



Kent County Council

**Assistant Director – Safeguarding, Practice and
Quality (Principal Social Worker)**

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Introduction to Kent County Council

We are the UK's largest local authority, with a workforce in excess of 30,000 people, including maintained schools, serving a population of 1.5 million. We have various offices in central locations and a large number of service establishments throughout Kent; our corporate office is based in Maidstone.

More than two thirds of our workforce provide services directly to the public – such as domiciliary Care Workers, Classroom Assistants, Social Workers, Teachers, and Occupational Therapists etc.

Our annual budget covers a huge range of services. This translates into a host of interesting roles and career paths awaiting those who want to work in a leading edge public sector organisation.

Visit our website, www.kent.gov.uk.

Aims and objectives

Our focus is to work as one council to design and deliver a cohesive, modern public service offer for all Kent's residents, businesses and communities. This will bring together change projects consistently across the council and create organisational design opportunities to transform the way we work, including our people, assets, technology, structures and service delivery.

Success in delivering this aspiration will be determined using the following criteria:

- Working beyond the limit of organisational and service boundaries
- Thinking beyond the limit of our statutory powers
- Building capacity to provide sector and system leadership
- Delivering at both strategic and local scale
- Supporting economic security
- Delivering a cohesive service offer
- Flexibly using assets as part of public service design and delivery

Framing Kent's Future is our top-level council strategy for 2022 to 2026. It sets out the priorities that we will focus on over the next four years to tackle the challenges and make the most of the opportunities that the county is facing. Through delivering these priorities, our aim is to improve life in Kent and build a solid foundation for the county's future success.

<https://www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/strategies-and-policies/framing-kents-future>

The Strategic Reset Programme

The Strategic Reset Programme (SRP) is a multi-year transformation programme, bringing together both new and existing programmes and projects across Kent County Council. The programme will prepare us for the opportunities and challenges ahead and ensure that significant activities will be delivered in a collective, timely and disciplined way, with a strong focus on improving outcomes and realising tangible benefits.

Political Arrangements

The County Council has 81 councillors and elections take place every four years.

The political composition of the County Council is as follows:

Reform	57 members
Liberal Democrat	12 members
Conservative	5 members
Green Party	5 Members
Labour	2 members

The Leader of Kent County Council is Linden Kemkaran.

There is a Cabinet of Executive Members which meets regularly to debate policy issues and make key decisions. The cabinet comprises of:

Linden Kemkaran	Leader of Kent County Council
Brian Collins	Deputy Leader of Kent County Council
Diane Morton	Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care
Georgia Foster	Cabinet Member for Community and Regulatory Services
Chris Hespe	Cabinet Member for Department of Local Government Efficiency and Local Government Reorganisation
Jamie Henderson	Cabinet Member of Environment, Coastal Regeneration and Public Health
Beverley Fordham	Cabinet Member for Education and Skills
David Wimble	Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Special Projects
Paul Webb	Cabinet Member for Children's Services
Peter Osborne	Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport
Maxwell Harrison	Cabinet Member for Communications and Engagement

Structure of KCC

The structure of the organisation is as shown [here](#)

The Senior Officer team consists of six Corporate Directors. For more information on the Corporate Management Team please follow this [link](#)

The three directorates and two departments are as follows:

Adult Social Care and Health

The Directorate commissions and provides a range of services to improve outcomes for older and vulnerable adults, including those with mental health issues or disabilities, and their families. The Directorate supports vulnerable adults to live independently by promoting their wellbeing and supporting their independence. Services for adult mental health and learning disability already work in integrated teams with NHS colleagues and as a key partner in the Kent and Medway ICS we are developing multi-disciplinary teams within communities to support local care.

Responsible for services that include:

Public Health, Adults Central Referral Unit, Adult Community Teams, Safeguarding and quality, Kent Enablement at Home, Sensory and Autistic Spectrum Conditions Service, Integrated/Registered Care Centres, Day Centres, Community Learning Disability Teams, In-House Provision, Mental Health Services.

