

JOB DESCRIPTION & PERSON SPECIFICATION

Director Area: Children’s Services	Job Ref Number: 04329
Service Area: Children’s Strategic Commissioning	Grade: SLC
Job Title: Head of Service Children’s Commissioning	

PURPOSE OF JOB:

Lead the commissioning of services for Lincolnshire’s children and young people, across the full commissioning cycle, to understand needs, plan solutions, secure services, and monitor delivery to improve outcomes.

Provide senior leadership to the Children’s Commissioning Service which has c.40 staff who work in a range of commissioning categories:

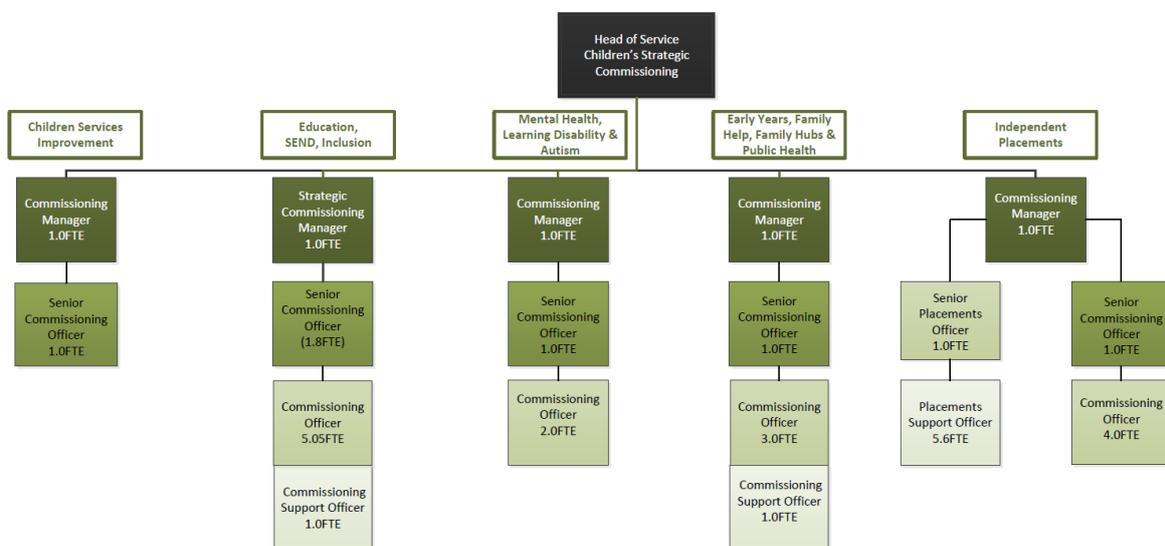
- Early Years, Family Hubs, Family Help and Public Health
- Mental Health, Learning Disability and Autism (on behalf of Lincolnshire Integrated Care Board (ICB))
- Education, Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Inclusion
- Independent Placements
- Children’s Services Improvement

This includes the oversight and effective allocation of over 400 contracts worth around £120 million per year and direct budget management responsibility of over £8 million per year.

Promote a ‘One Council’ approach and consistency in strategic commissioning across the Council’s other commercial services by applying shared frameworks, principles, and governance approaches, enabling a coherent and unified commissioning function.

Identify and drive opportunities for synergy and efficiency, continuously reviewing commissioning practices to enhance value for money, streamline processes, and improve outcomes across the children’s commissioning portfolio.

STRUCTURE CHART:



MAIN DUTIES:

1

Senior Leadership:

- Provide strategic and operational leadership for a service of more than 40 staff, ensuring structures, roles and resources are aligned to deliver a complex and dynamic programme of work. This includes effectively managing teams working remotely and across multiple office locations.
- Exercise direct line-management responsibility for Commissioning Managers and other designated staff, including recruitment, supervision, performance appraisal and ongoing professional development.
- Offer additional management oversight for staff outside the service when required to support the successful delivery of cross-cutting projects and programmes.
- Strengthen leadership capability across the Council by coaching, supporting and motivating staff to achieve high performance and contribute to a positive organisational culture.
- Deputise for the Assistant Director of Children's Services and/or the Executive Director of Children's Services, providing senior leadership presence and decision-making as required.

