

Head of Residential

Grade 14

About the Service

Our service is committed to ensuring that children and young people who are unable to live with their families are cared for in safe, secure and therapeutic homes, including high quality residential provision, that are fully regulatory compliant and responsive to individual need. We aim to provide nurturing, stable environments where children feel protected, valued and supported to recover from adversity and to thrive.

We take our responsibilities as a corporate parent seriously. Children and young people are at the centre of all decision making, with careful consideration of their lived experiences, strengths and needs. Through high quality care, skilled relationships and trauma informed practice, we work to achieve positive outcomes and improve life chances.

A strong sense of belonging and stability is fundamental to children's wellbeing. From the earliest point, we focus on achieving permanence and long-term security, whether through long term fostering, kinship care, adoption, reunification with family, or stable residential pathways where this best meets the child's needs.

The service actively strengthens the networks around children and young people, recognising the importance of consistent, trusted relationships to support transitions from residential care and preparing for adulthood. Maintaining and building supportive adult networks is especially vital to reduce isolation, promote resilience and ensure ongoing guidance and support beyond statutory involvement.

About the Role

The Head of Service for Residential Services provides strategic leadership and operational oversight to ensure that children and young people who require residential care are supported in safe, secure, high quality and therapeutic homes that are fully regulatory compliant and deliver positive, sustained outcomes. The role ensures that residential provision meets the needs of children with complex experiences, promoting stability, wellbeing, recovery and a strong sense of belonging.

The post holder has strategic responsibility for the sufficiency, quality and sustainability of residential care, ensuring there is an appropriate range of provision to meet current and future demand. This includes oversight of internal residential homes and the development of the local residential offer, reducing reliance on external placements and ensuring children are cared for as close to home as possible. The Head of Service leads on commissioning, market engagement and service development to ensure provision is responsive, value for money and aligned to children's assessed needs.

A core responsibility of the role is workforce leadership and development. The Head of Service ensures the residential workforce is skilled, stable and supported, with a strong focus on recruitment, retention, professional development and succession planning. This includes embedding a clear therapeutic and trauma informed framework, ensuring staff receive high quality supervision, reflective practice and learning opportunities that enable them to build safe, trusting and reparative relationships with children and young people.

The Head of Service maintains oversight of statutory duties, performance and quality assurance, ensuring compliance with legislation, regulations and statutory guidance. Learning from audit, inspection, complaints and practice feedback is actively used to drive continuous improvement and strengthen practice across residential services, with children's voices, lived experiences and outcomes at the centre of all service delivery.

The post holder acts as the Responsible Individual for designated residential children's homes, providing assurance of strong governance, effective leadership and safe care. This includes oversight of safeguarding arrangements, quality assurance processes, regulatory compliance and the development of a positive culture that promotes children's rights, wellbeing and participation. The Head of Service plays a key role in engaging constructively with Ofsted, including preparation for inspections, responding to findings and ensuring timely and sustained improvement.

Effective financial management and resource planning are integral to the role, balancing fiscal responsibility with the delivery of high quality residential care and the need to meet statutory responsibilities. The Head of Service works collaboratively with senior leaders across Children and Families, health, education, commissioning and partner agencies to promote integrated working, resolve systemic challenges and ensure shared accountability for outcomes for children and young people in residential care.

Reporting Relationships

Responsible to: Assistant Director Children in Care and Care Leavers

Responsible for: N/A

Key Accountabilities:

1. Strategic Leadership & Service Development

- Provide clear, effective operational and strategic leadership for residential services, ensuring practice is aligned with the organisation's vision, values and corporate parenting responsibilities. Promote high standards of care that prioritise safety, stability, inclusion, emotional wellbeing and positive outcomes for children living in residential settings.
- Lead the development, implementation and review of local, regional and national strategies relevant to residential care, including the Sufficiency Strategy, Corporate Parenting Strategy and other key transformation

programmes. Drive improvement and change initiatives that strengthen placement sufficiency, stability, safeguarding, quality of care and regulatory compliance, ensuring services are high-quality, effective and sustainable.

- Embed a culture of continuous improvement, learning and innovation across residential services, using insight from audit, performance data, inspection outcomes, complaints and children's feedback to inform practice and service development. Promote strong partnership working and integrated approaches that improve experiences and outcomes for children and young people in residential care.
- Lead, motivate and develop the residential workforce, ensuring high-quality supervision, reflective practice, professional development and constructive challenge are embedded at all levels. Ensure workforce practice is trauma-informed, therapeutically grounded and compliant with organisational policies, regulatory standards and the complex needs of children and young people in residential care.

2. Partnership & Collaborative Working

- Build and sustain strong, effective partnerships across internal services, health, education, social care, commissioning and the voluntary and community sector to deliver integrated, joined-up support that improves outcomes for children and young people living in residential care.
- Represent the organisation at local, regional and national partnerships and forums, championing high-quality residential care, sharing best practice, influencing policy and system development, and escalating risks or pressures that require collective or external resolution.
- Work collaboratively with internal and external commissioning colleagues to identify gaps in residential provision, inform sufficiency planning and support the effective commissioning and development of high-quality, safe and therapeutic residential care, including specialist and step-down provision where required.
- As the functional lead for residential services, provide clear strategic oversight of systems, pathways and governance arrangements that support children

and young people in residential care. Promote a whole-system approach that is fully compliant with legislation, regulatory requirements, statutory guidance and recognised best practice, ensuring consistency, accountability and positive outcomes.

