

Head of Service Family Help

Grade 15

About the Service

Our strategic ambition for children and young people in Staffordshire:
Happy, Healthy, Safe, Belonging and Achieving.

Our aim is to ensure that children and families receive the right help at the right time, preventing needs from escalating and reducing the likelihood of harm. Through timely, joined up and child centred support, we strengthen safety around children, build family resilience and take clear, proportionate action when risks increase.

We take our safeguarding responsibilities extremely seriously. The voices lived experiences and needs of children sit at the heart of every family help assessment, family plan and multi-agency discussion. Our focus is to ensure every child is heard, every concern is fully understood within its wider family and environmental context, and every plan reflects what will make their lives safer, more stable and more hopeful.

Working in close partnership with families, their wider networks and key safeguarding partners—including schools, health, early years, youth services, community organisations and statutory social care—we strive for high quality assessment, purposeful planning and timely intervention. From the earliest point of contact, our work is grounded in clear, achievable outcomes, whether through targeted early help, Child in Need planning, safety and support planning or step up/step down pathways.

Our approach recognises that, for most children, remaining within their family network is the best outcome when it can be made safe. We therefore prioritise the early and thorough exploration of family strengths, natural networks and practical support arrangements. Where children or families require more intensive intervention, we work



alongside statutory services to ensure a seamless, coordinated response.

Strong, trusted and consistent relationships are central to effective Family Help practice. We work actively to strengthen support networks around every child—ensuring they are not isolated, their needs are understood, and the adults around them are confident and equipped to keep them safe. Our planning and intervention emphasise connection, continuity and stability.

Our service is committed to delivering skilled assessment, strengths-based practice and confident professional judgment. We ensure children and families receive the support they need when they need it, through a system that is safe, timely, preventative and firmly centred on wellbeing, resilience and long-term positive outcomes.

About the Role

The Head of Service – Family Help provides strategic leadership and operational oversight across the full pathway: from receipt of referral from our Integrated Front Door, through Family Help assessment and relevant Family Help planning, both at targeted early help and child in need level from one integrated service. The focus is upon providing children and families with the right help and the right time, experiencing consistency in practitioner support wherever possible and having close line of sight upon quality of practice. This is an exciting role which is aligned with the national Families First reforms.

The post holder balances effective financial planning, monitoring, and control, with responsibility for managing significant placement and service budgets, delivering high quality, sustainable services. This includes balancing fiscal responsibility with the need to develop and lead our family help approach, build workforce resilience and confidence, navigate relationships with partners and robustly lead high quality social work practice.

The role operates as a key system leader within Children and Families services, driving improvement through the Continuous Improvement Plan, managing risk, and acting as a

strong practice lead for the most vulnerable children and young people. The role contributes to wider directorate priorities and works collaboratively with senior leaders to ensure services are aligned, sustainable, and outcome focused.

A core responsibility of the role is to ensure full compliance with statutory and regulatory responsibilities relating to our responsibilities to children and families under Working Together 2023 and in line with Families First Partnership approach. The Head of Service maintains oversight of performance management, audit, and quality assurance arrangements, ensuring that practice is safe, timely, and child centred, and that learning from inspection, complaints, and feedback is embedded to drive continuous improvement.

The Head of Service plays a pivotal role in driving integrated working across health, education, police, housing, voluntary and community sector partners. Through strong partnerships and shared accountability, the role supports coordinated responses that improve safety, stability, and life chances for children. This includes resolving systemic barriers, influencing commissioning arrangements, and promoting collective ownership of responsibility for improving outcomes for Staffordshire Children and Families.

Reporting Relationships

Responsible to: Assistant Director Family Help and Safeguarding

Responsible for: Service Managers for Operational Neighbourhoods

Key Accountabilities:

1. Strategic Leadership & Service Development
 - Provide strategic direction, leadership and oversight for Staffordshire's Family Help Service; including Targeted Early Help casework and Child in Need services, aligned with the council's vision, values and outcomes for children and families.
 - Lead the development, implementation and evaluation of Family Help strategies, service improvements and change programmes, including alignment with wider Early Help transformation, the Supporting Families programme, thresholds and pathways —

ensuring services are safe, lawful, strengths-based and sustainable.

- Drive forward change programmes responding to legislation, inspection findings and emerging local need—particularly around early intervention, preventing statutory escalation, family resilience and improving the quality of CiN planning.
- Foster a culture of innovation, learning and continuous improvement across the Family Help system; lead, support and develop managers and staff through high-quality supervision, reflective practice and constructive challenge.
- Provide clear strategic oversight for maintaining consistent, high-quality practice standards across Family Help pathways within targeted Early Help casework and Child in Need, alongside driving practice quality for evidence based assessment and planning.

