

Post Title: Assistant Director (AD)

Directorate: Children's Social Care

Grade: Hay 3

Reporting to: Assistant Director

Job Purpose:

A lead role in the Council's Strategic Leadership Board and across Children's Services ensure that Children's Services contributes to the council's vision and priorities.

A strategic lead in Children's Social Care responsible for creating, developing, implementing and embedding strategic strategy that drives and sustains improvements in practice, performance and delivery, with outcomes in services to children, young people and families that are consistently good or better.

Be accountable for and to create a culture of accountability that drives and increases standards and performance.

To deliver high level advice and guidance which significantly influences, either directly or indirectly, trust and confidence of the community and the Council.

Work very closely and collaboratively with appropriate Children's Services staff and wider partner agencies to:

- Continuously improve outcomes for children, young people and families.
- Ensure that the children and young people in Sefton are safe, secure and successful.
- Provide professional expertise and vision for the improvements that are required and those that we want to make.

Accountable for the performance and impact and responsible for the line management of the following areas:

- All services within Children's Social Care
- Performance and data Management within the service
- Practice development and improvement
- Ofsted and external scrutiny readiness
- Transformation, Change and Continuous Improvement Programmes

Other responsibilities

- Deputise for the Executive Director of Children's Social Care and Education, or other Assistant Directors or Heads of Service when required
- Ownership of Horizon scanning for regulatory and statutory changes in relation to social care, external scrutiny and workforce development briefing senior leaders promptly as implications for the service, council and wider partnership and to ensure that the authority is always compliant with such change.
- Support and cover for peers and colleagues when required.
- Lead Council-wide officer and partner groups as required
- Act as the Emergency Duty Co-ordinator, on a rota basis, for the Council's Emergency Planning processes and to attend ongoing training as required
- Represent the Council on key Civic events as required
- Represent the Council at partner events as required
- In addition to his/her principal duties the post holder will be expected to contribute more widely to the overall development of the Service and the Council and will be required to contribute to the Out of Hours Service.

Budget responsibilities

- To provide a strategic lead to planning managing and review allocated budgets in line with the priorities agreed by the organisation, ensuring robust monitoring and budget control processes are in place and there is clear accountability at all levels. Securing value for money to get best use of resources.
- To manage budget as delegated, taking a creative approach to provide efficiency by making expenditure stretch further, demonstrating value for money along with positive outcomes for children and young people and their families. Whilst also ensuring compliance with financial rules and regulations that are applicable, including but not limited to Council Financial Procedure Rules and Schemes of Delegation, along with other policies.
- To have and maintain management oversight of any budgets that are delegated to Heads of Service ensuring efficient and effective management with positive outputs in line with financial rules and regulations and aims of the service.

Principal responsibilities

- To manage, lead and motivate a team of Heads of Services and have strategic management oversight of the areas and teams they are responsible for.
- Provide effective strategic leadership, vision and management direction to ensure that high quality services are delivered across the whole of Children's Social Care which effectively safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people.

- Provide strategic leadership, vision and commitment for the continuous improvement of service delivery across the whole of Children's Social Care. This is to be achieved through continued high-quality strategic management oversight and implementation of quality assurance functions across and throughout all services areas and teams.
- Manage and develop partnership arrangements to improve the well-being of children and young people and enhance the performance of local authority Children's Services functions.
- To work together with Senior leadership in commissioning to commission services and ensuring these services are discharged with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare and safety of children across Children's Social Care.
- Responsibility for ensuring that the general principles stemming from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) are effectively implemented providing children and young people with involvement in the development and delivery of local services.
- Promote prevention and early intervention so that emerging problems for children, young people and families across Children's Social Care are dealt with at the earliest opportunity.
- Provide strategic leadership to implement and embed continued development and delivery of Sefton's Children's Social Care including its wider role in the context of Working Together, Pan Merseyside arrangements and best practice.
- Provide strategic leadership for the continuous development of the Service data performance function for Children's Social Care and ensure widespread effective analysis and use of data in service delivery and benchmarking performance against local, regional and national targets.
- Take the strategic lead for the preparations for external scrutiny, reviews and inspections across the whole Council so that there are robust preparations in place for such examinations, has the responsibility for the delivering and monitoring of recommendations within identified timescales and ensures that the impact on children's outcomes can be clearly evidenced to provide the relevant assurance that work is being progressed and targets are being met.
- Have strategic oversight of all the improvement, action, service and delivery plans across Children's Social Care with a detailed understanding of interdependencies, risks and correlations to ensure that delivery of plans is not impeded and that performance against these plans is measured and reported to various forums as required.
- Supporting Corporate Human Resources/Learning and Development where applicable and recommending training and development to meet identified need across Children's Social Care, ensuring all the service practitioners are aware and supported to achieve the required standards of performance.
- Develop, promote, implement and lead Children's Social Care and create a performance and accountability culture that drives up standards and performance within the service, whilst ensuring effective risk management and review of subsequent outcomes.

