



JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title	Strategic Manager - Operations		
Directorate	Children & Families		
Reporting to			
Grade	6		
Evaluation ref:	NOM0382	Job Family ref:	
Role Purpose			
<p>The Strategic Manager – Operations provides senior leadership and operational management for the delivery of high-quality children’s social care services within a designated area of Somerset. As a member of the Council’s Senior Management Group, the role is responsible for driving performance, assuring statutory compliance, and translating the Council’s strategic priorities, County Plan and Children’s Social Care Plan into effective front-line delivery. The postholder leads assessment, safeguarding and care planning services to ensure that children, young people and families receive timely, proportionate and effective support that achieves positive outcomes and safeguards wellbeing.</p> <p>Working collaboratively with elected Members, Directors, partner agencies and other senior leaders, the role shapes service delivery, influences policy development and drives continuous improvement. The postholder has overall accountability for operational performance, workforce leadership, quality assurance and the effective use of resources, including management of area budgets. Through strong leadership and a relationship-based, learning culture, the Strategic Manager – Operations ensures consistent practice, high standards of care, and the successful implementation of service transformation to meet current and future needs.</p>			
Accountabilities			
<p>Create, agree and deliver service plans and prioritise activities and projects.</p> <p>Identify and deliver opportunities for service change and improvement and scope, plan and manage change in corporate and professional activities.</p> <p>Review performance outcomes and customer feedback in order to meet customer requirements and to increase operational efficiency and effectiveness.</p> <p>Develop and maintain effective customer relations and feedback channels and work to improve levels of customer service and satisfaction.</p> <p>Resolve complex operational and service-based problems and conflicts raised through the service escalation process and ensure positive outcomes.</p> <p>Optimise the use of financial and other resources (including commissioning frameworks, income streams etc.) to locally commission and deliver services on time, to budget and to the quality standards required.</p>			

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Recruit, review the performance of and ensure the development of individual professional and other team members.

Operate information and communication systems to provide business and management information used to support and inform operational decision making.

Develop and maintain effective personal networks with partner agencies, suppliers and contractors etc. in order to maintain continuity and quality of service.

Communicate clearly and succinctly and use influence and persuasion to negotiate and achieve service objectives.

As part of the Children's Operations Service all staff are required to:

- Place quality and performance at the heart of everything they do.
- Be proactive and responsible for contributing to the achievement of positive well being and safeguarding outcomes for children and young people in Somerset.
- Work towards the achievement of key performance indicators.
- Be open to change and work in a flexible way as part of an integrated service to Children and Families.

Role specific duties and responsibilities

Take the lead responsibility for the provision of operational management for the delivery of assessment and safeguarding services to children and young people in a designated geographical area of the County but with location flexibility as necessary.

Provide operational management cover for other service areas within Children's Services as necessary.

Take overall responsibility through the Team Managers for the effective and efficient management of staff in the area including:

- a) Recruitment, induction, professional development, and reflective and reflexive supervision and appraisal.
- b) Role modelling of high motivation and innovation in working practice.
- c) Assignment of work, allocation of resources and overall deployment of staff.
- d) Appraising performance and the operation of staff development reviews.
- e) Leading the continual improvement journey for Children's Services through regular quality assurance.
- f) Promote and instil a relationship-based and learning culture across all Children's Service activities.

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Lead on the use of performance information to drive forwards practice improvement and positive outcomes for children and families. To develop and actively operate service improvement plans which ensure areas for improvement are identified, delegated and actioned in a timely manner with a regular review process in built and which shape the team services for children and families to promote best outcomes. Ensure compliance and alignment with the County Plan and the Children's Social Care Plan and regularly monitor progress against the Plan.

Work with other Operations Managers and Strategic Managers to develop and apply quality and best practice procedures across the county ensuring consistency and compliance with Council policies and the requirements of the Local Safeguarding Children's Board.

Ensure children who receive a statutory social care service do so at the appropriate level based upon their assessed strengths, needs and risks and that the resulting intervention is proportionate.

As the Corporate Parent, ensure that Children Looked After held in the community teams receive best quality care planning which addresses their individual needs both in the short and long term to include a clear focus on permanence. Ensure that children's care plans are reviewed according to statutory and regulatory intervals. Ensure that where children need permanent arrangements, plans are robust and address long term needs in a manner that will achieve the best outcome for the child concerned. As the Corporate Parent ensure that plans for permanence including reunification are central and regularly reviewed and amended as necessary.

As the Corporate Parent, ensure that effective planning is in place at an early stage for successful transition into independence and adulthood for young people held in the community teams. Ensure that meaningful Pathway Plans are completed in a timely manner and are aspirational for our young people including in terms of education, training and employment.

Ensure practice decisions are made in a timely manner under the scheme of delegation as appropriate. Further, to ensure that the impact on children of transfer between teams is minimised with avoidance of drift and unnecessary delay. Promotion of a seamless and flexible service for children and families within Children's social care.

Participate in the review and development of Children's social care services, policy and practice. Lead the area-based teams through transformation and change by working in close collaboration with internal colleagues and partner agencies to deliver new ways of working.