2

Service Leadership:

Provide strategic leadership and management for the Children's Commissioning Service across the full commissioning cycle (Analyse, Plan, Do, Review). The role places a strong emphasis on strategy, system leadership, partnership governance and whole-system transformation. Responsibilities include:

- Understanding statutory responsibilities and national policy, ensuring the commissioning function is compliant and aligned with local and national priorities.
- Assessing current needs and forecasting future demand using research, evidence, data analysis and engagement with children, young people, families and professional stakeholders.
- Mapping existing services to identify gaps, duplication and opportunities for improvement across the system.
- Setting strategic direction and commissioning priorities for Children's Services in collaboration with partners.
- Co-producing commissioning strategies and service models with stakeholders, ensuring they reflect local need and best practice.
- Undertaking evidence-based options appraisals, informed by research, benchmarking and evaluation.
- Shaping and influencing provider markets to secure sufficiency, quality, value for money and responsiveness to changing needs.
- Seeking democratic approval for commissioning recommendations and ensuring clear, transparent decision-making.
- Developing service specifications and KPIs that clearly set out expectations and measure improved outcomes.
- Leading or overseeing procurement and major commissioning programmes, ensuring compliance with the Council's Constitution, Contract and Procurement Procedure Rules, and relevant legislation.
- Establishing appropriate contractual arrangements that support high-quality, outcome-focused delivery.
- Implementing quality assurance frameworks to monitor performance against agreed outcomes and contractual obligations.
- Evaluating performance, outcomes, risk and value for money across all commissioned services, using learning to inform future commissioning cycles.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Driving continuous improvement, setting expectations for quality, innovation and system-wide effectiveness across the provider landscape.
2	<p>Service Transformation: Provide strategic leadership for a defined category of Children’s Services Improvement, driving system transformation and delivering high-quality change. This includes oversight of major transformation programmes, sector-led support, and the development and implementation of new initiatives and national pathfinders. Responsibilities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leading complex change programmes, ensuring strong project and programme management, effective governance, and clear oversight of risks, issues and interdependencies. • Redesigning operating models and service pathways, using data, insight and evidence to inform decision-making and shape sustainable, future-focused solutions. • Working collaboratively with stakeholders to ensure improvements are outcomes-focused, value for money, and aligned with statutory responsibilities and strategic objectives. • Championing culture change and organisational development, strengthening capability, promoting innovation, and embedding continuous improvement. • Ensuring benefits are clearly defined, monitored and realised, applying rigorous benefits management and ensuring delivery against agreed outcomes.
3	<p>Finance Management:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage a budget exceeding £8 million annually and provide oversight of contracts with a total value of over £120 million per year, ensuring robust financial governance and accountability. • Oversee service delivery within allocated budgets, ensuring strong financial control, accurate forecasting and effective monitoring, and provide support and challenge to other Budget Managers responsible for commissioned services. • Ensure commissioned services deliver value for money, applying financial analysis, benchmarking and commercial insight to identify efficiencies that contribute to the Council’s financial sustainability. • Interpret and analyse complex financial information, including organisational financial accounts, and develop zero-based budgets, negotiate savings, and identify financial risks with appropriate mitigation strategies. • Lead medium-term financial planning for commissioned services, including the management of inflationary pressures and contract uplifts in line with financial strategy and market conditions.
4	<p>Commercial Leadership:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work collaboratively with corporate commercial teams to develop and embed consistent, Council-wide approaches to commercial practice, contracting and market engagement. • Represent Children’s Services on corporate commercial boards and cross-cutting projects, ensuring that the Directorate’s needs, priorities and risks are clearly articulated and effectively addressed within wider organisational commercial strategies.
5	<p>Partnerships:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work closely with the relevant Portfolio Holder and elected Members to support the delivery of the Council’s vision, aims and objectives, upholding democratic processes as set out in the Constitution. This includes preparing and presenting briefings and reports, and maintaining regular, professional correspondence.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage frequently with the Corporate Leadership Team, Directorate Leadership Team, and Children’s Senior Leadership Team, as well as senior leaders across the wider Council. The role contributes to a strong “One Council” approach, collaborating effectively to develop coherent, corporate solutions. Build and maintain effective relationships with system partners, including the Integrated Care Board, NHS Provider Trusts, education providers, the voluntary and community sector, neighbouring local authorities and Government departments, ensuring partnership working supports improved outcomes for children and families in Lincolnshire. Work directly with children, young people and families, ensuring their voices meaningfully inform the commissioning, design and continuous development of services. Represent the Council when required, including on occasion acting as a spokesperson to the media. Demonstrate high-level partnership and stakeholder management skills, ensuring all aspects of the role are delivered collaboratively, constructively and with strong professional credibility.
6	<p>Integrated Commissioning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead integrated commissioning arrangements with the ICB for children’s services, ensuring statutory responsibilities—particularly for children and young people with SEND—are fully met. This includes developing integrated strategies, establishing joint commissioning arrangements, attending system boards, and supporting NHS planning and reporting requirements. Provide strategic leadership for the commissioning of children’s mental health services on behalf of the ICB, ensuring alignment with national policy, local priorities and system-wide improvement ambitions. This includes managing a pooled budget established under Section 75 of the NHS Act 2006, ensuring robust governance, value for money, and the effective delivery of jointly commissioned services across health and social care.
7	Remain up to date and compliant with all relevant legislation, organisational procedures, policies and professional codes of conduct in order to uphold standards of best practice.
8	The postholder is required to make autonomous decisions, and in accordance with Council policies and relevant legislation. While advice may be sought from colleagues, the role is expected to operate independently and exercise sound professional judgement in most situations.
9	The role requires responsibility for personal equipment, including a laptop and mobile devices, and involves mobile and agile working across a variety of environments. The postholder will undertake regular travel to different locations to meet service and operational needs.
10	The role involves regular exposure to sensitive and emotionally charged issues affecting children, young people and their families, requiring resilience, professionalism and the ability to respond with empathy and sound judgement.

