

Kent County Council

Job Description: *Specialist Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children Independent Reviewing Officer*

Directorate:	Children, Young People and Education
Unit/Section:	Safeguarding and Professional Standards
Grade:	KR12
Responsible to:	Service Manager - Safeguarding and Professional Standards

Purpose of the Job:

Kent's proximity to mainland Europe and having a major seaport means unaccompanied asylum-seeking children regularly present to its Children's Social Work Service. The children arrive either within vehicles crossing the Channel by ferry or the Eurotunnel or on clandestine boats operated by organised criminal gangs. There is a range of demographics, but predominantly they are males, aged between 15 and 17 years old, from Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Eritrea and Sudan. Research and experience show that unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) are exposed to violence and trauma prior to arrival in the UK and present with a range of physical and mental health needs.

The Specialist UASC IRO as an authoritative professional, will provide independent quality assurance of the care and accommodation provided for UASC in Kent's Reception and Safe Care Service (RaSCS). The RaSCS is responsible for the care and accommodation of newly arrived UASC until they can be transferred to another local authority under the National Transfer Scheme (NTS). These children are placed in a range of accommodation including Reception Centres, Foster Care and Semi-Independent provision. The aim of the role is to ensure correct decisions and recommendations are made when planning, regulating and providing guidance in relation to UASC. This role will look at the quality of service to the cohort of UASC in the RaSCS but also involve reviewing plans for individual children. The role will challenge the effectiveness and quality of service decisions where necessary and escalate to senior management where appropriate.

The role is required to champion social work values by contributing to the continuous development and improvement of standards and outcomes for Children in Care, ensuring high quality social work intervention for those in need of protection. This will be achieved through applying the agreed model of intervention, multi-agency collaboration and focusing on the wider safeguarding agenda for Kent. The role will ensure legislative and statutory obligations, specifically those outlined in the IRO Handbook, directorate procedures and quality assurance are met and Kent fulfils responsibilities as the Corporate Parent.

Main duties and responsibilities:

- Review planning for individual children and act as an independent chair at meetings for children who have not transferred under the NTS by the required timescale.
- As an authoritative professional, challenging the effectiveness and quality of decision-making and escalating to senior management where necessary.

- To lead and participate in case audits on the quality of work with newly arrived UASC, analysing and challenging practice, identifying gaps and developing strategies for addressing shortfalls.
- Contribute to identifying agreed targets and outcomes and mechanisms for effective service delivery and performance indicator standards to ensure consistent high-quality service. Alongside having accountability for the development of policy and practice to ensure the service as responds to new and emerging changes to statutory guidance and best practice standards. To lead on specific projects for the improvement of child care planning.
- Support the professional development of both qualified and non-qualified RaSCS staff by disseminating key learning at a national and local level, providing reflective spaces and promoting relevant training opportunities.
- To contribute to the formulation, development and delivery of departmental and inter-agency strategy, policy and training regarding newly arrived UASC looked after children. Accountable for the delivery of this training for Integrated Children's Services and other KCC staff as well as staff from other agencies involved with Children in Care matters, to ensure they are fully aware of child in care issues and procedures.
- Respond to situations of crisis and emergency by coordinating service provision with internal and external partners.
- Participate in events to promote RaSCS as a centre of excellence for the initial assessment and support of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children on a local and national level.

Footnote: This job description is provided to assist the job holder to know what the main duties are. It may be amended from time to time without change to the level of responsibility appropriate to the grade of post.

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Person Specification: *Specialist Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children Independent Reviewing Officer*

The following outlines the criteria for this post. Applicants who have a disability and who meet the criteria will be shortlisted.

Applicants should describe in their application how they meet these criteria.

