

Management Group: Children's Services

Department/Section: Children's Social Care

Job Title: Head of Service – Early Help, Partnership and Targeted Early Help

Reports to: Deputy Director, Children's Social Care

Grade: Bexley21

Purpose of the job

To lead and deliver a high quality, effective and joined-up Early Help and Targeted Early Help system across the London Borough of Bexley, ensuring that children, young people and families receive help and support earlier, and experience coordinated, Families First support.

Principal accountabilities

Strategy

The postholder will provide strategic leadership across Early Help, Targeted Early Help and Partnerships, working closely with Children's Social Care, Education, Health, Police and the voluntary and community sector to strengthen prevention and early intervention.

The role will lead our strategic vision for developing a targeted Early Help service, working in partnership with providers and key stakeholders. This includes ensuring that partners are fully engaged with and committed to implementing a single, consistent assessment for children across Bexley, in line with the requirements of the Families First reforms.

The postholder will lead the implementation and delivery of our Families First four Family Hubs, working closely with estates and partners, and will be accountable for reporting progress, delivery and impact through a variety of formal partnership boards. The role will lead and deliver our borough-wide 'Therapeutic Hub,' and 'Family Time' making best use of existing Children's Services and existing commissioned partner resources available in Bexley. It will include working closely with Human Resources to meet staff consultation requirements. The role will also work with partners to identify additional capacity, skills, and resources to support this service.

To lead and deliver a clear, trusted and effective Early Help and Targeted Help system across the London Borough of Bexley.

Direction

To provide a clear sense of direction, priority and purpose for staff working within the service, enabling a strong commitment to the social work values of the directorate and the competencies set out in the relevant knowledge and skills statements for social workers and practice leads.

The role will also be responsible for confirming and strengthening partners' understanding of, and contribution to, the Early Help Lead Practitioner role, ensuring it is consistently embedded across the partnership to support effective multi-agency working and improved outcomes for children and families

To lead and deliver a high quality, effective and joined-up Early Help and Targeted Early Help system across the London Borough of Bexley, ensuring that children, young people and families receive help and support earlier, and experience coordinated, Families First support.

The postholder will lead our Family Led Decision Making Service (FGDM), ensuring that all families have a meaningful opportunity to engage, participate, and lead their own plans. The role will provide clear leadership to align Family Group Decision Making with existing Family Network Meetings, creating a consistent, whole-family approach to family-led decision making.

The postholder will support alignment between Kinship Zones and Family Network Support Packages, working closely with Kinship Zones senior leaders to ensure data is captured accurately and in line with DfE requirements across all Family Networks and Family Group Conferences (FGC).

The postholder will broker strong partnership relationships to enable partner agencies to work alongside the Families First approach, including arrangements where the Early Help Lead Practitioner role is held by a partner agency at targeted Early Help level. The role will ensure shared responsibility for assessment and planning, with all partners working together with families towards a single, agreed plan and one coordinated set of outcomes.

The post holder will promote safeguarding, equality, diversity, inclusion and anti-racist practice to ensure that the needs, views and aspirations of children, young people and families are central to all aspects of service delivery.

The post holder will promote and support the use of the Signs of Safety solution focused/risk organised practice principles in all work undertaken with children and families. Mandatory training will be provided to support.

Implementation

Work with existing commissioned partners, such as Solace and Public Health, to agree how they can align and work together with the Therapeutic Hub, creating a joined-up and consistent approach.

The role will ensure good engagement from children and their families in feedback, development, design and co-production of our services.

To contribute to effective commissioning of early help provision across the Borough and identify gaps and opportunities to meet these as well as leading innovation and best practice in service provision

To deliver the objectives of the service as set out in our directorate strategic plan and service plan, ensuring alignment with the Council's corporate plan and strategic priorities.

To interpret and implement legislative and government policy requirements, taking account of local need, service priorities, partnership arrangements and other key stakeholders.

To ensure the service learns continuously from practice, establishing improvement priorities from complaints, quality assurance activity, audit, feedback from children and families, staff, corporate colleagues, partners and inspections.

To innovate and learn from best practice and service improvement approaches used in other services and local authorities.

To be an active member of the Children's Services leadership team, contributing to strategic improvement priorities and modelling and managing a positive approach to change, including the continued embedding of Signs of Safety where applicable.

