JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title	Senior Commissioner		
Directorate	Children, Families and Education		
Reporting to			
Grade	9		
Evaluation ref:	AG0702	**Job Family ref:**	

Role purpose

The Senior Commissioner plays a key role in enabling Somerset Council to deliver its Children and Young People's Plan, with a strong focus on improving both the sufficiency and quality of homes for children in care. The role leads strategic work to ensure that children and young people have access to stable, appropriate placements and that care leavers are supported to develop the skills and confidence needed to live independently when the time is right. Central to this is shaping commissioning activity that enhances outcomes, strengthens service quality and aligns with statutory duties and best practice.

In addition, the Senior Commissioner is responsible for defining and leading an effective, efficient service that meets the wider objectives of the Council. This includes overseeing commissioning practice, monitoring performance, ensuring resources are used optimally, and embedding a continuous-improvement approach through collaboration with young people, providers and professional partners. The role requires strategic leadership, sound judgement and the ability to influence, ensuring that commissioning activity consistently contributes to improved life chances for children and young people across Somerset.

Responsibilities

Controls and reviews specific project budget ensuring that service activity objectives are met, whilst not compromising on service quality.

Negotiate and manage budgets to appropriately plan for the service and identify further funding resources.

Manages and controls a devolved budget within financial parameters, reshaping services where appropriate to enhance outcomes.

Report on budget to external bodies such as the Department for Education.

Ensures the operation of any statutory or regulatory duty for the service area complies with government legislation and/or regulatory duties.

Optimises available resources effectively to locally commission and deliver services to the required standard.

Identifies links between strategic objectives set out in the sufficiency statement.

Somerset Council

JOB DESCRIPTION

Actively maintains up to date knowledge of best practice within commissioning and the specialist fields they are involved with.

Co-design services with young people and relevant professionals to embed a continuous improvement approach.

Collect qualitative and quantitative evidence to evaluate the effectiveness of the service.

Apply project management methodology to deliver outcomes in terms of service deliver and improved outcomes for young people.

Oversee the delivery of quality assurance activities in order to meet service delivery targets and to ensure that the services are reviewed positively under external inspection.

Ability to supervise others in the delivery of tasks that contribute to the achievement of team objectives.

Ability to think and act strategically.

Liaise with professionals at all levels to ensure contracts are adhered to.

Able to deal with complex problem solving issues promptly.

Develop new policies as the service develops and ensure this is embedded across the service.

Impact

Directly line manages Commissioning Officers.

Contributes to budget/expenditure management of £50 million placements budget.

Regular contact with the Children's Commissioning Team, Leaving Care and Social Work teams across Somerset.

Regular contact with stakeholders and multi-agency partner organisations.

Maintain a network of peer professionals working within or related to the field of commissioning. This may include representing SC at inter-agency forums and events relevant to their specific job role.

Maintain effective working relationships with providers (internal or external) and stakeholders, including the voluntary and community sector and private sector, which will involve being aware of and observing the boundaries of the commissioning relationship whilst at the same time establishing a basis for meaningful feedback and the practice of co-production. This will require effective

communication and the demonstration of appropriate professional knowledge required to achieve credibility in the role. Occasionally interact with Members of the Council to make them aware of commissioning issues that will/may have an impact on the communities they represent.			
	Essential	**Desirable**	
Knowledge			
A good understanding of the commissioning process in the context of children's services and improving outcomes for children.	**X**		
Includes an awareness of the importance of service user involvement in the commissioning process, and knowledge of how to design/implement involvement processes.	**X**		
Knowledge of outcome-based commissioning models and performance frameworks, including approaches for defining measurable outcomes, monitoring provider performance and linking commissioning decisions to improved life chances for children and young people.		**X**	
Knowledge of relevant legislation, regulatory frameworks and statutory guidance relating to children in care, leaving care, and safeguarding.		**X**	
Experience			
Significant experience as a commissioning practitioner in a post which involves (or is closely related to) commissioning of support or care services.	**X**		
Demonstrable understanding of best practice in commissioning and a track record of involvement in delivering significant commissioning projects.	**X**		
Considerable managerial experience.		**X**	
Experience of improving sufficiency of placements for children in care.		**X**	
Experience of working with elected Members or Board Members / Trustees.		**X**	
Experience of representing an organisation at external forums.		**X**	
Qualifications / Registrations / Certifications			
Diploma in Higher Education/Degree or equivalent academic qualification relevant to commissioning and /or	**X**		

Somerset Council

JOB DESCRIPTION

children's services (social care, health or education fields).			
Post graduate award, professional or vocational qualifications that are directly relevant to commissioning and/or children's services (social care, health or education fields).		X	
Skills			
Well-developed analytical and interpretative skills.	X		
Well-developed verbal and written communication skills; awareness and demonstrable ability to target communication according to different audiences and different situations.	X		
Negotiating and influencing skills; awareness of the need to apply different negotiating and influencing strategies / tactics according to differing situations; and demonstrable ability to apply them.	X		
Strong self-management skills. Experience of supervising others.	X		
Strong budget management skills.	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 interaction with staff, service users and communities and includes challenging discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity for all.

Date: August 2025