

JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title	Team Leader - Leaving Care		
Directorate	Children and Families		
Reporting to	Strategic Manager Operations CLA/LC		
Grade	9		
Evaluation ref:	AG0658	Job ref:	Family
Role purpose			
The purpose of this role is to lead, supervise, and develop a team responsible for delivering high-quality statutory support to care leavers as Somerset Council acts in its role as Corporate Parent. The post holder ensures that all young people transitioning from care receive consistent, timely, and outcome-focused support that safeguards their welfare, promotes independence, and enables them to thrive into adulthood. This role provides professional leadership in managing complex casework, overseeing assessments and plans, and ensuring that interventions are purposeful, evidence-based, and aligned with legislative and corporate standards. The Team Leader works directly with young people, often in challenging circumstances, offering expert guidance, crisis management, and robust advocacy to help them access accommodation, education, training, employment, health services, and financial stability. The post holder drives collaborative, multi-agency working, shaping effective partnerships that secure positive outcomes for care leavers. They support service development across the county, contribute to quality assurance frameworks, uphold safeguarding responsibilities, ensure accurate data and reporting, and manage key resources including accommodation, budgets, and staff performance. Ultimately, the role champions the voice of young people, ensuring their needs, aspirations, and feedback shape both their plans and wider service improvements.			
Responsibilities			
• Manage and prioritise team workloads, to ensure that all care leavers receive a professional and consistent service, that their welfare is safeguarded, their needs are met, that purposeful interventions are planned and delivered and outcomes well-evidenced. • Oversee and authorise casework assessments, and reports as required by the Operations Manager, ensuring they are of a professional standard, provide clear and evidenced analysis and planning and reflect the views of young people. • Recruit and induct new team members and conduct and record regular reflective supervision and appraisal to ensure staff development. Monitor and manage staff performance taking into account their safety and welfare. Utilise the Council's Performance and disciplinary policies and procedures when necessary. • Take lead responsibility for work with care leavers in an area, including those with highly complex needs. Analyse, evaluate and manage risk, using expert			

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knowledge, experience, and skills to respond, often in crisis situations where young people may be highly vulnerable, need urgent financial help, become homeless, or need other assistance.

- Ensure that care leavers receive the services to meet their needs in relation to accommodation, finances, health and wellbeing, education, training and employment, family relationships, parenting, and offending; and that they are motivated to capitalise on these.
- As the senior professional, with their team, work directly with care leavers and their families to motivate, inform, advise, and safeguard, acting as a Corporate Parent for the young person, maximising their transition into adulthood and from care placements to independent living.
- Ensure all young people are motivated to fulfil their potential in education, training and employment and are supported to have positive relationships with others e.g. family and friends.
- Ensure that young people have a strong voice and are active participants in planning and reviewing their services and that their feedback is consistently requested and proactively used in service planning and development.
- Ensure that all the work of the team with young people, their families and professionals have a timely and accurate record in keeping with professional standards.
- Respond to and manage stage 1 complaints and resolve complex operational and service-based problems and conflicts, escalating where appropriate.
- Take day to day financial and resource gatekeeping decisions in a way that optimises use of budgets, authorising expenditure such as Personal and Setting Up Home Allowances and wide range of additional discretionary payments
- Ensure best value for money and that staff operate in line with the Council's financial policies and procedures.
- Promote collaboration with partner agencies, shaping changes to ensure high quality services for care leavers.
- Take the lead role in planning for young people in their transition to adulthood with other agencies, convening multi-agency meetings to advocate for young people. Challenge, influence, and negotiate with partners and agree multiagency plans for young people to achieve the best outcomes for them using multiagency escalation processes if required.
- Provide expert knowledge and skills, sharing relevant information with internal and external mainstream and specialist services and agencies on behalf of care leavers to ensure the best outcomes for them.
- Convene safeguarding strategy discussions with Police, Probation, Adult and Mental Health Safeguarding and other relevant partners where risks to the care leaver are considered to be high or where there are concerns about the quality of care and provision of services.
- Ensure that the relevant team or agency is notified if there are safeguarding concerns about a care leaver's parenting and if their children may be at risk.
- Ensure the Operations Manager is kept informed of individual cases where there are significant safeguarding concerns, policy implications or particularly sensitive issues.

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- Contribute to the development and implementation of the Council and Leaving Care Quality Assurance Frameworks and to subsequent Action Planning.
- Ensure the appropriate recording of information and use of data management systems to ensure that there is accurate and reliable management information and timely and accurate government reporting.
- Engage with the Operations Manager in case file audits to ensure that the appropriate information is available and appropriately recorded and that assessments and plans are of an acceptable quality.
- Manage the accommodation that the council provides for up to 14, 18–21-year-old care leavers in 3 houses. Ensure that the young people are safe and secure, are appropriately supported. Take responsibility for ensuring that the buildings are maintained to an appropriate standard, and that Council Health and Safety Standards including Fire Safety are upheld.
- Manage and supervise the supported lodgings scheme for 18–21-year-old care leavers which involves recruiting, assessing, training and supervision of family-based provision under the auspices of the Council Fostering Panel.
- Contribute to broader management and development of Children's Social Care services as a member of area and county management teams.
- Engage with the Operations Manager in service developments and formulation of policy, protocols, procedures, and systems, which will set the framework for the work of the service and benchmarks against which the work can be measured and the service evaluated. Provide advice to the Operations Manager on detail and practicality to ensure that Policies, procedures etc. are realistic and achievable
- Take the lead county wide responsibility for a specific area of leaving care service development such as provision and coordination of accommodation, education training and employment, health and wellbeing or participation, representing the LC service and Somerset Council.
- Act as subject matter experts on legislation, practice, and resources in working with care leavers; give day to day advice and guidance to CLA, Safeguarding, Assessment, Children with Disabilities and Adult Social Care social workers and managers via one-to-one consultation, attendance at team meetings.
- Develop and deliver training to social workers, residential and foster carers, on leaving care matters; ensuring that everyone understands their part in preparing young people for independence and has high expectations for the young people. Subject areas for training include Pathway Planning and Plans, Preparation for Independence, financial capability, accommodation including 'Staying Put,' education, training, employment, and welfare benefits.
- Influence and persuade residential and fostering managers (in-house and independent sector providers) to ensure that preparing to leave care is embedded in the way young people are cared for throughout their teenage years and does not commence with the Pathway Plan.