Growth, Environment and Transport

The Directorate comprises a range of key frontline, strategic, policy and commercial functions, and plays a major role in making Kent a better place to live, work and visit. The services provided, and the future the directorate helps to shape, affects every household in Kent. This includes strategic responsibility for the future of the county in terms of planning, economic development, transport policy, and major transport improvement schemes, waste disposal and recycling services. In addition, GET manages country parks; libraries; and delivers enforcement services including trading standards, community safety and emergency planning.

Responsible for services that include:

Highways, Transportation & Waste, Regulatory Services, Economic Development, Community Safety & Emergency Planning, Libraries, Registration & Archives, Sport & Country Parks, Arts including Kent Film Office, Development Planning, Planning Applications, North Downs Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Flood Risk & Environment, Sustainability & Climate Change and Heritage Conservation

Children, Young People and Education Directorate

This Directorate combines and integrates the statutory responsibilities of Specialist Children's Services together with Education services and the targeted and universal services for children and young people within Early Help and Preventative Services. There is a strong focus on

alignment of resources to help ensure achievement of one of the key County Council strategic outcomes: 'Every child and young person in Kent gets the best start in life'. To improve outcomes for children and young people, services within the Directorate are working together with relevant partners to deliver the vision set out in the Children and Young People's Services Integration Programme.

Responsible for services that include:

Children's Social Care, Adoption & Fostering, Standards & School Improvement, Skills & Employability, Early Years and Childcare, Provision Planning, Fair Access, Educational Psychology, SEN Assessment & Placement, Youth Justice, Outdoor Education Centres, Children's Centres and Youth Hubs, Inclusion & Attendance, Early Intervention and Community Learning & Skills and Disabled Children and Young People Teams.

Chief Executive's Department and Deputy Chief Executive's Departments

The Departments support the delivery of our front-line services. The Directorate leads and coordinates major change, Organisational design and development and provides a critical client and contracting role with our trading companies including legal and customer contact. It provides Organisational wide governance, financial management and a major contribution to our political and external relationships.

Responsible for services that include:

Strategic Commissioning, Finance, Strategy, Policy, Relationship and Corporate Assurance, Governance, Law and Democracy, Technology, Strategic Reset Programme team, Marketing and Resident Experience, Infrastructure – ICT and property, Human Resources and Organisational Design, Health and Safety, Business Management and Client Relationships.

Job Description

Directorate:	Adult Social Care and Health
Grade:	KSM
Responsible to:	Director of Adult Social Care

Job outline:

Provide strategic leadership and direction for the development and implementation of the Authority's approach to professional practice, safeguarding, policy development, quality assurance and continuous improvement across Adult Social Care. Providing professional advice to the Director of Adult Social Services (DASS), Directorate Management Team and Senior Leadership Team.

As a senior and highly visible leader, undertake the statutory responsibilities of the Principal Social Worker, working alongside the Senior Leadership Team to drive excellent practice, strong professional standards and compliance with statutory duties.

Lead the development and delivery of quality assurance and safeguarding frameworks that improve practice, performance and outcomes, embedding a culture of learning, accountability, innovation and continuous improvement.

Support Directors of Adult Social Care and the Senior Leadership Team with the organisational development priorities by facilitating workforce learning and development, strengthening professional capability, and promoting evidence-based practice across ASCH and partner agencies.


Engage with and develop effective partnerships across the health and social care system to influence strategic priorities, improve outcomes, and maximise opportunities for adults to live independently, remain safe and well, and exercise choice and control over their lives.

Deputising for the Director as and when required.

Job accountabilities:

1. Undertake the statutory duties of the Principal Social Worker, giving professional advice to the Corporate Director of Adult Social Care and Health (DASS), Senior Leadership Team and Members on complex issues. Ensure high standard of social work practice is embedded by providing skilled and experienced leadership and practice knowledge to social workers, social care practitioners, the organisation and its partners.
2. Accountable for the development and implementation of the Authority's strategic approach to safeguarding, policy development, quality assurance and practice development and audit; coordinating this approach with partners to ensure improved service delivery.