3. Service Delivery & Performance Management

- Ensure residential services are evidence-based, outcome-focused and responsive to emerging need, legislative and regulatory change, and local demand. Use performance, quality and intelligence data to understand trends, pressures and risks, and to inform service development, improvement and sufficiency planning.
- Develop, oversee and report on robust performance management and quality assurance frameworks, including clear outcome measures, targets and assurance processes. Ensure these drive continuous improvement and demonstrate that residential services deliver safe, effective and sustained outcomes for children and young people.
- Lead an outcomes-based approach to performance and improvement, drawing on best practice and learning from audits, inspections (including Ofsted), serious incidents, complaints and reviews. Ensure learning is systematically embedded and directly informs strategic needs analysis, commissioning priorities, workforce development and service design.
- Develop, implement and regularly review policies, procedures and practice guidance to ensure residential care is delivered consistently, safely and efficiently. Ensure all practice is compliant with statutory requirements, regulatory standards and recognised best practice, supporting high-quality, child-centred and therapeutic care across residential services.

4. User Engagement & Co-production

- Promote and enable the meaningful participation of children and young people living in residential care, including those with disabilities, in the design, delivery and review of services. Ensure engagement approaches are accessible, creative and inclusive, so that children's views, lived experiences and

aspirations are actively listened to, understood and used to shape practice and provision.

- Act as a strong advocate and champion for the voice of children and young people, ensuring that communication and engagement processes enable children, parents, carers and families to inform, influence and shape the Children and Families agenda. Embed children's participation within strategic decision-making, service improvement and governance, demonstrating how feedback leads to meaningful change

5. Resource & Project Management

- Ensure residential services operate within agreed budgets, managing resources effectively and responsibly to deliver high-quality, safe and sustainable provision while meeting statutory and regulatory requirements.
- Develop, lead and oversee change and transformation programmes, ensuring plans are clear, realistic and delivered on time. Drive improvement initiatives that strengthen residential sufficiency, quality of care, workforce capability and outcomes for children and young people.
- Proactively identify, manage and mitigate risks, resolving issues at pace and providing assurance through strong governance, escalation and decision-making processes to ensure successful and sustained outcomes.
- As a senior leader within the Children's System, work collaboratively with partners and colleagues to deliver shared vision, priorities and outcomes. Contribute to a culture of innovation, trust and continuous improvement, where constructive challenge, shared learning and collective accountability are embedded to drive positive change across the system.

6. Service specific accountabilities

- Provide strategic leadership and accountability for the sufficiency, quality and accessibility of residential provision for children and young people across Staffordshire. This includes oversight of in-house children's homes and commissioned

residential placements, ensuring provision is safe, therapeutic, regulatory compliant and able to meet current and future demand. Promote placement stability, positive experiences and outcomes for children and young people.

- Lead strategic oversight of pathways into, through and out of residential care, including step-down planning, permanence and transitions to adulthood. Ensure children and young people are supported emotionally, practically and socially to prepare for independence and achieve positive outcomes in education, employment, health, housing, relationships and wellbeing.
- Act as a senior corporate parenting leader and advocate for children and young people living in residential care, ensuring their needs, rights and best interests are prioritised across the organisation and partner agencies. Provide leadership to relevant governance forums, ensuring accountability and that children's voices, lived experiences and feedback directly inform residential service design, strategic decision-making and continuous improvement

Person Specification

Qualifications/Professional membership

- Degree or equivalent level qualification.
- A relevant professional/management qualification or evidence of substantial management training

Knowledge and Experience

- Substantial post qualification experience within children's social care and managing teams within children's social care
- Extensive knowledge of children's residential care, including the needs of children with complex trauma, safeguarding concerns and multiple vulnerabilities.
- In-depth understanding of the statutory, regulatory and inspection framework for children's residential services, including the Children's Homes Regulations, Quality Standards and Ofsted inspection requirement
- Experience of acting as a Responsible Individual (RI) or working closely with an RI, strong understanding of regulatory compliance and governance, including engagement with Ofsted, inspection preparation and implementation of post-inspection action plans
- Knowledge of sufficiency planning, placement commissioning and market management, including reducing reliance on external placements and supporting children to live closer to home
- Substantial supervisory and management experience and knowledge of relevant HR guidance and procedure.
- Experience of successfully leading, managing and motivating high performing services
- Substantial experience of managing investigations and complaints
- Knowledge, understanding and experience of working with relevant legislation policy and procedures of children in care and care leavers
- In-depth understanding of statutory frameworks, national agendas, and best practice for children in care and care leavers
- Proven ability to embrace innovative practices and developments, lead change and project manage/ pilot new initiatives
- 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 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 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
- Effective 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
- 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.

****An Enhanced DBS will be needed for this post***



This role is a designated casual car user.

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