Reputation

- Build, nurture and maintain effective relationships with local, regional, and national partners including Central Government and Ofsted, to optimise the Council's strategic objectives.
- Influence a range of policy makers, public bodies, partners, and suppliers to ensure the Council is well positioned to meet existing objectives and new challenges.
- Develop and maintain excellent partnership and other working arrangements with key stakeholders and regulators (both internal and external to the Council).

To undertake any other duties commensurate with the role.

Person Specification

Qualifications

- Educated to degree-level or equivalent in a relevant subject, or equivalent by experience.
- Educated to relevant post-graduate or professional qualification in a relevant subject.
- Evidence of continuous professional development.
- Hold appropriate membership of a professional body.

Background and Experience

- Significant post-qualification experience gained either in the public, private or voluntary sector operating in a senior leadership role, with a proven track record of delivering successful Children's Services in a multi-disciplined and complex environment.
- Extensive experience of strategic planning and service delivery within local or central government or private sector, with demonstrable and proven record of achievement in same. This will include experience of developing and implementing planning, commissioning, and performance frameworks in a multi-disciplinary and partnership environment.

- Demonstrable experience and evidence of being able to understand and respond to the lived experience of children and families.

Experience and success in

- Leading organisational and transformational change and driving through service improvement; including the re-engineering of services in response to changing needs and demands. leading and developing high performing, professional teams.
- Effective partnership working, networking and collaboration; developing and maintaining positive and productive relationships with a range of internal and external stakeholders and strategic partners.
- Driving cultural change and organisational vision and values.
- Operating in a political environment, providing professional advice and guidance to, and building effective working relationships with senior managers and elected Members.
- Developing strategic financial and risk-based policies and plans.
- Demonstrable achievement in successfully managing budgets in a demanding public arena.
- Demonstrable experience of successful contract management and customer relationship management.

Skills and Knowledge

- Excellent current working knowledge and understanding of local government issues, emerging trends, policy developments, legislation, and statutory requirements.
- Knowledge and understanding of Children's Services national agenda; including knowledge of relevant regulatory and inspection frameworks and the ability to translate this into local solutions.
- Demonstrable leadership skills: specifically, the ability to 'take people' with you and promote organisational vision and values.
- Experience of leading a large directorate within a complex and diverse organisation, and leading constant change and transformation, establishing a mandate for change and inspiring the workforce to improve.
- Highly developed interpersonal, advocacy and communication skills, with ability to engage a range of audiences and positively represent the Council. Strong reporting writing and presentation skills
- Ability to see the big picture, interpret it and develop relevant strategies, plans and deliverables.
- Ability to encourage and engender collaborative working and build positive relationships with external agencies, partners, and internal and external stakeholders.
- Political awareness and the ability to work successfully within a political environment through effective working relationships with Elected Members.
- Ability to challenge delivery practices and where appropriate, champion and drive alternative solutions that align to the Council's vision and strategy.
- Excellent knowledge of the impact of underlying demographic, social or political drivers, and understands the formal and informal politics at the regional and national level and what this means for the Council.
- Ability to learn from experience and to share that learning through future actions to improve service delivery and performance.
- Strong management skills, with ability to make informed decisions, and build and maintain successful relationships and networks.
- Ability to respond quickly and innovatively in order to manage and enhance the Council's reputation.
- Strong influencing and negotiating skills.
- Strong financial and budget management skills.
- Highly developed analytical and problem-solving skills, able to work strategically and apply sound judgement.

Personal Qualities

- Passionate about putting children and young people at the heart of service delivery.

- Positive role model for behaviours and culture.
- Collaborative and strategic leader – able to motivate and work across boundaries and achieve performance and results through others.
- Sound judgement in devising and evaluating options and dealing with complex issues.
- Demonstrable evidence of policy judgement, political awareness, and astuteness.
- Flexible and able to meet competing demands and challenging circumstances.
- Ability to work under pressure and deliver outcomes at pace.
- Robust and resilient, with drive and self-motivation.
- Personality and credibility that engages and commands the confidence of all stakeholders.
- Innovative and forward looking with a ‘can-do’ attitude.
- Commercially and financially astute and customer focussed.
- Ethical, accountable behaviour and a personal commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusivity.
- Ability to build rapport and relationships with ease, quickly gaining trust.

Our Values and Behaviours

Our values define who we are and how we operate, by forming the foundation for how we interact with our customers, colleagues and provide our services. They are also at the forefront of our decision making and delivery and include:

	Customer-focused	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Think ‘One Team’ and act Council-wide • Take ownership and do the right thing • Keep customers up-to-date and informed • Listen and respond to differing needs
	Respectful	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embrace and live the Council’s values • Listen to and value the contributions of others • Share ideas and feedback at all levels • Promote diversity and inclusivity
	Efficient	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenge and innovate • Be collaborative and share learning • Be flexible, proactive and prioritise • Seek learning opportunities
	Supportive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build an open and sustainable culture • Promote achievement and celebrate success • Be caring and empathetic • Develop yourself and others
	Trustworthy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Act with honesty and integrity • Build effective relationships • Do what you say you’re going to do • Be open and transparent

Our Key Commitments

Our key commitments help ensure that the priorities we make, now and in the future, maintain the necessary breadth of focus in those areas that we believe matter most.

Our key commitments are:

- **Active, fulfilled lives:** We will help people live healthier, more active, independent and fulfilled lives.

- **Better, brighter futures:** We will care for our young people, providing them with a high-quality education and opportunities to help them flourish.
- **Safe and thriving places:** We will enable a thriving and successful economy that shapes great places to live, learn, work and visit.
- **Green, sustainable environment:** We will take a lead on improving the green environment, making the area more sustainable for generations to come.
- **Connected communities:** We will ensure our communities are connected with one another, so they are able to shape their lives and the areas where they live.
- **Modern public services:** We will provide efficient, effective and affordable services that make a real difference to all our local communities.

Why choose us?

We offer a fantastic working environment including diverse and active staff networks, great flexible working opportunities and well as many other benefits, you will:

- Receive a generous annual leave allowance.
- Have access to our Employee Assistance Programme which offers a confidential service for employees and their families 24 hours a day / 7 days a week. The programme provides expert advice and counselling in areas such as finances, family and personal problems, work issues, health related problems, childcare and consumer rights.
- Join the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS), which is a tax approved occupational pension scheme with a generous employer contribution rate, immediate life cover and ill-health protection. Benefits are based on the length of your membership and final salary.

We are proud to be a recognised Disability Confident Employer and is committed to providing an inclusive recruitment process and will offer an interview to disabled applicants who meet the essential criteria for the role.