	CRITERIA
QUALIFICATIONS	<p>Recognised Social Work qualification - Degree in Social Work, CQSW, DiPSW, CSS Child Care award</p> <p>Registration as a Social Worker with the Social Work England</p> <p>Evidence of continuous professional and management development</p>
EXPERIENCE	<p>Substantial post qualifying experience gained from working within a front-line children's service at team leader/practice supervisor level or equivalent including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Undertaking complex assessments of a child's needs and/or risk.- Designing and implementing care/protection plans.- Monitoring and reviewing such plans over a period of time. <p>Providing social work supervision and support</p> <p>Experience of chairing complex meetings including strategy meetings</p> <p>Experience of working closely in partnership with key internal and external partners and across agencies to deliver successful outcomes.</p>
SKILLS AND ABILITIES	<p>Able to establish positive and effective working relationships with children to ascertain their wishes and feelings and engage with them in decision-making processes.</p> <p>Excellent negotiating, influencing and interpersonal skills including the ability to offer consultations on complex issues and deal with conflict, hostility, and vulnerability.</p> <p>Ability to challenge assertively and offer a critical perspective whilst maintaining professional integrity and deliver difficult messages with sensitivity.</p>
KNOWLEDGE	<p>Excellent knowledge and understanding of relevant legislative and policy frameworks and impact on RaSCS.</p> <p>Excellent knowledge and understanding of safeguarding policies and procedures.</p> <p>Excellent knowledge and understanding of social work theories and research relating to unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.</p> <p>Knowledge of the National Transfer Scheme and how it relates to KCC and RaSCS.</p>

	<p>Knowledge of age assessment processes and good practice.</p> <p>Knowledge and performance management indicators.</p>
<p>BEHAVIOURS AND KENT VALUES</p>	<p>Open</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Act with integrity, honesty and transparency • Demonstrate healthy attitude to risk • Welcome and expect change and evolving technology, work in new ways and be willing to learn • Work as a whole council • Treat people fairly and with respect <p>Invite contribution and challenge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work collaboratively to find new solutions • Innovate • Put the interests and wellbeing of customers first • Be open to challenge • Actively encourage and expect contribution <p>Accountable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take personal and professional responsibility for your actions and performance • Deliver at pace • Look for ways to save money • Focused on outcomes <p>Kent Values:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are brave. We do the right thing, we accept and offer challenge • We are curious to innovate and improve • We are compassionate, understanding and respectful to all • We are strong together by sharing knowledge • We are all responsible for the difference we make

Organisational responsibilities

All corporate directors, directors and senior managers have an explicit responsibility to deliver the collective agenda of the Council. These are fundamental elements of their role not an addition and are summarised as follows:

Whole Council

- Seek to improve the lives of all residents in Kent and economy of Kent
- Act as corporate parent to the Council's looked after children
- Take an active role in promoting and ensuring the Council's responsibilities for safeguarding are met.
- Understand, communicate and contribute to the delivery of KCC's strategic aims
- Meet statutory obligations and promote and ensure compliance with policies and procedures and the Council's Code of Conduct (Kent Code).
- Advise elected members and support the democratic process
- Promote the Council brand and enhance the overall reputation of the Council
- Understand and monitor the measures of performance, including customer insight, which define successful outcomes for KCC services
- Maintain and ensure a relentless focus on the customer
- Act to support the Council-wide need to deliver services within budget, thereby avoiding an overspend that could damage the financial viability of the Council
- Overcome professional and service silos to achieve the County Council's objectives.

Integration of Services

- Focus resources where they have the biggest impact
- Deliver services that are flexible and adaptable
- Integrate services within KCC and work with partner agencies to ensure a seamless customer experience
- Fully and inclusively engage all staff in the delivery of services, demonstrating the Council's leadership values and competencies.

Embedding Commissioning and Engaging relevant markets

- Establish an outcome focused organisation
- Meet the financial regulations and standing orders of KCC
- Challenge the status quo and engage with the market to constantly improve
- Ensure all services are delivered effectively and efficiently
- Proactively and continuously seek to improve service delivery
- Proactively manage risk to avoid inertia whilst not exposing the Council to needless and avoidable challenge or loss

Managing Change

- Understand and support the Authority's overall change agenda
- Deliver required outcomes of service specific change on time and to budget
- Understand the quality of staff, support their development, nurture those with talent
- Identify the skills for the future and the level of staff through robust workforce planning
- Identify and deal with underperformance.
- Deliver to agreed budget and income targets.