Develop and maintain effective and professionally generous working relationships across partner agencies and agree local protocols and processes to secure improved local delivery of services.

Work alongside the Strategic Manager and business support and finance colleagues on a day to day basis to control and review all expenditure and income within area budgets and ensure budget targets are met.

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Ensure that records, resources, information and data at area level are managed in accordance with Council policies and current legislation and that audits and procedures are executed efficiently.

Ensuring effective communications and relationships are developed and maintained with community partners in service areas, to include the sharing of information regarding activities affecting children and young people in their area.

Participation in the duty manager role for out of hours contacts via the Emergency Duty Service.

Impact

Resources

Manage an annual operational budget to balance.

Line manage a range of Team Managers, Team Leaders and Consultant Social Workers.

Relationships

The postholder reports to the Strategic Manager - Communities & Children with Disabilities (CwD)) and its principal purpose is to deliver to that Strategic Manager the delegated management and improvement of Children and Young People's social care in their designated area. This will involve a full range of day to day management activities including priority settling, conflict resolution and service communication. In addition, the post will support the Strategic Manager in strategic and policy planning and service improvement.

The postholder will need to develop and maintain a locality-based network of colleague Somerset Council Managers, private, voluntary and community sector leaders and managers and other bodies/agencies in order to ensure that combined resources are optimised in the delivery of services and a coherent approach to service improvement.

The postholder requires advanced communication skills to ensure effective feedback arrangements from clients and customers and to enable effective leadership of local teams during changes to achieve new ways of working.

	Essential	Desirable	
Knowledge			
Good understanding and ability to develop and implement effective performance management and quality assurance frameworks.	X		

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Demonstrable knowledge of the statutory and policy framework within the service.	X		
Experience			
Working successfully with Members/Directors on complex issues and developing strategic direction.	X		
Track record of working and delivering on projects giving clear advice on options and policy developments.	X		
Proven ability in delivering and commissioning complex services to a high-quality standard.	X		
Ability to demonstrate personal achievements against each of the 9 SC Management behaviours and Competences.	X		
Leadership and proven ability to lead improvement in services.	X		
Qualifications / Registrations / Certifications			
Social Work or equivalent Professional Qualification and registration with appropriate professional and regulatory body.	X		
Evidence of continuing professional development in their specialist field.	X		
Skills			
Promotes the need for positive change and acts as a role model for change.	X		
Commitment to the HCPC Standards and promoting and developing these standards in others.	X		
Positive, committed, adaptable, thorough and confident approach.	X		
Ability to work to deadlines in delivering a high-quality service and to motivate others to work effectively and demonstrate a duty of care.	X		
Committed to diversity in service delivery and employment.	X		
Innovative and creative approach to service improvement, quality and value.	X		
Focussed on customers and communities.	X		

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Personal integrity.	X		
Drive and self-motivation and ability to motivate others to achieve excellence.	X		
Sound Analysis and decision making in dealing with complex service delivery and/or policy development matters.	X		
Working Conditions			
Working Arrangements			
Somerset Council's dynamic Working Strategy will be applied to this position.			
Corporate Responsibilities			
<p>Provide clear leadership to deliver the Council's strategic priorities and meet the Council's financial targets, as a member of the Directorates Senior Leadership Team.</p> <p>Update and advise Elected Members in respect of operational and policy issues in relation to the Children & Families Services teams.</p> <p>Lead Children & Families teams with a clear identity in terms of flexible and responsive ways of working, inclusive and diverse culture, and high level of employee engagement and wellbeing.</p> <p>Undertake representational and communication duties on behalf of the Council to promote and protect the Council's interests in matters concerning their specialist areas.</p> <p>Function as an ambassador for the Council promoting, both internally and externally, the Council's vision, strategic aims, and values.</p> <p>Value the diversity of Somerset's communities ensuring equality of access and treatment in service delivery and employment.</p> <p>Function as a role model for Somerset's vision and values. Promotes a culture of continuous improvement that encourages creativity and innovation to ensure services are efficient and develop the potential and flexibility across the Council and its workforce including the motivation and development of employees within the Children & Families service teams.</p> <p>Ensure that all service place a high value on customer responsiveness by demonstrating a commitment to meeting and involving the broadest range of direct and indirect service users, citizens, customer, and communities.</p> <p>Support the delivery of the Council's key strategic aims and objectives ensuring understanding and commitment from staff from across the Children & Families service.</p>			

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Keep abreast of specific statutory or regulatory duties contained within the role to ensure any challenges and opportunities in the delivery of services are responsive, compliant, and well communicated to customers, communities, and business as appropriate.

Support Corporate and Directorate specific transformational change programmes with the aim of maximising efficiency, modernising services, and achieving better outcomes and opportunities for service users and customers.

Ensure flexibility in reacting to the needs of the Council, its customers and partners supporting a culture of continuous improvement.

Ensure compliance with all relevant legislation, the Council's standards of conduct, organisational policy, and professional codes of conduct to uphold standards of best practise.

Accountable for compliance with all relevant health and safety legislation and Somerset Council H&S policies.

Date: May 2025