

Service Manager Care Leavers and UASC

Grade 13

About the Service

Our aim is to ensure that children who are unable to live with their families receive safe, nurturing, and high-quality care that meets their individual needs and enables them to thrive.

We take our role as a corporate parent seriously and our children are at the centre of all decision making, understanding their individual needs, to support the right outcomes.

Having a sense of belonging is critical for our children and we focus on achieving permanence for children from day one, including long term fostering, kinship, adoption and reunification.

The service actively works to strengthen networks around our children and recognises for care leavers, maintaining and building supportive adult networks is particularly important to reduce isolation and ensure ongoing guidance beyond statutory involvement

About the Role

The Service Manager for Care Leavers and Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) provides operational leadership and management across designated services to ensure that young people leaving care, and unaccompanied children and young people receive high quality, safe, and person-centred support. Reporting to the Head of Service, the role is responsible for translating strategic priorities into effective operational practice, ensuring services are delivered in line with statutory duties, national guidance, local policy, and agreed quality standards.

The role requires strong financial and resource management within delegated budgets, ensuring

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services are delivered efficiently while maintaining a clear focus on improving outcomes for care leavers and UASC. The Service Manager supports financial planning and monitoring, identifying emerging pressures and risks at an early stage, including those linked to accommodation, legal status, and support needs, and contributing to solutions that balance affordability with the delivery of safe, lawful, and effective services.

As a key operational leader within Children and Families services, the Service Manager plays an active role in driving service improvement through the Continuous Improvement Plan. This includes managing operational risk, embedding learning from audits, inspections, complaints, and feedback from young people, and promoting a culture of reflective practice, professional curiosity, and accountability. The role models strong corporate parenting principles and ensures that the voices, experiences, and aspirations of care leavers and UASC meaningfully inform service delivery and development.

A core responsibility of the Service Manager is to ensure compliance with statutory responsibilities and guidance relating to care leavers and UASC, including pathway planning, accommodation and support duties, age assessments, transition planning, and preparation for adulthood. The role maintains oversight of performance management and quality assurance activity across teams, using data and performance information to challenge practice, provide support, and drive continuous improvement in outcomes, stability, and independence for young people.

The Service Manager works closely with internal and external partners, including housing, health, education, legal services, the Home Office, police, and the voluntary and community sector, to support effective multi agency working at an operational level. Through collaborative problem solving and partnership working, the role contributes to coordinated responses that improve safety, stability, legal compliance, and life chances for care leavers and unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, escalating systemic risks and barriers to the Head of Service as appropriate and contributing to wider service and commissioning developments.

A key aspect of the role is contributing to the development, implementation and continuous

improvement of the Care Leaver Offer, working closely with the Team Managers and partners to ensure it is equitable, accessible and responsive to the diverse needs of care experienced young people. This includes identifying gaps or barriers in provision, addressing inequalities in access to services and opportunities, and supporting initiatives that improve outcomes in areas such as accommodation, education, employment, health and emotional wellbeing.

Reporting Relationships

Responsible to: Head of Service Children in Care and Care Leavers

Responsible for: Children in Care Team Managers

Key Accountabilities:

1. Strategic Leadership & Service Development

- Provide clear operational direction and leadership for Care Leaver and Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children services, ensuring alignment with the organisation's vision, values, corporate parenting responsibilities, and outcomes for young people transitioning to adulthood.
- Lead the development, implementation, and evaluation of relevant local, and delivery plans, including Care Leaver Sufficiency, Accommodation and Support Strategies, and UASC-specific operational plans, ensuring services are safe, lawful, and sustainable.
- Drive service improvement and change programmes that respond to legislative requirements, national guidance, inspection findings, and emerging needs, particularly in relation to accommodation, immigration status, and preparation for independence.
- Promote a culture of innovation, learning, and continuous improvement across the service and wider system, embedding strong corporate parenting practice for care leavers and UASC.
- Lead, motivate, and develop managers and staff, ensuring high-quality supervision, reflective practice, support, and constructive challenge in line with organisational policy and service priorities.

2. Partnership & Collaborative Working

- Build and sustain effective partnerships with internal teams and external agencies, including housing, health, education, legal services, the Home Office, police, and the voluntary and community sector, to deliver integrated and joined-up support for care leavers and UASC.
- Lead or contribute to multi-agency forums, panels, and operational groups to address complex needs, remove barriers to support, and improve outcomes for young people transitioning from care and those with uncertain immigration status.
- Represent the organisation at local, regional, and national networks and forums, championing best practice for care leavers and UASC and escalating systemic issues requiring external or strategic resolution.
- Work collaboratively with commissioning colleagues to identify gaps in accommodation, support, and specialist provision, contributing to effective commissioning solutions that meet the needs of care leavers and UASC.