3. Responsible for raising quality across all areas of provision in adult social care ensuring those services are delivered in accordance with relevant law, national and local standards, targets, regulations and other legislative requirements.
4. Develop and embed a listening and learning culture across Adult Social Care and Health that encourages and embraces people who draw on care and support to shape and develop services. Ensure that complaints and concerns are considered in the context of opportunities to improve the quality of care. Ensure that voice of the people with lived experience is integral to the service development and practice improvement.
5. Lead on the development of aligned and integrated Adult Social Care and Health strategies, policy and practice guidance; building, developing and maintaining effective strategic partnership working and internal and external relationships, to ensure an integrated and collaborative approach.
6. Work with the Directorate Management Team and Senior Leadership Team to advise and take forward effective models of delivering statutory responsibilities across different locations and settings in Kent, ensuring that we retain the required capability and capacity.
7. Provide strategic oversight and help define the Council's Adult Social Care responsibilities relevant to the Kent and Medway Safeguarding Adults Board business. Ensure the Directorate Management Team, Senior Leadership Team, Cabinet and other Members are kept apprised of high-profile or complex safeguarding issues or other matters arising. Accountable for the oversight and assurance of institutional/large scale abuse enquiries.
8. Ensure management reviews and complex reviews, including Safeguarding Adult Reviews and Domestic Abuse Related Death Reviews, are conducted to a high standard, with learning effectively disseminated and embedded to drive continuous improvement, inform strategic direction, and strengthen safeguarding practice and outcomes.
9. Accountable for providing strategic leadership and operational direction in the development and delivery of effective services, including Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards, within the legislative framework, reflecting and developing national themes to promote independence, manage demand and maximise opportunities from the local health and social care economy.
10. Accountable for the effective management of budgets and service performance, ensuring compliance with the Government and the Authority's financial regulations, delivery of the Medium-Term Financial Plan objectives, and achievement of national, departmental and partnership performance targets and standards.
11. Lead, develop and inspire the workforce to deliver integrated services. Ensure robust workforce development and succession planning for the adult social care workforce. Promote a culture of highly effective support and supervision to enable the delivery of high quality and consistent practice standards across the Directorate, thereby fulfilling the



changing demands of the person-centred service.

12. Work closely with the Commissioning function to ensure that the development of services meet the assessed needs of the population and use market insights and analytics for market shaping.

Recruitment Selection Criteria

The qualifications, knowledge and experience criteria below will be used in shortlisting. Applicants should describe in their application how they meet these criteria.

Qualifications:

- Educated to degree level (or equivalent) with Social Work
- Qualification and registered with the relevant body, currently Social Work England
- Evidence of continuous professional development
- Management qualification or equivalent experience including completion of Managing in Kent or willingness to work towards this

Experience:

- Experience in a senior leadership role in Adult Social Care and experience working at a senior level representing Adult Social Care on strategic, statutory and partnership meetings
- Experience of joint work and developing joint services between health and social care services.
- Experience of providing strategic direction at a senior level, in complex public sector organisation
- Experience of managing complex budgets against performance indicators.
- Experience of working in partnership with voluntary or independent sector agencies and with people who draw on care and support to delivery service improvements.
- Experience of designing and implementing new ways of working and leading change and service improvements

Skills and Abilities:

- Strong systems leadership, matrix management and interpersonal skills.
- Proven ability to lead, influence and challenge at senior level particularly during change to build and maintain professional credibility and trust.
- Excellent communication and negotiating skills. Effective decision making skills.
- Able to identify and resolve diverse strategic and operational issues.
- Able to successfully manage within a multi-agency environment and working at a senior level representing Adult Social Care on strategic, statutory and partnership meetings .
- Highly innovative and able to influence and inspire cultural change.
- Ability to work effectively in a politically sensitive environment.
- Able to motivate and influence a range of stakeholders (including staff) to deliver an effective service.
- Awareness of Data Protection and confidentiality issues.

- Commitment to equality and promoting diversity in all aspect of working.
- 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.

Knowledge:

- Up to date working knowledge of national policies and strategy, legal framework and a wide appreciation of the Authority's approach to procedures and standards.
- In-depth knowledge of Government legislation relevant to adult social care including Care Act, Mental Health Act, Mental Capacity Act
- In depth knowledge of research in the field of health and social care and application into practice
- Understanding of political interface between health and the local authority and have a high degree of political sensitivity.
- Knowledge of HR practices to recruit, motivate and develop staff to achieve a high standard of service delivery.

