

## JOB DESCRIPTION

<b>Job Title</b>	Specialist Placement Manager		
<b>Directorate</b>	Children, Families and Education Service		
<b>Reporting to</b>			
<b>Grade</b>	8		
<b>Evaluation ref:</b>	RP270	<b>Job Family ref:</b>	
<b>Role Purpose</b>			
<p>The Specialist Placement Manager leads the newly established Specialist Placement Team within Children's Services, overseeing placements in independent, maintained, and academy special schools. This role ensures that placements are educationally effective, cost-efficient, and aligned with the child's development needs, working closely with professionals such as Learning Mentors, Educational Psychologists, and Safeguarding Officers.</p> <p>This role will have positive relationships and challenging discussions with educational settings to ensure children's needs are met, performance and cost issues are raised and addressed, and decisions on placements are evidence based, robust and followed through.</p> <p>The role coordinates quality assurance, performance management, financial analysis, and strategic decision-making, ensuring that all specialist education placements are understood in terms of value and appropriateness. This includes leading the team in data analysis, SEND processes, and partnership working to support the best outcomes for children and young people.</p> <p>The Specialist Placement Manager will support and lead the Specialist Placement Officers, ensuring that work is prioritised effectively, responsibilities are fairly distributed, and ensuring Officers are able to develop their skills in a safe and encouraging environment.</p>			
<b>Accountabilities</b>			
<p>Leads the delivery of value for money in all independent special school placements, identifying children who may benefit from a transfer to a different setting.</p> <p>Manages the attendance of the Specialist Placements Officer at selected meetings with families and schools, such as Annual Reviews and Team Around the Child meetings, where provider performance or placement end is a discussion point.</p>			

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Advises, challenges, and supports colleagues and settings, including Head Teachers and Trust CEOs, to increase inclusion and secure the best outcomes for children and young people.

Works with strategic and service managers across education, social care, and health to develop and apply quality standards and best practices.

Leads development and monitoring of quality in independent non-maintained special schools (INMS), including Ofsted/ISI issues.

Maintains strong working relationships with schools, providers, and professionals relevant to specialist placements.

Ensures SEND processes are followed when transitioning children out of INMS into new settings.

Leads activities to ensure value for money in specialist placements through data collection, analysis, and provider engagement.

Drives improvement in education for children in specialist settings by identifying performance issues and leading problem-solving initiatives.

Manages up to 7 staff members, supporting challenging work with a positive and inspiring leadership style.

### Impact

This role ensures that specialist placements are educationally and financially effective, contributing to improved outcomes for children and young people with SEND. It supports cost avoidance and savings in the High Needs Budget and contributes to strategic actions in the DMP. The manager leads initiatives that improve education quality in specialist settings and informs strategic planning and development projects.

### Knowledge / Experience / Skills

	Essential	Desirable
<b>Knowledge</b>		
Excellent knowledge of SEND law and guidance, including experience of following SEND law and guidance with families and schools.	x	
Excellent knowledge of SEND law and guidance.	x	
Comprehensive knowledge of the EHCP process.	x	

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Understanding of good practice in education for children with disabilities.	x	
Understanding of the independent education sector and Ofsted/ISI requirements.	x	
Knowledge of financial environments in the independent education sector	x	
Understanding of innovative approaches to specialist education provision	x	
<b>Experience</b>		
Experience of leading meetings and discussions with families, schools, providers, and professionals.	x	
Experience of using data to understand the performance of a school or provider.	x	
Significant experience of working in/with schools and/or education settings which brings credibility to successfully lead discussions with Head Teachers and Trust CEOs.	x	
Experience of working in the field of children with disabilities	x	
Experience of writing EHCPs and following the EHCP process.	x	
Experience of leading a team, co-ordinating and prioritising complex workloads and supporting challenging work positively.	x	
Experience of strategic planning and development in SEND services.	x	
Experience of contributing to cost-saving initiatives in education budgets	x	
<b>Qualifications / Registrations / Certifications</b>		
Standard qualifications: English and Maths GCSE grade C or above.	x	
<b>Skills</b>		

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Ability to work proactively with families, schools, providers, and professionals.	x	
Ability to deal with conflict and challenge in a healthy and transparent way.	x	
Excellent communication skills and ability to analyse data effectively	x	
<b>Working Conditions</b>		
<b>Dimensions of the role</b>		
<p>Team Leadership: Manages up to 7 staff members at grade 10 or below.</p> <p>Scope: Covers independent, maintained, and academy special schools, Units, Resource Bases, and Mainstream Plus provision.</p> <p>Strategic Engagement: Attends Special School Placement Panel meetings and supports strategic decision-making.</p> <p>Data Oversight: Leads analysis of performance and quality data across specialist placements.</p>		
<b>Working Arrangements</b>		
Somerset Council's Dynamic Working Strategy will be applied to this position.		
<b>Corporate Accountabilities</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Update and advise Elected Members in respect of operational and policy issues in relation to the Education Services teams.</li> <li>• Lead 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.</li> <li>• Undertake representational and communication duties on behalf of the Council to promote and protect the Council's interests in matters concerning their specialist areas.</li> </ul>		

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- Create, monitor, and review frameworks of performance measures and quality standards to be applied in the delivery of services.
- 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 Education service teams.
- Ensure that Education services 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, customers, communities, and businesses.
- Support the delivery of the Councils' key strategic aims and objectives ensuring understanding and commitment from staff from across the Education service.
- Support Corporate and Directorate and service 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: