



## JOB DESCRIPTION

<b>Job Title</b>	Head of SEND Improvement, Quality and Value		
<b>Directorate</b>	Children, Families & Education		
<b>Reporting to</b>	Service Director of Education		
<b>Grade</b>	6		
<b>Evaluation ref:</b>	RP293	<b>Job Family ref:</b>	
<b>Role Purpose</b>			
<p>Provide strategic leadership to drive improvement and quality across Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) services, delivering sustainable improvement of high quality, timely and cost-efficient services, which make a real difference to the lives of Children and Families in Somerset experiencing SEND.</p> <p>Co-design and lead programmes of service improvement and transformation projects to both deliver outstanding local services for children and families with SEND and also reduce financial costs.</p> <p>Provide listening, leadership and inspiration to Council and Partner Staff alongside Parents Carers, Children and Young People to deliver excellent services for children and families with SEND services in Somerset, ensuring support needs are identified as soon as possible, and that pupils and families are provided with the right support and the right time, wherever possible in inclusive mainstream school provision.</p> <p>As a member of the Council's Senior Management Team, will drive performance and deliver the Council's priorities and meet service targets.</p> <p>To work with schools and providers to deliver high quality mainstream-focused services which children, young people and families consider to be high quality, and which are provided efficiently and offer value-for-money to Somerset taxpayers and Council budgets.</p> <p>Using their service expertise, provide clarity and drive quality improvements in systems and processes across SEND teams, for example on ensuring high quality identification, assessment, support and review.</p> <p>To lead strategic development in Education Services and to ensure education system compliance with statutory requirements and regulatory duties, including the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG)/Deficit Management Plan (DMP).</p> <p>Advise Members and Directors in respect of local and national policy matters and service delivery issues and engage with partners in the promotion, communication and delivery of services.</p>			
<b>Accountabilities</b>			
<b>System Leadership</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lead and drive partnership and co-operative working across the council and with other agencies/bodies to ensure the effective delivery of services in their specialist areas.</li></ul>			



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- Working with other Heads of Service, lead, motivate and provide professional support to staff and multi-agency teams to ensure the achievement of performance targets, professional development and the provision of a high-quality service.
- Lead on SEND Inspection Readiness preparation.
- Embed a culture of continuous improvement and quality assurance across SEND services, ensuring compliance with statutory requirements and readiness for future Ofsted/CQC inspections. This includes delivering recommendations arising from forthcoming inspections and beyond, requiring strong SEND acumen, experience and programme management capability.
- Undertake representational and communication duties on behalf of the Council and partners to promote and protect the Council's interests in matters concerning their specialist areas.

### **Strategy/Strategic Development**

- Lead the development of strategies, accountabilities, policies and procedures across education services, with a particular focus on SEND and the DSG/DMP.
- Lead the strategic development and transformation of SEND services to deliver inclusive, mainstream-focused provision aligned with national reforms and a changing policy landscape. This includes the development, ongoing maintenance and refresh of the SEND and Inclusion Strategy, Partnership Action Plan, and associated policies and procedures.

### **Compliance & Quality Assurance**

- Lead in the design, development, delivery and review of a strategic framework for performance management and quality assurance of education services.
- Engage with Strategic Managers and partner organisations to ensure cohesive and inclusive standards, practices and ongoing improvement in the quality of practice.

### **Financial Accountability**

- The High Needs Block for Somerset in 25/26 is £84.2 million, a significant part of which links to the delivery of SEND services. The postholder has oversight and shares responsibility with other Heads of Service for ensuring that this budget is spent effectively, ensuring robust financial planning and control to mitigate deficit growth in line with the Deficit Management Plan.
- Demonstrate that they can manage the budget within a financial envelope.
- Drive long-term financial sustainability within the High Needs Block through robust planning and oversight that mitigates future deficit growth and supports value-for-money provision. This will be ongoing and may only mitigate—rather than eliminate—short-term pressures.

### **Staffing**

- Direct line management of up to 6 staff (increasing over time) and matrix leadership of over 100 staff engaged in service improvement and deficit-reduction initiatives.

### **Subject Matter Expert**

- Develop and maintain strong and positive relationships with Somerset Council Senior Management and elected Members, providing advice on duties arising from the statutory/regulatory framework for SEND and gaining support for strategic plans and initiatives.



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- Shape and/or recommend Council policy concerning their specialist areas of activity.

### **Programme Management**

- Lead complex, multi-year programmes focused on SEND improvement, transformation, quality assurance and financial sustainability, ensuring delivery of measurable outcomes and benefits realisation.
- Coordinate and lead a data and performance management improvement workstream, addressing longstanding issues relating to disparate datasets and progressing long-term IT system transformation work (noting that implementation may take several years).

### **Building Partnerships & Co-Production**

- Take a lead role in facilitating the engagement of and building positive relationships with children and their families to ensure that their requirements are central to service design and delivery.
- Build system-wide partnerships and strengthen co-production with schools, health partners and families to ensure services remain responsive, innovative and resilient within a highly volatile educational environment.

### **Performance Culture**

- Develop and embed a performance culture that delivers results and improves outcomes for young people within the available financial envelope, through open challenge, personal accountability and continuous improvement.