PERSON SPECIFICATION			
Requirements	Where identified*	Essential	Desirable
Educated to degree level or equivalent professional qualification in a relevant subject	A	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

Knowledge an advanced level in a number of specialist disciplines including education, health and social care, contract law, finance, management and procedural matters.	A, I		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Experienced team or service manager that demonstrates motivational leadership	A, I	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Experienced commissioner across the full commissioning cycle	A, P, I	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Experienced budget manager of high value, complex budgets with an excellent understanding of financial systems and budget monitoring	A, P, I	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Programme and/or project management experience	A, I	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Experience of managing and implementing change	A, I	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Excellent presentation, written and verbal communication skills	A, P, I	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Excellent analytical skills	A, I	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Experience of engaging and co-producing children, young people and families in services	A, P, I	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Experience of building strong positive relationships across organisations at all levels, including elected members (desirable)	A, I	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Experience of establishing credible and influential relationships with system partners, diverse markets, other local authorities, and other provider organisations	A, I	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

*A = Application form T = Test/Assessment I = Interview P = Presentation

GENERAL

The postholder is required to take personal responsibility for contributing to organisational transformation and changes in ways of working, maximising the benefits and efficiencies for both internal and external customers, including the promotion and use of self-service to achieve maximum cost effectiveness.

The postholder is expected to work to Lincolnshire County Council's Values and to carry out the duties in accordance with Lincolnshire County Council policies.

Other Duties: The duties and responsibilities in this job description are not exhaustive. The post holder may be required to undertake other duties within the general scope of the post. Any such duties should not substantially change the general character of the post. Duties and responsibilities outside of the general scope of this grade of post will be with the consent of the post holder.

Safeguarding: All employees need to be aware of the possible abuse of children and vulnerable adults and if you are concerned you need to follow Lincolnshire County Council's Safeguarding Policy. In addition employees working with children and vulnerable adults have a responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and vulnerable adults during the course of their work.