- To strategically lead and embed effective and accurate self- assessment of service quality to inform strategic leadership across the authority and where applicable, the safeguarding partners.
- Identify, broaden, develop and foster effective relationships and partnerships with external stakeholders, partners and agencies, representing and promoting joint interests with these groups to work collaboratively to focus resources on improving services and outcomes for children and young people and families of Sefton.
- To provide strategic leadership and direction to ensure that areas of operation are fit for purpose, appropriately structured and integrated with other teams and services to maximize impact and outcomes to meet local and national policies and priorities.
- To lead and direct on the formulation of strategies and policies which drive improvement and lead to better outcomes for children and young people.
- To formulate service specification and (working with Senior Leadership in commissioning) commission appropriate services and provision as necessary to achieve positive outcomes for children and young people. Ensuring there is compliance, effective monitoring and evaluation and value for money.
- Based on a strong clear vision of the outcomes to be achieved by Children's Social Care and how the outcomes will be achieved, improve, implement, shape and embed effective supervision across Children's Social Care ensuring compliance and measuring impact and to deliver high quality and impactful supervision to direct reports and others as require.
- Maintain strategic oversight of and embed performance management across Children's Social Care to ensure, practice is good or better and safeguarding children and young people and achieving positive outcomes for them and families is the driver.
- To contribute towards the effective and efficient operation of frontline fieldwork services, ensuring that the safeguarding of children is paramount in every aspect of work.
- To be the authority's expert officer on issues related to areas of responsibility and applying this to achieve improved outcomes for children and young people.

Overarching essential criteria

Role Based Criteria

- Emphasis on functional leadership and management, co-ordination and oversight of a range of related functions to achieve specific outcomes for local people
- Make appropriate evidenced based commissioning decisions for a range of council services in line with council policy and priorities.
- Work closely with elected Councillors especially Cabinet Members and support them in undertaking their community leadership and policy and decision making roles.
- Direct personal accountability for delivery of a range of services and outcomes to agreed performance standards and within budget.

- Constantly seek and embed a leadership team that constantly seeks efficiency and value for money and support the development of new delivery and support models.
- Empower and devolve decision making to the most appropriate level, as close as possible to the frontline, to maximise performance
- Discover new ways to reduce the cost of services to taxpayers and improve their overall productivity and value for money to service users.
- Actively manage demand and risk whilst encouraging creative thinking and innovative practice.
- Develop staff with flexible skills and competencies that are valued and supported.
- Set clear expectations, and provide development and support to enable the Council to deliver the required outcomes
- Promote cross-organisation team working, within the Council and with partner organisations to deliver more cost effective and valued services and enable coherent and integrated problem solving.
- Fulfil the role of Project Sponsor for specified key corporate projects.
- Empower all staff to deliver effectively and efficiently.

Skill and Attitude and Value Based Criteria

- To commit to Sefton's Vision of how we as a Council want to work with each other, our communities and our partners, to make Sefton a great place to be.
- Personal responsibility to support the delivery of the vision and consistently demonstrate the behaviours and values expressed in the Promise and Leadership requirements.
- Have the necessary political knowledge, skills and abilities needed to operate effectively in a political environment.
- Develop, lead, participate and collaborate in effective partnership across organisations and sectors.
- Focus on outcomes, break down service/professional barriers and facilitate One Council delivery.
- Thrive on ambiguity and demonstrate exceptional personal resilience.
- Create and sustain enabling and open relationships.
- Create the most effective environment for innovation, learning and performance.
- Lead change and empower the whole Council to effectively manage complexity, ambiguity and risk.

Leadership

Must demonstrate the following leadership competencies.

- Achieve respect and commitment through professionalism, collaboration, delivery and output

- Demonstrate ownership and accountability, developing a culture that follows by embedding across Children's Services
- Demonstrate and lead commitment and professionalism
- Provide strong clear vision and direction.
- Lead and manage change effectively and efficiently.
- Plan strategically and embed strategic vision.
- Lead and manage people and performance.
- Work corporately as well as collaboratively with partners.
- Communicate clearly and effectively.
- Focus on excellence and develop a culture that follows and thrives on excellence.
- Develop self and others.
- Personal and professional resilience and strength.

Behaviours

Must demonstrate the following behaviours.

1. Lead, embed and provide support with a view to improving quality.
2. Provide strategic, appropriate and constructive challenge.
3. Create a culture that looks for understanding and solutions.
4. Visibly and positively respect and value staff and their contributions to Children's Social Care and the Local Authority.
5. Communicate a strong, consistent and clear message throughout the Council and with partners.
6. Respect, listen to and value others' views.
7. Maintain a customer focus with a relentless pursuit of excellent outcomes.
8. Have collective integrity and responsibility.
9. Endeavour to improve outcomes for the communities of Sefton.

Strategic service

- Provide strategic direction and decision making. Understand the impact of change driven by national agendas and adapt services to meet these changes as required.

Managing change

- Develop and promote initiatives to improve the quality and effectiveness of Children's Social Care
- Contribute to the delivery of the Sefton 2030 Vision Framework for change.

