

JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title	Access Casework Officer		
Directorate	Education		
Reporting to			
Grade	11		
Evaluation ref:	AG0989	Job Family ref:	
Role Purpose			
Provides information and advice to a wide variety of contacts including members of the public, schools, parents, pupils, other parts of the local authority, members, partner and other external organisations as required, sometimes in challenging circumstances which require sensitivity and tact. Liaise with Head Teachers and other school staff, Educational Psychologists, other support services, PRUs, SEN Team, Admissions Officers, Transport Officers, and other specialists as appropriate throughout all processes. Work closely with other team members providing support and cover when necessary.			
Accountabilities			
Responsible for the Local Authority's statutory duties in relation to section 19 of the Education Act 1996. This includes children permanently excluded from school, children who have been unable to secure a school place and meet the criteria for the Panel for Excluded and Vulnerable Pupils and children who are unable to attend because of health reasons. Act as the first point of contact for Head Teachers, Governors, Clerks, other professionals, parents and pupils for advice on the statutory process governing the exclusion of pupils from school. Provide advice and guidance on alternatives to exclusion, the graduated response and Core Standards, training for school staff and/or Governors if necessary and DfE statutory guidance. Co-ordinate the administrative process in line with standard operating procedures for pupils excluded from school and ensure compliance with all the statutory timescales and obligations and that pupils receive suitable education provision by day 6. Prepare the LA response (where required) for School Governors Disciplinary Committees (GDC) and Independent Review Panels and presents the information as required, e.g. prepare for the hearing and synthesise a variety of professional reports to create a cohesive written response. Evaluate the individual case paperwork to ensure that the decision to exclude a pupil has regard to the			

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statutory guidance on exclusions and the school's behaviour policy, raising any discrepancies as necessary.

Where the criteria are met undertake an assessment via a home visit of the educational requirements for excluded pupils ensuring adherence to the DfE statutory guidelines, the terms of reference for the Panel for Excluded and Vulnerable Pupils (PEVP) and procedural timelines.

Identify and monitor the vulnerable pupils in the area who are at risk of exclusion (either permanent or fixed), children who are hard to place or those who are deemed vulnerable under the Fair Access protocol, being mindful of safeguarding. Liaise with Children's Social Care in relation to children in Care.

Coordinate and attend fortnightly PEVP meetings, e.g. prepare agendas, collect information, produce equitable share data, present statutory cases to the panel, clarify the facts and concerns, complete and monitor outcomes. Ensure process complies with PEVP terms of reference (Somerset Fair Access Protocol and DfE School Admissions Code).

Provide a written report to PEVP for all statutory cases including synthesis of a variety of professional reports to create cohesive written documents and ensure recommendations and actions from the panel are enacted.

Liaise on behalf of the Local Authority with other professionals to ensure appropriate education provision is in place. Co-ordinate the meetings for reintegration of pupils into mainstream schools in the area, for permanently excluded pupils or other unplaced pupils placed by PEVP and work with professionals to ensure a smooth and appropriately timely integration. Support schools and other professionals by drawing up the individual integration plan and monitor and track those cases. Ensure effective multiagency working to achieve the best educational outcomes for these vulnerable pupils.

Ensure there is consistent application of requirements for Children in Care, children on 'No Provision' and pupils educated otherwise than that at school and that children who are vulnerable under the Fair Access protocol enter suitable educational provision as quickly as possible via PEVP. Provide advice and guidance to social workers, parents and other professionals about PEVP criteria and processes as well as sign posting as appropriate.

Obtain information and maintain the Capita ONE database for all permanent exclusions and long fixed period exclusions and ensure it is up to date and accurate.

Communicate with schools, parents and outside agencies and support services. Monitor cases to ensure compliance with all statutory timescales. Liaise with parent's, schools and other professionals and arrange home visits, visits to schools and attend multi professional meetings.

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Collect information and monitor and/or produce data in relation to exclusions, re integrations and other work.

Provide cover across the county when necessary.

Identify where problems or disagreements exist and in liaison with other professionals agrees acceptable and effective solutions. Clarify issues arising from decision to exclude pupils from school through the interpretation of statutory guidance on exclusions. Take a lead in resolving 'stuck cases', escalating when appropriate.

Prioritise a workload ensuring statutory timescales are maintained.

Take a thematic lead for specific areas of work across the team when necessary, e.g. draft information, review and improve processes, advise and liaise with colleagues.

Support the service by sharing and helping to resolve issues, offer suggestions for revising policy and practice to ensure quality of service delivered is maintained and developed.

Monitor the recording and maintenance of relevant data to ensure appropriate, accurate and timely information is available to Senior Managers to support decision making processes.

Responsible for promoting the welfare of children and young people and where relevant support schools in safeguarding children through being aware of relevant policies and procedures and understanding how to use these to ensure that children and young people are protected, and all suspicions and allegations of abuse are taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.

Knowledge / Experience / Skills

	Essential	Desirable
Knowledge		
Have an in depth understanding of exclusion procedures, legal framework, Fair Access Protocols and have a sound understanding of the School Admissions Code 2021 and DfE guidance on suspensions and exclusions.	X	
A thorough understanding of the complex factors which may influence behaviour in educational settings and have a sound knowledge of strategies to support early intervention and positive change.	X	

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Knowledge and understanding of the education system within a large rural authority		X
A sound working knowledge of safeguarding children, with an emphasis in education settings.		X
Experience		
Proven experience of working with school leaders and senior school staff, to provide support and challenge, in seeking alternatives to permanent exclusion and in securing school places.	X	
Experience of providing advice and guidance to Head Teachers, parents, carers and school governors	X	
Proven ability to work in partnership with families, professionals and schools to bring about positive change.	X	
Experience of attending and chairing multi-agency meetings with parents/carers, schools and professionals	X	
Preparing for and attending Area Allocation Panels in accordance with the Fair Access Protocol		X
Proven track-record of holding and managing a complex caseload.	X	
Demonstrate an understanding of the importance of confidentiality and effective record keeping.	X	
Qualifications / Registrations / Certifications		

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Educated to A level or equivalent or Level 4 NVQ standard with GCSE grade A- C in Maths and English or equivalent.	X	
Qualifications in Social Care, Education Safeguarding, Youth Work, or teaching (including further education).		X
Experience of working with vulnerable children and families in welfare, educational and legal context.	X	
Skills		
Have good interpersonal skills and the ability to develop good working relationships with pupils, parents and with colleagues in both schools and the local authority.	X	
Ability to conduct home visits to family homes	X	
Ability to use IT programmes such as Word, Outlook, Excel, Teams & One Note	X	
Ability to prioritise, work to deadlines and manage time and workload effectively.	X	
Have effective communication skills in a variety of contexts, i.e. in writing, one-to-one, group discussions, formal meetings	X	
Ability to build strong relationships with customers, colleagues, and all partners.	X	
Creative approach to problem solving, including conflict management and negotiation skills.	X	
Ability to work under pressure	X	
Enhanced DBS check	X	
Car Driver, although suitable adjustments will be made in accordance with the Disability Discrimination Act	X	
Ability to speak fluent English as stated in Part 7 of the Immigration Act (2016)	X	
Working Conditions		

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Dimensions of the role

Responsible for approximately 120 permanent exclusions across the county in an academic year. The four area PEVP meetings discuss approximately 365 children each academic year, often multiple times. There are approximately 5700 fixed period exclusions across the county in an academic year. Secures new school places and facilitates the integration of approximately 80 children across the county in an academic year

Working Arrangements

Somerset Council's Dynamic Working Strategy will be applied to this position.

Corporate Accountabilities

Understand, uphold, and promote the aims of the council's equality, diversity, and inclusion policies; health, safety and wellbeing of self and others; and Organisational values in everything you do. Equality and Diversity practice covers both interaction with staff, service users and communities and includes challenging discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity for all.

Date: