



Post Title: Head of Service-SEND
Grade: SLMG-03

Job Purpose

To shape and lead the strategic direction of Children and Education Services, placing the needs and voices of children, young people, and families at the centre of all decision-making. The post holder will champion and embody the Council's vision, values, and priorities, ensuring these are reflected in all service strategies and interactions with partners, stakeholders, staff, and the wider community.

Success in this role will be measured by the ability to deliver ambitious, evidence-based outcomes that improve life chances for children and families. This will be achieved through clear, collaborative leadership, setting and communicating shared goals, and translating policy into effective local practice. The post holder will work closely with the Corporate Director for Children and Education Services, Elected Members, colleagues, and partners to foster a culture of high performance, continuous improvement, and innovation, supporting Nottingham's aspiration to be a world-class city for children and young people.

To provide strategic leadership of SEND services, embedding relational practice, co-production and clear accountability, ensuring children and young people with SEND are at the centre of planning, decision-making and service delivery, and that statutory duties are met in a timely and compassionate way.

This role requires a commitment to robust and transparent decision-making, underpinned by strong governance and effective risk management. The post holder will be responsible for ensuring that resources are allocated and managed to deliver value for money, meet statutory duties, and achieve the best possible outcomes for children and families. They will proactively build and sustain effective relationships with partners across education, health, social care, and the voluntary sector to deliver joined-up, future-ready services that reflect national best practice and are responsive to emerging needs.

Service Leadership Expectations

Leading People

1. Translate a clear vision and purpose by inspiring and motivating others and ensure citizens are at the heart of everything we do.
2. Role model visible leadership through living and breathing our values and balancing performance, resilience and wellbeing.
3. Develop workforce plans to ensure services have robust plans for the future capability and capacity needs.
4. Empower others to make appropriate decisions.
5. Builds and supports high performing teams and services through effective support, challenge and feedback.



Change and Innovation

1. Lead and drive change in a political and challenging public finances context.
2. Explore innovative approaches to deliver services, managing risks and actively being curious of market analysis and benchmarking.
3. Use robust project management principles to organise people and finances, delivering positive outcomes that are on time and within budget.
4. Design and deliver resilient services, responding at pace to re-prioritise objectives in line with the organisation's changing needs.
5. Lead change across services and drive a culture of continuous improvement by encouraging colleagues to share ideas.

Collaboration

1. Work collaboratively across the Council to achieve the best outcomes for the citizens of Nottingham.
2. Lead a culture of collaboration by working across boundaries to break down silos to deliver benefits to the citizens of Nottingham.
3. Proactively harness, develop and seek-out effective relationships to foster the collaborative culture, creating efficiencies and joined-up services to achieve the best outcomes for Nottingham's People.
4. Takes account of the council's priorities when negotiating and aligning resources to deliver services.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

1. Actively promote equality, diversity and inclusion through all actions, and positively challenge inclusion measures within the workforce and in the delivery of services.
2. Design and deliver fully inclusive services, demonstrating awareness of the diverse needs of our citizens.
3. Show commitment to attract, recruit and retain an inclusive workforce that represents our citizens and city.
4. Develop and support to release the full potential of all colleagues ensuring fairness, diversity and inclusion in all service leadership practices.
5. Recognise and respect a culture of inclusivity within the organisation where voices are respected, valued and heard.

Specific Duties

1. Provide strategic leadership within the Children's and Education Division, fostering high performance across Education, Social Care, Family Help, School Improvement, Inclusion, Commissioning, and Partnerships. Champion forward-