2. Partnership & Collaborative Working

- Build and sustain effective partnerships with social care, health, education, early years, youth services, community safety, commissioning, police, the VCS and district/borough councils to deliver integrated support, remove barriers and improve outcomes for families.
- Lead and participate in multi-agency forums addressing complex family needs, early intervention pathways, contextual safeguarding, exploitation, and support for families escalating towards the edge of care.
- Represent the authority at local, regional and national forums, championing best practice in family help and CiN, and escalating systemic issues requiring cross-agency or strategic resolution.
- Work with commissioning to identify gaps and shape provision for intensive family support, targeted parenting, adolescent services, domestic abuse support, and child focused interventions.
- As the strategic lead, ensure a coordinated, whole-system response to supporting children and families in line with Working Together 2023.

3. Service Delivery & Performance Management

- Ensure service delivery is evidence-based, outcome-focused and responsive to legislative change; use performance data and quality assurance to inform decisions and drive improvement.
- Develop, monitor and report on performance frameworks, KPIs and QA processes to secure safe, timely and child-centred practice across Family Help and CiN.
- Lead an outcomes-based performance model informed by audits, inspection findings, serious

incidents/learning reviews and feedback from families—informing strategic needs analysis and future service design.

- Maintain compliance with statutory responsibilities including assessment, planning, review, CiN processes, Section 17 and escalation into section 47 duties, safeguarding pathways and information-sharing requirements. Work closely with the Head of Service for Child Protection and Court, and the Head of Service for the Integrated Front Door, Emergency Duty Service and Multi-Agency Child Protection Teams.
- Develop and implement service guidance, policies and procedures to ensure effective, efficient and consistent intervention across all Family Help services.

4. User Engagement & Co-production

- Promote and facilitate the active participation with children, young people, parents and carers in the design, delivery and evaluation of Family Help and CiN services.
- Advocate for the voice, rights and aspirations of families—ensuring lived experience shapes practice, improvement plans and wider Children & Families priorities.
- Create a culture and practice environment where children, young people and families can inform, influence and shape the direction of Family Help services.

5. Resource & Project Management

- Responsible for the management of budgets to ensure effective, efficient and financially sustainable delivery of Family Help and CiN services.
- Develop and oversee transformation and change projects, ensuring timely delivery, measurable impact and alignment with the wider Children's System vision.
- Identify and mitigate risks, resolving operational and strategic issues to ensure successful outcomes for children and families.
- Contribute to the leadership of the whole children's system, promoting a culture of innovation, trust, constructive challenge, collaboration and learning.

6. Service-Specific Accountabilities

- Provide strategic leadership for targeted Early Help, assessment and Child in Need pathways, ensuring high-quality assessments, plans and interventions that prevent escalation and improve outcomes.
- Lead development and oversight of step-up/step-down pathways between Early

Help, Family Help, Child Protection and Children in Care; ensuring consistency, timeliness and high-quality practice.

- Provide strategic oversight of support for vulnerable adolescents, including risk reduction, diversionary support, contextual safeguarding and coordinated multi-agency responses.
- Ensure the Family Help service contributes effectively to cross-system priorities including exploitation, domestic abuse, SEND, emotional wellbeing and school attendance.

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.
- Evidence of regular practice learning.

Knowledge and Experience

- Substantial post qualification experience within children social care and managing teams within children's social care or early help.
- Significant experience of managing risk within a safeguarding context.
- Substantial supervisory and management experience and knowledge of relevant HR guidance and procedure.
- Extensive experience of successfully leading, managing and motivating high performing services
- Substantial experience of managing investigations and complaints
- Significant Knowledge, understanding and experience of working with relevant legislation policy and procedures.
- In-depth understanding of statutory frameworks, national agendas, and best practice for children in need, early help and prevention and effective partnership working.
- Proven ability to embrace innovative practices and developments, lead change and project manage/ pilot new initiatives
- Strong ability to make sound judgements and hold risk appropriately based on analysis of the relevant facts in planned and unplanned circumstances.
- Proven track record of developing and implementing strategy and policy and the ability to convey a clear vision and provide strategic leadership.
- Proven ability to work collaboratively with internal and external partners, including multi-agency groups.
- Demonstrable significant financial management experience, including managing and monitoring staffing and procurement budgets.
- Ability to foster and champion innovation, leading to the successful delivery/commissioning of innovative best in class services, further enhancing the County Council's reputation.
- A thorough understanding of the current challenges facing local government generally, and Staffordshire County Council in particular, coupled with financial and commercial awareness.
- Track record of delivering effective, high-quality services and driving continuous improvement.

- Experience in successfully developing and monitoring performance frameworks, quality assurance, and reporting.

Skills

- Proven leadership qualities and the ability to inspire, motivate, and manage teams towards successfully achieving organisational goals
- Strong inter-personal skills with proven ability to develop and sustain effective relationships; and foster positive culture
- Effective verbal and written communication skills with the ability to communicate complex information clearly to a variety of audiences
- 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
- 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.
- 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
- Evidence that you can 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 a casual car user.

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