

Role Title:	Head of Quality Assurance & Practice Development	Directorate:	Children's Services	Version:	February 2026
Reports To:	Assistant Director - Children's Services	Grade:	Level 12	Budget:	£
Direct Reports:	Reviewing Service, Quality Assurance, Partnership Manager, DSCO				

Role Purpose:	Key Accountabilities
To lead, manage and direct the delivery of independent safeguarding and reviewing services for children falling within the remit of the Children's Services Directorate, and to provide strategic leadership for quality assurance, practice development and partnership working across the whole of Children's Services. The postholder is responsible for driving a whole-directorate quality assurance function across all Children's Services, ensuring robust oversight of quality, safeguarding standards, learning, improvement and statutory practice across service areas, not solely children's social care. The role also provides leadership for the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) function, evidence-based practice and system-wide partnership arrangements that support the wider Corporate Plan priorities, particularly for Health and Wellbeing.	1. Developing and implementing strategies and policies in own service area that support the overall achievement of the Children's Services vision, strategy, and improvement plan as well as ensuring all statutory responsibilities are fully discharged 2. Leading and managing Quality Assurance and Safeguarding standards and activities across the Children's Services Directorate at North Somerset 3. Leading and developing best practice models and training delivery across the Children's Services Directorate, focusing on quality, learning and workforce development, to meet statutory and regulatory requirements including inspection. 4. Delivering high quality, value for money services whilst ensuring effective budgetary and performance management & contributing to the achievement of the council's overall aims, practices and policy objectives, including modelling the council's values and expected behaviours 5. Leading and delivering recruitment, induction, engagement, staff development and training plans, ensuring the directorate has an effective workforce capable of meeting its vision, strategy, objectives and statutory obligations 6. Developing partnership working with a range of organisations, and internal stakeholders, which ensures the most cost effective and good quality delivery models Reporting at strategic level to a range of forums, including CLT, partnership boards and others as planned and as required

Responsible for the delivery of statutory duties included within the Children Act 1989 & 2004, Children & Families Act 2014, Children & Social Work Act 2017, Care Act 2014, and Working Together to Safeguard Children. Responsible for safeguarding standards, partnership assurance and quality assurance across the directorate.	
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Key Accountabilities:	Key Measures of Success:
1. Developing and implementing strategies and policies in own service area that support the overall achievement of the Children's Services vision, strategy, and improvement plan as well as ensuring all statutory responsibilities are fully discharged - Develop and deliver a strategic plan that ensures the council meets its children's & families partnership priorities and statutory obligations in relation to the quality and range of its children's care delivery for children in need, child protection, children in care, and children with disabilities, including the provision of effective policy and procedures to safeguard children - Deliver a range of national and local KPI's/requirements in contributing to meeting these overall aims - Take a leading role in the on-going development of the council's approach to delivering a good start in life for children and young people with a particular focus on using all assets to work with operational services - Ensure the effective development and implementation of policies, procedures and practice standards; and that services are delivered in accordance with legislative requirements and council policies, this also includes multi-agency partners - Ensure that the procedures for service delivery within the service area are properly maintained, reviewed and revised in accordance with legislation, regulation, best practice and council policies and ensure that they are fully complied with - Ensure that practice and decision making, is in line with council policies, legislation and regulation	- Children's support and safeguarding statutory duties are fully discharged - Children's support and safeguarding vision & strategy is successfully delivered - Children's Improvement plan is successfully delivered - SEND Improvement plan is successfully delivered - Children's & families partnership priorities are achieved - Ofsted & SEND rating of good or outstanding following inspection - Successful National Audit Office (NAO) audits - Practice audits demonstrate an increase in the extent of good practice and appropriate