- thinking, innovative service delivery through collaborative working with Council teams and partners.
2. Establish and nurture effective partnerships with education, health, voluntary sector, and social care organisations to drive best practice throughout Children's and Education services.
 3. To provide strategic leadership and accountability for the development, delivery and continuous improvement of the SEND strategies.
 4. To ensure full compliance with UK SEND legislation, statutory guidance and reforms drive high-quality outcomes for children and young people, and embed an inclusive culture across education, health and care and parent-carer partners
 5. To ensure inclusion and equality across the SEND and wider inclusion system, so that all children and young people can access equitable opportunities, support and outcomes.
 6. Play an active role as a member of the Children's Services Senior Leadership Team, building strong relationships across children's services and the wider Council to maximise impact through both matrix management and direct delivery.
 7. Lead, support, and develop Service Managers and Team Managers, setting clear expectations and ensuring continuous improvement through robust performance management and open feedback.
 8. Drive innovation in service design and delivery, optimising resource management and aligning operations with Strategic Plans, underpinned by transparent objectives and effective governance.
 9. Champion sound financial management and sustainability by embedding the Council's Financial Accountabilities framework and Financial Regulations throughout all service activities.
 10. Translate national policy, legislation, reforms and statutory guidance into responsive local practice, ensuring services are compliant, adaptive, and future-focused.
 11. Develop, implement, and review service strategies that align with the Council's vision, corporate priorities, and the evolving needs of children and families.
 12. Allocate and manage resources to consistently meet statutory requirements, national performance standards, and inspection criteria, ensuring services are value for money and outcome focused.
 13. Embed child-centred and outcomes-based approaches across all services, maintaining full compliance with statutory duties, including those within the Children's Acts 1989 and 2004, Education Act of 1996 and Keeping Children Safe in Education statutory guidance.
 14. Promote a culture of continuous quality improvement through collaborative work with quality assurance functions, ensuring rigorous standards across all education and social care services.
 15. Maintain and enhance safeguarding and education standards, ensuring robust systems, clear accountability, and a commitment to ongoing learning and improvement.
 16. Participate flexibly in out-of-hours cover arrangements, supporting the Corporate Director and wider leadership as required.
 17. Ensure teams are equipped to deliver Council and Customer objectives, reporting effectively to key boards and partnerships such as Ofsted, Corporate Parenting Board, Children's Improvement Board, Children's Scrutiny, Quality Assurance Board, Partnership Assurance and Improvement Group, SEND Executive Leadership Group and Nottingham City Children's Safeguarding Partnership.
 18. Act as a role model for leadership excellence, inspiring colleagues and raising the profile of Children and Education Services to achieve better outcomes for children and families.



19. Advance the quality-of-service delivery and commissioning by developing robust performance management and quality assurance systems.
20. Ensure staff have access to current research, training, and development adapting services to local needs and offering focussed support to the most vulnerable.
21. Leverage professional and technical expertise to inform Council commissioning and delivery strategies, fostering consistency and high standards of practice.
22. Embrace innovation, applying fresh thinking to all aspects of service delivery and policy, and effectively managing legal and strategic implications.
23. Contribute to developing leadership capacity and talent across the Council, coaching and motivating staff to achieve excellence.
24. Embed a culture of ongoing development and professional challenge across the workforce, integrating quality assurance and support at every level of education.
25. Lead on regional and national initiatives, conducting horizon scanning to ensure services remain progressive and future ready.

This is not a complete statement of all duties and responsibilities of this post. The post holder may be required to carry out any other duties as directed by a supervising officer; the responsibility level of any other duties should not exceed those outlined above.

This is a politically restricted post under the provision of Section 2(1) (c) of the Local Government Housing Act 1989

All senior leaders are expected to:

- Undertake any other duties allocated by the Chief Executive
 - Work outside of normal office hours where required
 - Participate on an on-call Emergency Response rota if required
 - Travel within and outside the city's boundaries when required.
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Person Specification: Head of SEND

AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY	REQUIREMENT	MEASUREMENT			
		P	A	A C	D
	Experience as a service leader in a complex organisation with similar responsibilities, budget and resources.		x		
	Evidence of a successful track-record of creating a vision for service delivery, translating clear objectives to deliver outcomes that make a positive difference.		x		
	Evidence of successful involvement in building the reputation of services and inspiring people to deliver continuous improvement.		x		
	Evidence of driving accountability, balance risk and respect good governance and ensuring understanding at all levels.		x		
	Evidence of financial and commercial awareness with strong analytical skills and a creative approach to problem solving.		x		
	Demonstrate an understanding of the current issues and challenges facing local government in general and Nottingham City Council in particular.		x		
Leading People	Evidence of successfully leading and motivating people and cultivating a culture that creates high performing people and services.		x		
	Evidence of empowering others to take decisions and follow through confident actions, through strong and visible leadership.		x		
	Evidence of successful strategies in managing your own personal resilience and wellbeing at a leadership level and role modelling this practice.		x		
	Evidence of planning for the future delivery of services, including the effective workforce planning for capacity and capability challenges.		x		
	Evidence of leading change programmes, bringing others on the journey with you.		x		



