

JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title	Senior Education Safeguarding Officer		
Service	Children's and Families		
Reporting to			
Grade	11		
Evaluation ref:	AG0937	Job ref:	Family ref:
Role Purpose			
<p>The Senior Education Safeguarding Officer provides operational and professional leadership across a defined functional area of Education Safeguarding, ensuring children and young people aged 0–25 in Somerset receive their educational entitlement and are safeguarded effectively. The role leads and manages Safeguarding Assistants and relevant business support staff, holding responsibility for quality assurance, case oversight, complex decision-making and the effective use of statutory and legal powers. Working closely with schools, early years settings, partner agencies and internal services, the postholder ensures compliance with legislation, Somerset Council policies and safeguarding best practice, while contributing to continuous service improvement. The role also represents the service in legal proceedings, supports investigations and prosecutions where required, promotes high professional standards, develops safeguarding practice and training, and contributes to traded and income-generating activities, while upholding the Council's values, equality, diversity and inclusion commitments.</p>			
Accountabilities			
Management and Leadership			
<p>Leads and manages Safeguarding Assistants and other business support staff where necessary, carrying out line management responsibilities and appraisals as required by SC policies, this includes ensuring that staff receive support and are held to account for the quantity and quality of their work.</p> <p>Takes responsibility for a functional area of Education Safeguarding practice, e.g. Child Employment or Entertainment, across the county and will lead on the development of this area, complying with legislation or SC principles where relevant.</p> <p>Plans the allocation of resources across their functional area of responsibility across the county to ensure work is completed to standard and on time and within agreed service specs.</p> <p>Works with the other Senior Education Safeguarding Officers, Advisors and the Service Manager to continuously improve processes and practices, responding to the changing needs of customers, changes to legislation and service priorities.</p> <p>Maintains and develops good working relationships with attendance leads, School and Academy Senior Leadership Teams, Colleges, independent provisions and</p>			

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Early Years settings across the county, promoting the service and wider SC services. This will take place through contact at meetings, email correspondence and face to face meetings.

Carries out Quality Assurance processes, sampling and observing the work of their own team members, and others, to ensure work is being completed on time and to service standards. Reports as necessary to the Service Manager.

Caseload

Holds an allocation of education provisions, following service processes to ensure children receive their educational entitlement and holds parents and schools to account. Provides operational leadership, advice and support to early years, schools, parents and students to support with all areas of safeguarding, including where complaints require investigating and resolving. Oversees the processes and actions taken by the team and provides leadership and guidance for resolving challenging situations.

Supports team members by providing wider specialist service knowledge to ensure policies and procedures are followed resulting in robust safeguarding in Somerset. Leads on finding solutions to resolve blockages and delays. Escalates cases, to the Service Manager and other professionals, that cannot be resolved using established processes and local discussion, with, for example, Team Leaders in other services.

Supports the Education Safeguarding Advisor in managing safeguarding complaints by following service guidelines to address concerns with early years settings, education providers and others. Uses appropriate systems and communication methods to reach resolution.

Provides guidance and support to the team in relation to sharing sensitive information to key stakeholders and partner agencies, escalating high priority child protection concerns with appropriate senior managers within SC.

Leads the team in promoting the safeguarding of children and young people of Somerset from 0-25 years by offering high quality advice, support to all partners and using appropriate escalation processes for all the areas of the service, including Elective Home Education (EHE), Children Missing Education (CME) and use of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE).

Attends meetings as required to represent the Education Safeguarding service and offer specialist advice and guidance to key partners. Reports to the Safeguarding Advisor any required actions.

Maintains accurate and up-to-date electronic records in accordance with relevant legislation, policy and procedures and produces accurate timely reports on performance and outcomes. Ensures that team members maintain accurate records.

Legal

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Convenes and chairs meetings with parent/carers, pupils and schools; commence and lead criminal investigations using statutory powers under Section 444(1) and 444(1A) of the Education Act 1996 and Police and Criminal

Evidence Act 1984 (PACE) interviews. Provides support and guidance to the team particularly in relation to more challenging or potentially contentious meetings.

Prepares on behalf of the Local Authority, prosecution cases in relation to non-school attendance, including Section 9 Witness Statements and disclosure schedules for Trials. Provides guidance, training and support to the team in relation to the accurate and timely completion of legal documents, to ensure the professional reputation of the service and SC is upheld.

Makes decisions regarding prosecutions and other legal measures as necessary, e.g. planning parental prosecutions, School Attendance Orders, Parenting Orders and Education Supervision Orders.

Makes first presentations in Magistrates' Courts for the above measures, following legal guidance to ensure the Council is protected and children's interests are promoted. Makes decisions on the hoof in court on withdrawing cases, challenging "Not Guilty" pleas and parents' false assertions and mitigation. Undertakes discussions both outside and inside court with defence solicitors over EWS decision-making. Responds, as required, to The Clerk's and Magistrates queries and observations.

Appears as a witness in Magistrates' Court and Family Proceedings Courts in respect of irregular school attendance as required. Gives evidence in court to Magistrates and be subject to cross examination in Trial proceedings.

Considers and makes public interest arguments in line with national guidance to the Service Manager about commencing, continuing and withdrawing prosecutions, on behalf of own caseload, and on behalf of the team. Works closely with the other Senior Education Safeguarding Officer, Advisors and Service Manager to potentially challenge arguments proposed by team members to proceed or withdraw cases on the grounds of public interest to ensure a fair and robust decision-making process is applied consistently across the county.