To provide robust oversight of service performance, ensuring that managers participate in regular performance boards, understanding service performance, and prioritize required improvements.

To lead the delivery and ongoing development of Family Hubs in line with our Families First programme, working closely with estates and partners, and ensuring progress, impact and risks are reported through partnership, and governance boards.

To ensure effective join up between both statutory and voluntary and community services to ensure provision, systems and processes reflects a clear and transparent pathway that is accessible to children in line with need.

To implement and embed a borough-wide Therapeutic Hub using existing Children's Services and partner resources, ensuring therapeutic approaches are integrated across the system rather than delivered as a standalone service.

To lead and oversee the Family-Led Decision Making service, ensuring alignment with Families First and Kinship Zones and strengthening family networks to support sustainable outcomes.

To broker and maintain strong partnership arrangements enabling partner agencies to undertake Early Help Lead Practitioner roles at targeted Early Help level, working collaboratively with Families First practitioners and families towards one assessment, one plan and shared outcomes.

To ensure all services within the remit of the post are cost-effective and responsive, and that complaints are investigated and resolved in accordance with departmental procedures.

To hold responsibility for the efficient and effective management of budgets within the remit of the post, working closely with the Senior Leadership Team and senior finance lead, including the submission of regular exception reports against budget and expenditure.

To provide line management and professional leadership to staff within the service, ensuring the effective translation of strategy into operational delivery and improved outcomes for children and families.

Organisational Control and Development

- a) To keep under review and develop the structures, procedures and working methods for which the post holder is responsible to ensure an integrated, effective and efficient approach to the delivery of services.
- b) To ensure that working practices and processes are developed that maximise the use of new technology to ensure efficient and effective delivery of services to residents.

Staff Management and Development

- a) To ensure that staff are recruited, managed, appraised and developed, and that effective arrangements are made for the training and development of all staff within the department so as to meet service needs and to provide equality of opportunity for all employees.

Personal Effectiveness

- a) To present timely and relevant advice and information to Members and to ensure that Group Leaders are briefed on major and sensitive issues.
- b) To deal promptly with all matters requiring the post holder's personal attention.
- c) To be fully conversant with relevant statutory provisions and the Council's constitution, processes and procedures; to develop the full range of managerial and professional skills and knowledge to satisfy the requirements of the post.
- d) To establish and develop effective working relationships and productive partnerships with all the relevant partners, including those in e.g. education, health, social services, Independent and voluntary sectors.

Person Specification

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Job Family: Head of Service

Selection Criteria	Essential/ Desirable (E/D)	Method of Assessment (see key)
(a) Education and formal training		
Professional qualification in Social Work and current Social Work England registration	E	A/I
Evidence of Continuous Professional Development	E	A/I
Education to degree level, with post qualifying training	D	A/I
(b) Relevant technical experience, knowledge & skills/abilities		
Demonstrable evidence of ability to lead and develop a service with success	E	A/I
Ability to work constructively as a member of a senior leadership team.	E	A/I
Evidence of successful change management within a complex service to achieve desired outcomes	E	A/I
Able to demonstrate leadership behaviours that enable good social work to flourish	E	A/I
Demonstrates understanding of, and a clear commitment to working in accordance with the Council's values and performance expectations.	E	A/I
Demonstrates a clear commitment and willingness to adhere to the Managerial Contract for Bexley Managers.	E	A/I

Either (1a and 1b) OR (2) below:

(1a) Demonstrable experience and skill in managing child protection provision and legal proceedings. (1b)	E	A/I
(2) Demonstrable experience and skill in managing frontline services in assessment, Children in Need and Child Protection, including public law outline work.	E	A/I
Able to successfully transform children's social work services into high performing services, introducing innovative service models and maintaining agreed standards.	E	A/I
Demonstrable evidence of rigorous management and practice oversight, corrective action plans and improved delivery of social work services for families	E	A/I
Experience of leading and managing children's social care services that are relevant to this particular service area and role (including high risk and high complexity work), and that deliver high quality performance and good outcomes for children.	E	A/I
Experience of developing a highly motivated, high achieving and stable work force with a positive, "can-do", customer-centred culture.	E	A/I
Achievement of measurable results in an environment where political and financial issues impact on service delivery.	E	A/I/T
Ability to write high quality, clear and concise management and committee reports, constructing and adhering to the timelines in local decision making cycles.	E	A/I
Comprehensive understanding of national policy, strategy and developments regarding children's social care, and areas that impact on looked after children.	E	A/I/T
Comprehensive understanding of relevant legislation, statutory guidance, standards and procedures.	E	A/I
Comprehensive understanding of relevant theoretical frameworks, practice models and research findings.	E	A/I

Comprehensive understanding of outcomes concepts, quality assurance methodology and change/project management techniques.	E	A/I
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Evidence of successfully managing budgets, achieving value for money and commitment to deliver services in line with the agreed budget.	E	A/I
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Experienced in leading and managing strategic and operational change, projects and programmes to achieve desired outcomes, applying project management skills effectively.	E	A/I
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Ability to lead and manage a service area dealing with high risk and high complexity in a way that delivers protection and the best outcomes for children and families.

Able to devise and introduce effective outcomes based quality assurance frameworks.

Experienced in developing strategic priorities with partners and developing innovative service delivery models.

Understanding and experience of working in a complex organisation, with demonstrable good partnership working with a variety of stakeholders including elected members.

(c) Other Additional Requirements

Commitment to work beyond office hours as required by the role and to participate in senior manager out of hours rota.	E	A/I
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Enhanced DBS Check	E	DBS
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KEY:

I = Interview, A = Application Form, AT = Ability Test, PQ = Personality Questionnaire,

P = Presentation, PE = Practical Exercise, DBS = Disclosure & Barring Service, DL = Driving Licence

Applicants will be assessed against these criteria and the following high-performance indicators throughout the recruitment process.

High Performance Indicators

Values	Behaviours for staff	Behaviours for managers
Innovation	I respond flexibly and adapt to changing demands	I routinely look for innovative and cost-effective ways to improve performance and customer service
	I am prepared to take managed risks to achieve better outcomes	I champion change and deal successfully with ambiguity, enabling people to see positive and exciting possibilities for the future
	I ask 'What if...?' to develop fresh thinking and innovative approaches to generate and implement solutions to improve performance and challenge the status quo	I take calculated risks based on available evidence and my professional judgement to learn and try new things
Leadership	I demonstrate a clear sense of purpose and direction, in line with organisational objectives	I take responsibility for my service and for making things happen to make a difference to my service users
	I am willing to take difficult decisions	I create an environment where staff can thrive and show I value and trust staff, give praise and recognise good work
	My personal actions promote a positive image of Bexley	I inspire, lead and encourage staff to move forward
Collaboration	I show respect for others and value contributions from internal and external partners and customers	I encourage the feeling that the team is a collective unit with shared goals
	I recognise the right solution, regardless of who initiated it	I engage with service partners and other areas of the Bexley organisation to understand the demands on others and seek solutions as One Council
	I seek out and work with partners who can help me achieve the outcomes and objectives I need to deliver	I network internally and externally

Listening and Responding	I acknowledge other people's viewpoints and work with them to find a win-win solution	I seek regular service user feedback and review customer data to shape service improvements
	I prepare and present information anticipating questions and problems	I ask staff for ideas on how to improve our service and how I can improve as a manager, listen to them and act on them
	I adapt my style to the audience and their needs, using the most appropriate communication channels	I empower staff to make decisions and changes to improve value for money, customer service and productivity
Open and Accessible	I see issues from the customer / user perspective	I am accessible to my service users, customers, staff and Members
	I monitor customer feedback and level of satisfaction with the service they receive, and use this to improve and pre-empt customer needs	I communicate and share a clear vision for the bigger picture as well as specific service areas
	I seek to build and maintain positive relationships with customers and partners	I outline what is expected of individuals and their contribution to the whole, and am consistent in my expectations
Impact	I prioritise my activities and resources to focus on those which have the most impact for residents	I design services that provide value for money and deliver our outcomes, informed by evidence
	I take responsibility for making things happen and achieving my objectives	I produce, prioritise and adapt plans to meet changing requirements
	I make decisions and clear recommendations based on my professional opinion and experience, informed by a range of information and evidence	I set interim goals to achieve notable wins on the way to larger objectives
		I deal with poor performance