### **Knowledge / Experience / Skills**

	<b>Essential</b>	<b>Desirable</b>
<b>Knowledge</b>		
Expert knowledge of the SEND system, inclusion and best practice.	X	
Knowledge of education policy and practice, including national curriculum assessment and moderation procedures, the Ofsted/CQC Inspection Framework as they relate to education and compliance requirements.		X
Knowledge of programme/project management with a focus on front-line service improvements and making savings.	X	
Performance monitoring and reporting of front-line transformation initiative, including tracking of benefits realisation.		X
<b>Experience</b>		
Experience of sustainable management of large service budgets related to Council Children's Services.	X	
Experience of credible and relevant education senior leadership sufficient to secure the confidence of Somerset school leaders and other system leaders locally and regionally.		X



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Experience of working collaboratively and successfully with stakeholders at all levels, including the most senior, to devise and negotiate joint solutions on complex issues and provide challenge and support on the performance of the education system in Somerset.	X	
Experience in developing, leading and advising re the implementation of strategies, policies and practices that generate continuous improvement.	X	
Proven experience of delivering large scale transformation programmes or projects within Children's Services, resulting in achievement of large-scale financial savings		X
Experience of working with a wide variety of public sector and voluntary community sector stakeholders on service improvement initiatives.	X	
Experience of leading co-production of service improvements with children and families.		X
Experience of successful and inspiring management of staff directly in services and teams and indirectly through programmes and projects	X	
Track record of operating corporate projects and providing clear advice on policy options and policy development.	X	
<b>Qualifications/Registrations/Certifications</b>		
Graduate level degree in education or another relevant field.	X	
Qualification or training in project, programme and/or change management.	X	
<b>Skills</b>		
Social, emotional and political awareness, ability to communicate in high stakes environments and manage challenging relationships.	X	
Ability to think strategically about systems and experience of managing change without the use of direct levers of control.	X	
Ability to foster a culture of innovation and adapt strategies to evolving educational landscapes.	X	
Strong written and verbal communication skills to engage with internal and external stakeholders, including Councillors.	X	
Excellent and fluent verbal and written communication in English.	X	
<b>Working Conditions</b>		
N/A		



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### Dimensions of the role

The education system in the UK is midway through a very significant and far-reaching series of reforms which are fundamentally changing the relationship between local authorities and school in their localities. The end state of that reform is not yet known and highly politically sensitive, and therefore all strategic managers in education must operate within an environment that is highly subject to controversy and change, where the financial context is volatile and where significant improvements must be made at scale and at pace with very few levers for influence. This means that postholders must make independent, complex decisions in high stakes situations on a regular basis.

The DSG deficit has been increasing since 2018/19 primarily due to the growth in demand for, and complexity and cost of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) provision, that the local authority has a statutory obligation to fund. This has been experienced by local authorities nationally and the growth in expenditure has exceeded the DSG allocations from the DfE for a number of years. In Somerset the HNB deficit currently stands at £107 million (projected to end of March 26) and is further projected to be £300+ million by the end of March 29, if significant mitigation isn't implemented via the DMP.

Because education standards in Somerset schools are below the national average (DfE 2025), improvement work is at constant risk of being derailed due to crises and therefore this role must operate with a high level of agility and forethought to act preventatively and to put innovative approaches in place alongside colleagues to break the pattern of decline which has been observed in recent years. Maintaining current models and standards within the county is not an option, and this postholder will therefore need to implement change and quality assurance approaches in ways that may require significant imagination and may encounter resistance on the path to a step change in performance.

This postholder will need the knowledge and skills to enable them to work credibly to persuade and influence very senior people across the council, members, partners and leaders in different education phases.

### Working Arrangements

Hybrid role, with an expectation of working on site 3 days a week to develop and sustain relationships with team members, colleagues and partners.

### Corporate Accountabilities

- Provide clear leadership to deliver the Council's strategic priorities and meet the Council's financial targets, as a member of the Directorates Senior Leadership Team.
- Update and advise Elected Members in respect of operational and policy issues in relation to the Children, Families & Education Services teams.
- Lead Children, Families & Education teams with a clear identity in terms of flexible and responsive ways of working, inclusive and diverse culture, and high level of employee engagement and wellbeing.

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- Undertake representational and communication duties on behalf of the Council to promote and protect the Council's interests in matters concerning their specialist areas.
- Function as an ambassador for the Council promoting, both internally and externally, the Council's vision, strategic aims, and values.
- Value the diversity of Somerset's communities ensuring equality of access and treatment in service delivery and employment.
- Function as a role model for Somerset's vision and values. Promotes a culture of continuous improvement that encourages creativity and innovation to ensure services are efficient and develop the potential and flexibility across the Council and its workforce including the motivation and development of employees within the Children, Families & Education service teams.
- Ensure that all service place a high value on customer responsiveness by demonstrating a commitment to meeting and involving the broadest range of direct and indirect service users, citizens, customer, and communities.
- Support the delivery of the Council's key strategic aims and objectives ensuring understanding and commitment from staff from across the Children, Families & Education service.
- Keep abreast of specific statutory or regulatory duties contained within the role to ensure any challenges and opportunities in the delivery of services are responsive, compliant, and well communicated to customers, communities, and business as appropriate.
- Support Corporate and Directorate specific transformational change programmes with the aim of maximising efficiency, modernising services, and achieving better outcomes and opportunities for service users and customers.
- Ensure flexibility in reacting to the needs of the Council, its' customers and partners supporting a culture of continuous improvement.
- Ensure compliance with all relevant legislation, the Council's standards of conduct, organisational policy, and professional codes of conduct to uphold standards of best practise.
- Accountable for compliance with all relevant health and safety legislation and Somerset Council H&S policies.

Date: 23/01/2025