

Kent County Council

Job Description: *Accommodation Officer*

Directorate:	Children, Young People and Education
Unit/Section:	18+ Care Leaver Service, Integrated Children's Services
Grade:	KSE
Responsible to:	Accommodation Team Manager

Purpose of the Job:

Provide professional, practice-focused support to Kent Supported Homes Hosts, acting as a consistent point of professional guidance, challenge, and quality assurance, to enable Hosts to deliver safe, stable, and regulation-compliant accommodation and support. The role also supports Care Leavers and 16/17-year-old Children in Care where additional intervention is required to maintain placement stability.

Main duties and responsibilities:

- Manage a caseload of Kent Supported Homes Hosts including Independent Foster Agency Staying Put Hosts, and other providers, as their Single Point of Contact, providing professional oversight, guidance, and challenge to ensure Hosts meet contractual, regulatory, and safeguarding expectations.
- Develop and maintain an extensive knowledge of available resources to support providers in meeting the needs of the service users through a range of interventions including, direct management and signposting and supporting service users to access the voluntary sector for information, advice & guidance.
- Support integrated working with Social Workers, Personal Advisers and Hosts to identify the required outcomes that the Hosts must meet, in-line with the Service User's Pathway Plan (where appropriate). Build and maintain community links and optimise independence and wellbeing and support accommodation transition plans. Provide mediation and be an agent of negotiation between a range of providers and Social Workers/Personal Advisers and the Service Users.

- Support Hosts and senior managers when responding to emergency planning issues and ensuring there are business continuity arrangements in place at all times.
- Support Hosts to develop their practice through guidance, reflective discussion, and proportionate challenge, helping them to respond effectively to young people's behaviours, needs, and vulnerabilities. Support Hosts to understand professional boundaries, role expectations, and decision-making responsibilities within multi-agency arrangements, including when and how to escalate concerns.
- Work closely with Hosts to monitor, review and improve service delivery and ensure quality and outcome improvements are made where required in line with the Supported Accommodation (England) Regulations 2023.
- Support the Social Worker or Personal Adviser for each young person to ensure the correct housing related benefits or other payments are in place for their accommodation. Work with the Host, Personal Adviser, Accommodation Finance Officer/Benefits Adviser as required, to ensure that any issues in respect of DWP, KCC or provider payment collection and procedural issues are identified, responded to, and addressed.
- Where behavioural issues are identified, provide guidance and support to Hosts on proportionate responses, boundary setting, and escalation, to sustain placement stability.
- Travel countywide and out of county when required, to attend to the needs of a range of Hosts, young people, or to otherwise act as a representative of the KCC 18+ Care Leavers Service.
- Support with ongoing development of the service and remain flexible to service and service user needs.

Footnote: This job description is provided to assist the job holder to know what their 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: *Accommodation 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	Level 3 Diploma in a relevant subject, for example, education, training, guidance, counselling, youth and community work, health or social service work or work in the voluntary sector.
EXPERIENCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Experience of working in health or social care• Experience of multi-agency working• Experience of developing young person-centred plans and strategies in relation to behaviours and transition to adulthood and independence Experience of face-to-face work with Care Leavers in a formal or informal setting.• Experience of working with Care Leavers from a diverse range of backgrounds or specialist knowledge of the needs of Care Leaver from particular groups.• Experience of delivering Supervision and assessing needs for professional development within this framework.
SKILLS AND ABILITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Good negotiation skills and high level of interpersonal and communication skills at all levels.• Excellent administration skills• Ability to meet strict deadlines• Ability to plan and prioritise effectively• ICT literate with accurate record keeping skills• Identify issues which may need resolving via improved process or policy and recommend improvements to work practices when identified• Ability to work sensitively within a variety of contexts and adapt the way you work as appropriate• Innovative and creative problem solving and resource allocation in line with structural and systemic processes and boundaries.• Demonstrable ability in respect of setting boundaries and expectations of behaviours/support delivery for Service Users and the professionals supporting them.• Ability to provide professional challenge while maintaining supportive working relationships.

<p>KNOWLEDGE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working knowledge of The Children Act 1989 and 2004, Children’s (Leaving Care) Act 2000, the Children’s and Families Act 2014 and The Supported Accommodation Regulations 2023. • Knowledge of the Benefit systems/processes • Knowledge of accommodation processes for Care Leavers • Knowledge of the regulatory frameworks and quality standards for accommodation based services • Understanding of the needs of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and young people, and the associated processes • Awareness of Data Protection, GDPR and confidentiality issues • Awareness of and responsiveness to political issues
<p>KENT VALUES AND CULTURAL ATTRIBUTES</p>	<p>Kent Values:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are brave. We do the right thing, we accept and offer challenge <p><i>E.g. Professionally challenging a Host where practice no longer meets regulatory or safeguarding expectations, while maintaining a respectful and supportive relationship.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are curious to innovate and improve <p><i>E.g. Keeping knowledge of Supported Accommodation Regulations, benefits processes, and best practice up to date, sharing this learning with Hosts.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are compassionate, understanding and respectful to all <p><i>E.g. Recognising the emotional impact on Hosts supporting young people with complex needs and offers reassurance and containment during difficult periods.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are strong together by sharing knowledge <p><i>E.g. Acting as a consistent link between Hosts, PAs, Social Workers, and managers, reducing duplication and confusion.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are all responsible for the difference we make <p><i>E.g. Balancing responsiveness to need with fairness, consistency, and proportionate use of resources.</i></p>

	<p>Our values enable us to build a culture that is:</p> <p>Flexible/agile - willing to take (calculated) risks and want people that are flexible and agile</p> <p>Curious - constantly learning and evolving</p> <p>Compassionate and Inclusive - compassionate, understanding and respectful to all</p> <p>Working Together - building and delivering for the best interests of Kent</p> <p>Empowering - Our people take accountability for their decisions and actions</p> <p>Externally Focused - Residents, families and communities at the heart of decision making</p> <p>Applicants should be able to demonstrate how they have applied these values in practice when supporting carers, providers, or accommodation services working with young people who present with complex needs.</p>
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