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- Promote the needs of young people with disabilities and additional needs as they make the transition into adult services, if eligible, and adulthood.

Impact

Contacts & Relationships

- Effect change for young people and their families to ensure the most positive outcomes possible are achieved for them. Ensure that the risks for care leavers are managed as safely as possible.
- Use creative ways to communicate with young people, motivating them, and influencing their behaviour, some of whom may be resistant and hard to engage, taking into account their views and facilitating their involvement in planning their own future and service developments.
- The post holder will require the use of a significant level of skill, confidence, determination and persistence in working closely on a day to day basis with social workers, and managers at all levels to advocate on behalf of young people, provide advice and guidance re legislation, policies, procedures and resources and where appropriate challenge their practice in the best interests of the young people.
- Similarly regular effective communication with other council colleagues and external agencies bodies to share knowledge, provide advice, act as advocates and broker services will be required to ensure positive outcomes for young people and to meet statutory requirements. This includes collaboration with Adult and Children's SW teams, Fostering teams and foster carers, the Virtual School, schools and colleges, physical and mental health professionals, getset, District Council housing, Pathways to Independence (P2i) and private landlords and their agents, Job Centre Plus, Department of Work and Pensions, the Justice System, Careers Southwest, as well as the voluntary and community sector to offer holistic and quality support.
- Developing networking relationships on a county and national level representing and on behalf of Somerset Council to promote the needs of care leavers, and to motivate partners in their service developments.
- Informing the Operations Manager about significant issues, which would affect the safety of young people or staff, budget constraints, the ability of the service to fulfil its requirements or the reputation of the service.
- Working with the Operations Manager and others in the development of the Service Plans.

Resources

- Supervise and manage up to 8 FTE staff including Leaving Care Workers, plus sessional workers, volunteers, or social work students, directly responsible for working with client group.
- Provision of services relating to the maintenance, accommodation, and support for up to 150 care leavers aged 15-25 within a total cohort of 450 - 500.

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- Responsible for meeting all statutory requirements for up to 100 young people aged 18-25 in an area. Also, for offering specialist advice and support up to a further 35 young people aged 15-17 years.
- Coordinate partnership working with a wide range of colleagues inside the Council and in other agencies convening and chairing meetings which include up to 20 people including senior professionals
- Making decisions as approved as signatory for up to £300 spending at any one time in line using judgement to ensure value for money and that departmental priorities are adhered to, and within budgetary constraints and financial regulation.
- Make detailed recommendations to the Operations Manager for spending in excess of £300 and for additional significant expenditure.
- Assist the Operations Manager Leaving Care in the monitoring and management of the £3m budget.
- Be responsible for ensuring the health and safety standards of the Council's 3 buildings and up to 25 family-based lodgings provision for the accommodation of care leavers
- Provide cover for Leaving Care Team Leader colleagues in other areas /roles in the event of leave or sickness to ensure continuity of service.
- Represent the Leaving Care Service at Boards, panels, and other meetings in the absence of the Operations Manager.

Knowledge / Experience / Skills

	Essential	Desirable	
Knowledge			
In depth knowledge of the needs of young people looked after and care leavers.	X		
Knowledge and understanding of childcare, assessment, and planning for young people.	X		
Working knowledge of the Children Act/Children and Young People's Act, Leaving Care Act, Child Protection legislation, practice, and procedures.	X		
Knowledge of Accommodation legislation, statutory requirements, Council, and departmental policies.		X	
Experience			
Proven experience working with young people in social care setting.	X		
Experience of working co-operatively with colleagues and other professionals.	X		
Experience and commitment to working in a team setting.	X		

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Specific experience of working with care leavers, particularly in relation to their accommodation needs.		X	
Experience of supervision, appraisal, and management of staff.		X	
Qualifications / Registrations / Certifications			
Ability to demonstrate competence against occupational standards equivalent to NVQ3 in Care.	X		
Holds or prepared to work towards a Management Qualification equivalent to NVQ level 4.		X	
Skills			
Ability to communicate a range of service-related issues at all levels in an appropriate and concise manner, both orally and in writing.	X		
Ability to think strategically, analyse situations and a willingness to work cooperatively, proactively and to solve problems.	X		
Relevant IT skills to enable effective use of IT equipment on a daily basis.	X		
Effective skills in recruitment, selection, team leadership and review.		X	
Ability to manage, supervise, motivate, and develop staff within an equal opportunities' framework.		X	
Ability to monitor and evaluate the work of individuals and the team.		X	
Working Conditions			
Working Arrangements			
Somerset Council's dynamic Working Strategy will be applied to this position.			
Corporate Responsibilities			
• Ensure compliance with all relevant legislation, organisational policy, and professional codes of conduct to uphold standards of best practice. • Deliver the aims of the council's equality, diversity and inclusion policies; health, safety and wellbeing of self and others; and Organisational values in everything you do, ensuring team members are also aware of their responsibilities and maintaining their understanding that Equality and Diversity practice covers both			

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interaction with staff, service users and communities and includes challenging discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity for all.

Date: 26th September 2024