Organisational Responsibilities

All Corporate Directors, Directors and Heads of Service have an explicit responsibility to work as part of a team to deliver, collectively, the agenda of the County 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 the 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 Values

- 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

Our values enable us to build a culture that culture is:

Flexible/agile - willing to take (calculated) risks and want people that are flexible and agile

Curious - constantly learning and evolving

Compassionate and Inclusive - compassionate, understanding and respectful to all

Working Together - building and delivering for the best interests of Kent

Empowering - Our people take accountability for their decisions and actions

Externally Focused - Residents, families and communities at the heart of decision making

As a senior leader you will be expected to role model and drive the Council's cultural aspiration and its related values. In doing this the leadership traits we expect of you are:

- Courage and integrity
- Making a difference – sense of purpose
- Compassion and inclusion – community leadership
- Drive for results -
- Curiosity and learning

Working for Kent County Council

Salary and Notice

The appointment will be subject to 3 months' notice.

KCC pays salaries to bank accounts on the 25th of the month unless this falls on a weekend or public holiday.

Terms and Conditions

The appointment is subject to the terms and conditions contained within the Kent Scheme of Conditions of Service.

30 days annual leave is provided excluding Bank Holidays. You will also receive paid time off for public holidays plus a concessionary day at Christmas.

An excellent relocation package is available to assist with costs, including removal companies, temporary lodgings and professional expenses.

The postholder will be expected to provide a car for official journeys.

Personal Interests

Kent County Council policy requires all employees to declare membership of any organisation that falls within the following definition:

Any lodge, chapter, society, trust or regular gathering or meeting, which:

- is not open to members of the public who are not members of that lodge, chapter, society or trust;
- includes in the grant of membership an obligation on the part of the members to make a
- commitment (whether by oath or otherwise) of allegiance to the lodge, chapter, society, gathering or meeting; and
- includes, whether initially or subsequently, a commitment (whether by oath or otherwise)
- of secrecy about the rules, membership or conduct of the lodge, chapter, society, trust, gathering, or meeting

A lodge, chapter, society, trust, gathering or meeting as defined above, should not be regarded as a secret society if it forms part of the activity of a generally recognised religion.

Pensions

The post holder will have the choice of contributing to the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS). Further details will be available for the successful applicant.

Politically Restricted Posts

This is a politically restricted post which means that the post holder cannot stand for public elected office (other than to a parish council) and is subject to further restrictions on more general political activity.

Whole Time Employment

The person appointed will be required to devote their whole time service to the work of Kent County Council and should not engage in any other business without the express consent of the County Council.

Health and Safety Policy

The County Council recognises and accepts its responsibility as an employer, and will take positive action to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all employees and other persons who may be affected by its operations, by providing safe working conditions and a healthy and safe working environment.

Sickness Provision

Our sickness benefit scheme exceeds statutory requirements. Actual paid absence depends on how long you have worked for KCC and the circumstances of your absence. For example, after 6 years' service your benefit would be 6 months full pay and 6 months half pay.

Training and Development

KCC is committed to supporting staff to reach their full potential through annual appraisal and personal development plans, enhanced by a range of career development opportunities.

Managers from KSG to KSR will be required to undertake our Kent Manager standard programme within the first year of employment.

Green Travel

Our Green Travel Plan is exploring alternative modes of transport to improve travel choice and reduce congestion and pollution. This includes:

- Car sharing and emergency taxi home.
- Discounted fares, free tickets, trip planning and improved travel information.
- Pool car and bikes

Other benefits

KCC offers a range of family friendly policies including:

- A generous maternity scheme
- Emergency leave
- Parental leave
- Special leave
- Help Fund – all employees have the opportunity both to pay into the fund and to apply for help from it when experiencing financial hardship
- An in-house confidential counseling service and Occupational Health Service
- Kent Rewards - discounts at over 1,200 retailers ranging from reduced rates at Health Clubs to house and car insurance to holidays

Living in Kent

With great schools, vibrant cities, golden beaches and stunning countryside Kent has lots to offer you. Find out more about [locations in Kent](#).

Selection Process

Closing Date

This post will close at midnight on 9th August 2026.

Selection Process

As part of the interview process for this role you may be required to complete an occupational personality questionnaire prior to your interview.

How to Respond

To apply please visit www.kent.gov.uk to complete an online application form.