Knowledge of Legislation

Demonstrates a clear understanding of wide-ranging legislation with the ability to explain and clarify the legislation to team members, service users and senior managers in relation to safeguarding, school attendance matters, child protection issues, Children in Employment and Entertainment, Elective Home Education and Children Missing Education, ensuring that changes in legislation are understood and communicated effectively.

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Supports team members on children missing education, children in entertainment and employment and electively home educated children, for example with home visits, making casework decisions as needed.

Maintains a good understanding of LA policies and procedures and ensures these are followed by staff so that children receive their educational entitlement and team members comply with LA policies.

Practice

Maintains and develops good working relationships with other services/agencies concerned with the safeguarding and education of children and co-ordinate action and share information, e.g. with PEVP, MARAC and at multi-professional meetings.

Maintains confidentiality in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and is responsible for providing guidance and support to team members.

Maintains an accurate and up to date Outlook calendar that is available to all colleagues of own activities. Ensures compliance with the recording of data.

Undertakes education safeguarding related project work as required by the Service Manager or by other SC Managers.

Works to ensure their own continuing professional development through participation in team training days, team meetings, reading and other activities.

Responsible for promoting the welfare of children and young people and where relevant support schools and early years settings in safeguarding children though being aware of relevant policies and procedures and understanding how to use these to ensure that children and young people are protected, and all suspicions and allegations of abuse are taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.

Project & Revenue Generation

Works closely with team members to identify appropriate opportunities which can potentially become traded opportunities to provide income generation.

Uses their contacts in Schools and Academies to identify and gain opportunities for revenue generation and to promote the full range of revenue generating activities available from SC.

Works closely on the leadership and development of traded opportunities with other SC teams to ensure traded packages are costed and marketed according to SC's approved standards.

Develops and delivers a range of training programmes to schools. Follows occupational standards where relevant, ensuring the training complies with relevant legislation and monitoring the quality of training delivered by the Education Safeguarding Officers.

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Understand, uphold and promote 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. Equality and Diversity practice covers both interaction with staff, service users and communities and includes challenging discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity for all.

Knowledge / Experience / Skills

	Essential	Desirable
Knowledge		
Demonstrable in-depth knowledge of relevant legislation and statutory guidance relating to safeguarding, school attendance, child protection, Elective Home Education, Children Missing Education and Children in Employment and Entertainment.	X	
Knowledge of traded or income-generating services within a local authority context, including delivery of training to schools or partners.	X	
Detailed understanding of the Education Act 1996, including Sections 444(1) and 444(1A), and the application of enforcement powers in relation to non-school attendance.	X	
Strong understanding of safeguarding thresholds, information-sharing requirements and escalation pathways within a local authority and multi-agency context.	X	
Understanding of quality assurance principles and performance management within safeguarding or regulatory services.	X	
In-depth knowledge of prosecution processes, including preparation of witness statements, disclosure schedules and presenting cases in Magistrates' Courts.		X
Knowledge of multi-agency safeguarding arrangements and forums, such as MARAC, PEVP and other partnership panels.		X

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Understanding of service development and continuous improvement within a county-wide education or safeguarding service.		X
Knowledge of traded or income-generating services within a local authority context, including delivering statutory or safeguarding-related training to schools.		X
Experience		
Significant experience of working in education safeguarding, school attendance or a closely related statutory service, including complex casework involving children and families.	X	
Proven experience of leading, supervising or managing staff, including performance management, quality assurance and supporting staff development in line with organisational policies.	X	
Experience of exercising statutory powers and undertaking enforcement or legal processes, including preparation of legal documentation and presenting cases in court or equivalent formal settings.	X	
Experience of leading a specialist functional area or service development within education safeguarding or attendance services.		X
Direct experience of conducting PACE interviews and appearing as a witness in Magistrates' or Family Courts.		X
Experience of conducting quality assurance audits and contributing to service improvement initiatives across a county-wide service.		X
Experience of contributing to multi-agency forums such as MARAC, PEVP or other safeguarding panels.		X
Experience of supporting and advising others on the management of safeguarding complaints and escalation processes.		X

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A strong commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion, with experience of challenging discrimination and promoting inclusive practice in professional settings.		X
Qualifications / Registrations / Certifications		
A relevant Level 5 qualification or above, or equivalent professional qualification, in education, safeguarding, social care, youth justice, community safety or a related discipline.	X	
Evidence of substantial relevant experience and continuous professional development where formal qualifications have been gained through practice rather than study.	X	
Training in safeguarding and child protection, with clear evidence of applying this knowledge in a statutory or regulatory context.	X	
Skills		
Ability to make sound, defensible decisions in high-risk and contentious situations, balancing legal compliance, public interest and the welfare of children and young people.	X	
Strong partnership-working skills, with experience of working collaboratively with schools, early years settings, multi-agency partners and internal services to resolve safeguarding concerns.	X	
Excellent communication skills, with the ability to provide clear professional advice, chair meetings, explain legislation and represent the service confidently with senior stakeholders.	X	
Strong organisational and analytical skills, including accurate record-keeping, use of case management systems and production of timely reports on performance and outcomes.	X	
Working Conditions		
Dimensions of the role		

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Working Arrangements

Somerset Council's Dynamic Working Strategy will be applied to this position.

Corporate Accountabilities

Understand, uphold, and promote 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. Equality and Diversity practice covers both interaction with staff, service users and communities and includes challenging discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity for all.

Date: