

**North Northamptonshire Council
Role Profile
Executive Director of Children's Services (DCS)**

Salary: £130,000- £140,000

Responsible to: Chief Executive North Northamptonshire Council

Role Purpose

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

- Undertake the statutory duties of Director of Children's Services for North Northamptonshire Council.
- Provide leadership and oversight of the provision of Children's Services, which address the local needs of all children and young people, including the most disadvantaged and vulnerable, and their families and carers and provides high quality, value for money services in a joined-up way.
- Be responsible for the contract management and delivery of service outcomes of the Children's Trust; ensuring the effective delivery of Children's social care services across North Northamptonshire whilst also liaising with the DCS for West Northamptonshire Council where required.
- Be responsible for the delivery of the Education functions of the local authority.
- Work closely with the Head of Paid Service, Members, and peers to drive forward the Council's vision, strategic priorities, and objectives; ensuring the needs of children and young people and Trust service delivery plans are aligned to these.

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 senior management team, driving strategy and performance, reporting upon the performance of Children's Services; and championing 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.
- Participate in the Council's Duty Gold on-call rota, providing resilience and major incident response leadership when required, and to undertake appropriate training as set out in the emergency response plan and ensure these skills are kept up to date.

Shaping the new unitary

- Lead the transformation plan, ensuring service redesign, transformation and integration is undertaken within a clear plan and deliverable financial targets. This will include playing a key role in the establishment of Education Services.

- Work closely with the Chief Executive of the Children’s Trust and other senior leads to jointly develop the future Children and Young Persons strategy that maximise opportunities and meet the needs of Children and Young People across the county.
- Establish a strong, financial foundation and position that facilitates effective service delivery.

Core Responsibilities:

- Discharge the responsibilities of the statutory Director of Children’s Services 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.
- 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 delivered through the Children’s Trust, operating in a multi-agency context, meeting the Council’s legal and statutory obligations, and ensuring communities across Northamptonshire have access to high quality children’s services that reduce the need for statutory intervention.
- Ensure that all direct delivery services and commissioned arrangements for education and Early Help services achieve best value for the Council and are focused on improving outcomes for Northamptonshire’s Children and Young People
- Responsible for the delivery of the Learning, Skills and Education services across North Northamptonshire.
- Work closely with the Children’s Trust, Adult Services, Public Health, and other external partners to ensure effective and integrated mechanisms are in place to support vulnerable children transitioning to adulthood.
- Fulfil the Councils’ statutory responsibilities in respect of partnership working, including in relation to the Local Safeguarding Children’s Partnership arrangements, the Health and Wellbeing Boards and Community Safety Partnerships.
- Lead and develop employees.
- Ensure that Children’s Education and Early years services are designed and delivered to the highest Ofsted standards and within legislative requirements; whilst providing value for money and maximising available resources.
- 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, 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.
- Demonstrate improvement in services to external regulator and inspection bodies such as Ofsted. Be the lead officer for Ofsted
- Lead on the children’s safeguarding agenda for the Council that promotes the welfare of children and young people in the area and ensures that safeguarding is a corporate and universal priority.
- Build productive working relations and collaborative arrangements with a wide range of stakeholders and partners, including private, voluntary, and other public sector organisations.
- Provision of high quality and timely advice to Elected Members, Regulators, senior leadership colleagues and other stakeholders or partners on best practice, external factors affecting

Children's services, legislative changes; and any issues relating to Council services which have a children's service-related impact on the Council.

- Foster and encourage a working environment which encourage 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, and systems are in place to identify pressure areas and respond appropriately, taking remedial action where necessary.
- Manage resources efficiently and effectively, ensuring that there are sufficient financial, human, and other resources to deliver high quality services.
- Develop robust governance and control, performance management and reporting, which supports effective decision making and delivers assurance.
- Lead on service user or children and young people involvement in order to meet the diversity of local needs and achieve a more customer- centred service delivery model.
- Secure the effective development of initiatives and funds to enable change and improvement in services.
- Continually review the impact of local and national policies and develop appropriate strategic response that enables the Council to consistently meet its statutory obligations and organisational priorities.
- Represent the Council at regional and national networking forums, keeping abreast of latest research and best practice.

Political Interface and Member Relations

- Develop and maintain effective working relationships with elected Members to foster a positive and productive interface between Members and officers across the Council.
- To support Members in formulating strategic policy, direction, and performance of services, providing professional advice, reports, and briefings to members on all matters relating to Children's Services.
- Regularly provide feedback to members regarding the performance and contract monitoring outcomes in regard to services delivered by the Children's Trust.
- Promote a culture of political awareness amongst officers to help translate political will into appropriate future strategies and delivery of objectives.
- Develop and build strong and productive relationships with councillors of all groups and to ensure that councillors are offered timely high-quality professional advice and guidance.

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.

Political Restriction and Other Requirements - This position is politically restricted

Person Specification

Director for Children's Services

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 to 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 including a personal commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusivity.
- Ability to build rapport and relationships with ease, quickly gaining trust.