Change and Innovation	Evidence of innovative service delivery models that continue to provide high quality services within a smaller financial scope.		x		
	Evidence of leading services or teams and experience of having to re-focus service priorities at pace following changes outside of the organisation's control.		x		
	Experience of developing cultures of continuous improvement where people feel included and involved.		x		
Collaboration	Evidence of working successfully in partnership across different sectors and fostering / harnessing partnerships.		x		
	Evidence of actively working to develop a culture of collaboration.		x		
	Understanding of how to operate effectively and openly within the democratic process with the political acumen and ability/skills to develop productive working relationships with Councillors and to speak truth to power.		x		
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	A deep understanding of equality, diversity and inclusion at every level and demonstrative experience in tried and tested methods to deliver inclusive services.		x		
	Demonstrating a thorough understanding of equality, diversity and inclusion challenges posed by providing quality public services in our multi-cultural city.		x		
	Demonstrating personal commitment to the equality, diversity and inclusion challenges faced by our workforce and Nottingham's people.		x		
	Evidence of developing people and services/teams recognises, respects, and values individual needs to achieve a culture of inclusivity.		x		
Role Requirements	Ability to provide strong strategic and operational leadership across complex Children's and Education services, including Social Care, Family Help, School Improvement, Inclusion, and Commissioning.		x		
	Proven experience of meeting and overseeing education and social care statutory duties within a local authority children's services context.		x		
	Evidence of leading and implementing full compliance with UK SEND legislation and statutory guidance across a local area.		x		
	To ensure inclusion and equality are embedded across the SEND and inclusion system.		x		



	Extensive experience contributing to and influencing senior leadership decision-making within a large organisation.		x		
	Strong experience of working collaboratively with a wide range of partners including education, health, voluntary sector, police, and community organisations.		x		
	Ability to build effective relationships and influence across organisational boundaries to drive integrated service delivery and best practice.		x		
	Demonstrable experience of developing, implementing, and reviewing service strategies aligned to corporate priorities and statutory responsibilities.		x		
	Ability to manage performance across multiple services, ensuring high-quality, child-centred, and outcomes-focused practice.		x		
	Strong understanding of national policy, legislation, and statutory guidance related to children's social care, education, and safeguarding.		x		
	Ability to translate legislation and policy into effective, innovative operational practice		x		
	Deep understanding of safeguarding legislation, practice standards, and regulatory frameworks (including Ofsted).		x		
	Strong financial acumen, including experience of managing budgets and ensuring financial sustainability.		x		
	Substantial experience of managing Service Managers and Team Managers, including performance management and capability building.		x		
	Commitment to developing leadership capability across the organisation through coaching, mentoring, and talent development		x		
	Demonstrated ability to lead complex service transformation and improvement programmes.		x		
	Ability to use professional expertise to influence commissioning strategies and ensure consistency of practice.		x		



	Capacity to act as a senior role model, demonstrating the Council's values, behaviours, and commitment to improving outcomes for children and families.		x		
	Demonstrate analytical report writing		x		
	Ability to participate in senior management out-of-hours cover as required.		x		
Qualification requirement	Essential Qualifications				
	Appropriate professional qualification as a qualified and registered social worker or an equivalent and relevant qualification (at degree level). Or Qualified Teacher Status.	x	x		x
	Leadership and management qualification (ILM Level 7 or Equivalent) or commitment to work towards this.				
P- Pre-Application	A - Application	AC – Assessment Centre	D - Documentary Evidence		

Job Profile and Person Specification produced March 2026