

## Kent County Council

### Job Description: *Designated Social Care Officer (DSCO) for SEND*

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<b>Directorate:</b>	<b>Children, Young People and Education</b>
<b>Unit/Section:</b>	<b>Special Educational Needs and Disability</b>
<b>Grade:</b>	<b>KR12</b>
<b>Responsible to:</b>	<b>Interim Assistant Director for Quality Assurance and Social Work SEND</b>

#### **Purpose of the Job:**

The DCSO will have in-depth knowledge, and understanding of both social care operations and the SEND reforms agenda and will identify areas where social care requires improvements or is non-compliant with the SEND Code of Practice - generating solutions and implementing strategies and plans to address this - aligning these to social care's operational and business plans and statutory obligations.

You will be capable of working autonomously managing situations that are complex with potential levels of risk and uncertainty. Act as a role model and mentor to colleagues in SEND and residential special schools and identify and develop areas of knowledge and expertise for the role, sharing these with colleagues and other professionals. Take an active role in effective service working and understand the service's relationships with other services and partner agencies.

Contribute to training initiatives and deliver training to multi agency cohorts to increase the knowledge of SEND and social care in the wider professional community.

This role will strategically lead in framing and developing social care elements of the SEND strategy across the local authority, in compliance with legislative requirements of the SEND Code of Practice (2015). You will be responsible for fulfilling the Council's responsibility under section 85 & 86 Children Act 1989 and Children in long Term Care Regulations 2011; ensuring the wellbeing of children placed in residential school, children are properly safeguarded and plans for their wellbeing progressed.

#### **Main duties and responsibilities:**

- An operational and strategic role accountable for developing strategies, action plans and processes which support and enable the SEND reforms agenda to become embedded within social care operations and practice, improving links between social care services and the SEND system.
- Contributing to and influencing SEND organisational design, working alongside the development of 0-25 Children & Young People with Disabilities Service and its policies.
- Establishing and leading a network of social care SEND 'champions' and link workers across Children's Social Care. Facilitating and overseeing the implementation of the SEND agenda within social care through this network and gathering insight and intelligence from them and other groups such as the parent carer forum to inform future planning.
- Responsible for developing social care aspects of the Local Offer that provide relevant advice and information and meet all legislative requirements.
- Coordinate EHC assessments and reviews with other social care assessments and reviews ensuring that you collaborate with colleagues in other agencies to develop a joint approach in the production of EHC Plans including supporting social care practitioners to improve the quality of social care advice for EHC Plans.
- Working collaboratively with social care Assistant Directors and service managers to ensure social care meet statutory responsibilities under the Children & Families Act (2014) and Care Act (2014), and to drive forward organisational culture change aligned to the SEND reforms.
- Responsibility for framing social care elements of the local authority's self-evaluation process to ensure readiness for SEND Ofsted & CQC Inspections.
- Manage a small SEND caseload of children and young people placed in residential school by Kent County Council SEN department, where the child is not a Child in Care under sec 20 or sec 31 (CA1989), discharging the Councils Statutory duty to ensure 'the child's Welfare is... safeguarded and promoted while they are accommodated' (sec 85 & 86 CA1989).
- Work in partnership with the child, parents and carers, Health Service including Acute and Community Trusts and with Integrated Care Boards, Departments within Kent County Council, commercial and private sector, and voluntary bodies to identify and produce positive outcomes for children and their families within the context of the child's safety and wellbeing within residential provision.
- Attend, and if required chair, the weekly SEN Panel and High Cost Placement Panel and to ensure Social Care actions are communicated and followed up from the Panel as well as wider learning from Panel contributing to practice improvements.
- To "problem solve" in complex cases particularly where difference of opinion or potential differences may occur between partners (for example around funding) in meeting the child's needs.

- Maintain an awareness of child development, related theories, legislation, corporate and directorate policies, local and agency practices, in order to, inform practice, disseminate knowledge and contribute to the delivery of a high standard of service.
- Represent the County Council's SEND Service as and when required in Court/Tribunal in accordance with the County Council's procedures to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- Operate across a variety of SEN and Social Care teams to gain a diverse level of knowledge and experience that meets the appropriate practice level and a high standard of service delivery, including offering consultancy to practitioners across SEN, Children's Social Care and Adult Social Care.
- Engage with national DSCO community of practice and regional social care networks.

*\*For more information on the DCSO role in the SEND Tribunal process please [click here](#).*

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.

## **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.

## Kent County Council

### Person Specification: *Designated Social Care Officer (DSCO) for SEND*

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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.

	<b>CRITERIA</b>
<b>QUALIFICATIONS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Degree in Social Work, CQSW/DipSW or equivalent and registration as a social worker with Social Work England</li></ul> <p>A Full UK Driving Licence – The Council is committed to making reasonable adjustments so whilst this job requires the jobholder to drive your application will still be considered if you are unable to drive due to a disability.</p>
<b>EXPERIENCE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Diverse post qualification practice experience in Children and Families</li><li>• Experience of systemic practice e.g., Signs of Safety</li><li>• SEND Processes</li><li>• Knowledge, understanding and practice in relation to the implementation of SEND legislation, particularly within social care.</li><li>• Experience of successful working with a wide range of stakeholders including children and young people, parents and carers, and those within social care, education and health (including the voluntary sector).</li></ul>
<b>SKILLS AND ABILITIES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ability to supervise and develop student placements and other social work staff</li><li>• Good interpersonal skills to communicate effectively with children, families and colleagues</li><li>• Interest/desire to lead in training courses</li><li>• Supervisory, mediation and negotiation skills</li><li>• Ability to work effectively on own initiative as well as within a team</li><li>• Ability to build relationships and promote change</li><li>• Ability to think creatively and challenging the norms: existing practice, process, protocols.</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ability to travel across a wide geographical area in a timely and flexible manner at various times of the day</li> <li>• Commitment to equal opportunities and valuing diversity</li> <li>• Commitment to SWE Code of Conduct</li> <li>• Maintain confidentiality</li> </ul>
<b>KNOWLEDGE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good Working knowledge of relevant legislation and policies and procedures relating to Looked After Children, Children in Need and children in the Child Protection System, children placed in residential schools by SEND and SEND Code of Practice.</li> <li>• Good working knowledge of family relationships</li> <li>• Good understanding of Family Court Proceedings/SEND Tribunals</li> <li>• Good working knowledge of Assessment Framework</li> <li>• Understanding/knowledge of fostering, adoption and disability issues</li> <li>• Good understanding of attachment theory</li> </ul>
<b>KENT VALUES AND CULTURAL ATTRIBUTES</b>	<p><b>Kent Values:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We are <b>brave</b>. We do the right thing, we accept and offer challenge</li> <li>• We are <b>curious</b> to innovate and improve</li> <li>• We are <b>compassionate</b>, understanding and respectful to all</li> <li>• We are <b>strong together</b> by sharing knowledge</li> <li>• We are all <b>responsible</b> for the difference we make</li> </ul> <p>Our values enable us to build a culture that is:</p> <p><b>Flexible/agile</b> - willing to take (calculated) risks and want people that are flexible and agile</p> <p><b>Curious</b> - constantly learning and evolving</p> <p><b>Compassionate and Inclusive</b> - compassionate, understanding and respectful to all</p> <p><b>Working Together</b> - building and delivering for the best interests of Kent</p> <p><b>Empowering</b> - Our people take accountability for their decisions and actions</p> <p><b>Externally Focused</b> - Residents, families and communities at the heart of decision making</p>