Partnerships

- Manage and build relationships with partners to deliver the highest standards of service and ensure an effective agency response to safeguarding children.
- Actively promote Regional and National networks to foster relationships.

General:

The post you are applying for is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and therefore you are required to declare any convictions, cautions, reprimands and final warnings that are not 'protected' (i.e. filtered out) as defined by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 (Amendment) (England and Wales) Order 2013. For further information, please refer to [DBS filtering guidance at www.gov.uk/dbs](https://www.gov.uk/dbs).

This job description is a representative document. Other reasonably similar duties may be allocated from time to time commensurate with the general character of the post and its grading. The person appointed will be expected to work flexibly and the exact nature of the duties described above is subject to periodic review and is liable to change.

In addition to their principal duties the post holder will be expected to contribute more widely to the overall development of the Service and the Council and will be required to contribute to the Out of Hours Service.

All staff have a duty to take care of their own health & safety and that of others who may be affected by your actions at work. Staff must co-operate with employers and co-workers to help everyone meet their legal requirements.

The Authority has an approved equality policy in employment and copies are freely available to all employees. The post holder will be expected to comply, observe and promote the equality policies of the Council.

Since confidential information is involved with the duties of this post, the postholder will be required to always exercise discretion and to observe relevant codes of practice and legislation in relation to data protection and personal information.

Note: Where the post-holder is disabled, every effort will be made to support all necessary aids, adaptations or equipment to allow them to carry out all the duties of the job.

Prepared by:
Designation

Risthardh Hare
Executive Director for Children's Social Care & Education

Date

June 2025

Person Specification

Head of Service (HoS) – Children’s Social Care

Assessment indicator Key

A – Application Form I - Interview
C - Certificate P – Presentation/Assessment

Essential

Qualifications

- ✓ Qualified Social worker (AF/C)
- ✓ Social Work England registered (AF/C)
- ✓ Appropriate leadership/business degree level qualification or Professional Management Qualification (AF/C)

Experience

- ✓ Clear demonstrable track record of success in leading high quality and high performing children’s social work/care services including policy development and corporate /strategic planning (AF/I)
- ✓ Experience of strategic leadership of and improvement and change including the creation of performance and accountability driven cultures (AF/I)
- ✓ A proven track record of leading statutory services through inspections and other external scrutiny, demonstrable experience of working with regulatory bodies such as Ofsted and with the support and challenge of the DfE (AF/I)
- ✓ Exchanges wide ranging complex and contentious information with a range of people, groups, organisations orally and in writing (AF/I)
- ✓ Significant experience of dealing with complex situations involving a degree of uncertainty (AF/I)
- ✓ Specialist expert and up to date knowledge in relevant policy, procedures, regulations, inspections, case law, legislation and best practice within children’s social care (AF/I)
- ✓ Successful track record of communicating and working with stakeholders and partners in order to focus resources jointly on improving services and outcomes for children and young people (AF/I)
- ✓ Experience of managing people effectively within a customer focused, service delivery organisation (AF/I)
- ✓ Successful management of budget to drive better value for money in service delivery (AF/I)

Ability, Skills & Knowledge

- ✓ Has the drive, tenacity and confidence to motivate, empower, support and challenge individuals, teams and services using evidence-based work to support change and drive forward improved ways of working (AF/I/)
- ✓ Strong, visible and positive leadership (AF/I/)
- ✓ Ability to provide constructive challenge, and to exert influence, on councillors, external partners, board members in order that appropriate and effective decisions are made. (AF/I/P)
- ✓ Knowledge of Children Act 1989 /2004, Adoption & Children Act 2002, Children and Young Persons Act 2008, other appropriate legislative frameworks, statutory guidance and processes for Looked After Children and Children subject to Child Protection Plans, Inspection and Regulation (AF/I/P)
- ✓ Ability to plan, organise and prioritise a demanding workload, to maintain the delivery of multiple, competing short and long-term objectives (AF/I)
- ✓ Proven ability to build and maintain strong networks of support both internally and externally (AF/I)
- ✓ Ability to forge effective partnerships with external agencies, voluntary and statutory bodies, and stakeholders for the continuous improvement of services (AF/I)
- ✓ Ability to harness the full commitment and responsibility of all key stakeholders in delivering the vision for Sefton's communities (AF/I)
- ✓ A successful record of delivering customer focused services and improving standards and performance (AF/I)
- ✓ The ability to employ advanced effective verbal and non-verbal communication to professional staff, public, employees and elected members. (AF/I)
- ✓ Ability and willingness to be pro-active and solution focused to implement (AF/I)
- ✓ performance and practice management (AF/I)
- ✓ standards and make decisions based on interpretation of complex information (AF/I)
- ✓ Effectively leading in areas of diversity and equalities (AF/I)
- ✓ Ability to drive forward excellence and deliver results, applying a focus on performance and improvement within the context of increasing efficiency (AF/I)

Special Requirements

- ✓ Prepared to work flexible working hours, including attendance at evening meetings throughout the Borough and outside the Borough (AF/I)
- ✓ Prepared to relocate to offices within the Borough, if required to do so (AF/I)