

JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title	Head of Service Fostering & Kinship		
Directorate	Children & Families		
Reporting to	Service Director Children & Families		
Grade	Grade 5		
Evaluation ref:	RP229	Job Family ref:	
Role purpose			
<p>The Head of Service Fostering & Kinship is responsible for leading and managing the fostering and kinship services within Somerset Council. This role involves overseeing the recruitment, assessment, and support of foster carers and kinship carers, ensuring that all children and young people in care receive high-quality, stable, and nurturing placements. The post holder will work closely with the Service Director Children & Families to develop and implement strategic plans, policies, and procedures that align with national standards and local priorities. They will also collaborate with other agencies, stakeholders, and community partners to enhance service delivery and outcomes for children and families.</p> <p>The Head of Service will provide leadership and direction to teams of social workers, family and child practitioners and support staff, fostering a culture of continuous improvement, professional development, and safeguarding excellence.</p>			
Accountabilities			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead and manage the fostering and kinship services, ensuring compliance with statutory requirements and best practice standards. • Develop and implement strategic plans, policies, and procedures to enhance service delivery and outcomes. • Oversee the recruitment, assessment, training, and support of foster carers and kinship carers. • Ensure that all children and young people in care receive high-quality, stable, and nurturing placements. • Monitor and evaluate service performance, using data and feedback to drive continuous improvement. • Collaborate with other agencies, stakeholders, and community partners to enhance service delivery and outcomes. • Provide leadership and direction to a team of social workers and support staff. • Foster a culture of continuous improvement, professional development, and safeguarding excellence. • Manage budgets and resources effectively, ensuring value for money and financial sustainability. • Represent the fostering and kinship services at internal and external meetings, forums, and events. 			

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Knowledge / Experience / Skills		
	Essential	Desirable
Knowledge		
Comprehensive understanding of fostering and kinship care legislation, policies, and best practices.	x	
Knowledge of child development, attachment theory, and trauma-informed care.	x	
Awareness of the local and national context of children's services.	x	
Understanding of safeguarding principles and procedures.	x	
Familiarity with performance management and quality assurance frameworks.		x
Knowledge of financial management and budgetary control.		x
Experience		
Significant experience in a senior management role within children's services.	x	
Proven track record of leading and managing fostering and/or kinship services.		x
Experience of developing and implementing strategic plans, policies, and procedures.	x	
Experience of working collaboratively with other agencies, stakeholders, and community partners.	x	
Experience of managing budgets and resources effectively.	x	
Experience of using data and feedback to drive continuous improvement.	x	
Qualifications / Registrations / Certifications		
Degree in Social Work or a related field.	x	
Registration with Social Work England.		x
Management qualification or equivalent experience.	x	
Postgraduate qualification in a relevant field.		x
Training in safeguarding and child protection.	x	
Continuous professional development in leadership and management.		x

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Skills		
Excellent leadership and management skills.	x	
Strong communication and interpersonal skills.	x	
Ability to build and maintain effective working relationships.	x	
Analytical and problem-solving skills.	x	
Ability to manage change and drive continuous improvement.	x	
Working Conditions		
<p>This role involves working within a dynamic and supportive local authority environment. Candidates should be prepared for the following conditions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work Hours: Standard working hours with occasional requirements for evening or weekend work to meet project deadlines or attend community events. • Location: The primary work location is County Hall, with opportunities for remote work as per organisational policies. • Travel: Some travel within the local area will be required for meetings, site visits, and community engagement activities. • Work Environment: The role involves working both independently and as part of a team, with access to modern office facilities and resources. • Health and Safety: Adherence to all health and safety regulations is mandatory, ensuring a safe working environment for all employees. 		
Working Arrangements		
Somerset Council's dynamic Working Strategy will be applied to this position.		
Corporate Accountabilities		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 Service team or teams. • Lead the 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. • Undertake representational and communication duties on behalf of the Council to promote and protect the Council's interests in matters concerning their specialist areas. 		

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- 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 service team or 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 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: 03.04.25