3. Service Delivery & Performance Management

- Ensure service delivery is evidence-based, outcome-focused, and responsive to emerging needs and legislative change, using performance data to inform service development and operational decision-making.
- Develop, monitor, and report on performance frameworks, targets, and quality assurance activity to drive continuous improvement and deliver safe, effective, and sustainable outcomes for care leavers and UASC.
- Lead an outcomes-based performance model informed by best practice, learning from audits, inspections, serious incidents, and feedback from young people, ensuring this intelligence informs needs analysis, service design, and delivery.
- Develop, implement, and review service policies, procedures, and practice guidance to ensure consistent, lawful, and effective intervention and support across the service.

4. User Engagement & Co-production

- Promote and embed meaningful participation and co-production with care leavers and UASC in service design, delivery, and evaluation, ensuring services reflect lived experience and aspirations.
- Act as a strong advocate and champion for the voice of young people, ensuring that care leavers and UASC are listened to and that their views influence

operational practice, service development, and wider Children and Families priorities.

5. Resource & Project Management

- Manage delegated budgets effectively, ensuring services are delivered within financial constraints while maintaining a clear focus on meeting statutory duties and improving outcomes for young people.
- Develop and oversee plans to ensure the timely and successful delivery of service improvement, transformation, and change programmes.
- Identify, manage, and mitigate operational and financial risks, resolving issues proactively to ensure service continuity and safety.
- As part of the wider Children's System leadership, work collaboratively to deliver shared vision, aspirations, and outcomes, fostering a culture of trust, innovation, mutual challenge, and continuous learning to drive improvement.

Person Specification

Qualifications/Professional membership

- Degree or equivalent level qualification.
- A qualified and registered Social Worker.
- A relevant professional/management qualification or evidence of substantial management training

Knowledge and Experience

- Substantial experience in managing teams within children's social care within a multi-agency environment.
- In-depth knowledge of legislation, statutory guidance, and national policy relating to care leavers, including the Children Act 1989 and 2004, Care Leaver Regulations, and the Care Leaver Statutory Guidance.
- Significant understanding of statutory duties and guidance relating to Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children, including age assessment, transition planning, Home Office interfaces, and the implications of immigration status on support and entitlements.
- In-depth understanding of statutory frameworks, national agendas, and best practice for care leavers and children seeking asylum
- Sound understanding of pathway planning, preparation for adulthood, accommodation and support duties, and promoting independence and resilience in young people.
- Knowledge of safeguarding responsibilities and contextual safeguarding risks affecting care leavers and UASC, including exploitation, homelessness, and destitution
- Experience in managing and implementing service development, change programs, and operational planning
- Ability to make sound judgements and hold risk appropriately based on analysis of the relevant facts in planned and unplanned circumstances
- Supervisory and management experience and knowledge of relevant HR guidance and procedure
- Proven ability to work collaboratively with internal and external partners, including multi-agency groups
- Track record of delivering effective, high-quality services and driving continuous improvement.
- In-depth understanding of statutory frameworks, national agendas, and best practice in the children in care.
- Successful experience in managing budgets, resources, and financial accountability
- Experience in successfully developing and monitoring performance frameworks, quality assurance, and reporting

Skills

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- Ability to inspire, motivate, and manage teams towards successfully achieving organisational goals
- Proven management qualities, including the capability to drive improvement and foster a positive culture
- Effective verbal and written communication skills with the ability to communicate complex information clearly to a variety of audiences
- Developed negotiating and influencing skills, able to build consensus and secure commitment from a wide range of stakeholders
- Interpersonal skills for building and sustaining effective relationships with staff, partners, and stakeholders.
- Highly organised and analytical with a logical approach to problem solving and an ability to analyse complex information and situations to make effective evidence-based decisions
- Ability to develop, monitor and report on performance frameworks and quality assurance processes
- Effective budget and resource management skills
- Ability to manage and implement change programmes and service improvements
- Ability to advocate for service users
- Able to evidence being an advocate for the empowerment and development employees
- Evidence of and commitment to ongoing professional learning and development
- Flexible, autonomous, and able to manage competing priorities as part of a wider team.

This role is designated as a casual car user.

The content of this Job Description and Person Specification will be reviewed on a regular basis.