- Develop business planning frameworks for the service area and proactively manage allocated budgets, secure levels of service and staffing resources match available funds. Utilise BI data to identify trends and take corrective action where appropriate - Prepare written and verbal reports relevant to the role, on any aspect of the Children's Services Directorate - Organise regular management meetings to ensure that targets, objectives, projects and agreed work programmes are well communicated and being progressed - Contribute to the strategic leadership of the Children's Services Directorate acting as an active member of the Directorate Senior Leadership Team as well as contributing to wider corporate leadership initiatives - Assist the Director and Assistant Director in managing Children's Services and managing the Directorate as a whole - Significantly contribute to and implement the children's improvement plan for Children's Services in order to achieve a good or outstanding level of service delivery through Ofsted inspection - Have good oversight and understanding of frontline practice, service delivery, systems, and feedback from children and families and drive practice improvement of the Children's Service Directorate - Lead on the development and delivery of the Children's Services Quality Assurance Framework, Audit & Learning Framework and Workforce Development Strategy; inspection preparation and management - To support the Assistant Director in meeting the strategic change agenda for Children's Services by researching and proposing appropriate service developments and effectively managing change - Through personal example, commitment and clear action, to value the diverse backgrounds, identity and experiences of our workforce and the children and families the directorate serve and that this is taken into account in planning and decision making	measures are put in place to address areas for practice improvement - Children, young people and their families feedback is listened to and acted upon results are positive - There are appropriate mechanisms in place to celebrate good practice including the recording of compliments - Learning from complaints is established and well embedded - Service KPI's are on the appropriate trajectory - Legislation is complied with
2. Leading and managing Quality Assurance, safeguarding and practice standards and activities across the whole Children's Services Directorate at North Somerset - Oversight of the effectiveness of the whole quality assurance and safeguarding system across Children's Services, including assurance across all service areas and advice to, and scrutiny of, the Safeguarding Board	- Children's support and safeguarding statutory duties are fully discharged - Children's support and safeguarding vision & strategy is successfully delivered

- Provide appropriate challenge and support to the divisional strategic and wider leadership team, and to relevant multi-agency partners, using quality assurance intelligence to strengthen whole-system performance, practice and outcomes for children and families - Manage and lead the service area to deliver effective functions, ensuring compliance with regulatory standards and local frameworks - Lead on safeguarding and quality standards, ensuring consistent, high-quality practice across the full range of Children's Services within the legislative framework, driving best practice to deliver outstanding services for children, young people and their families - Lead the Independent Quality Assurance and Reviewing Team with combined responsibility for chairing child protection conferences and child care reviews providing effective and high quality oversight to the veracity of planning for children - Is the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) providing advice and guidance to employers, organisations and other individuals who have concerns about the behaviour of an adult who works with children and young people - Support the Directorate's practice mo and solution focused approach when working with children and families. This approach highlights the importance of respectful and collaborative working relationships with children, families, and professionals in order to bring about improved safety and outcomes for the children we serve. It also recognises both areas of strength and safety, as well as worries and danger which will then help inform the next steps in a child's safety, support, or care plan. - Ensure that timely and effective statutory processes are in place where there is a concern about a child or young person who may have suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm - Initiate appropriate remedial procedures, where safeguarding and service standards fall short of the required requirements - Ensure all team members hold safeguarding as a priority and manage risk accordingly	- Children's Improvement plan is successfully delivered - SEND Improvement plan is successfully delivered - Children's & families partnership priorities are achieved - Ofsted & SEND rating of good or outstanding following inspection - Successful National Audit Office (NAO) audits - Practice audits demonstrate an increase in the extent of good practice and appropriate measures are put in place to address areas for practice improvement - Children, young people and their families' feedback is listened to and acted upon results are positive - There are appropriate mechanisms in place to celebrate good practice including the recording of compliments - Learning from complaints is established and well embedded - Service KPI's are on the appropriate trajectory - Legislation is complied with
3. Leading and developing best practice models and training delivery across the Children's Services Directorate, focusing on quality, learning and workforce development, to meet statutory and regulatory requirements including inspection.	- Children's support and safeguarding statutory duties are fully discharged

- Lead the delivery of quality assurance services and ensure the achievement of required objectives, targets and outcomes for the service area through the development and maintenance of a rigorous auditing and feedback that includes input from children, families, practitioners, managers and multi-agency partners in order to identify areas of good practice and areas for improvement - Lead, plan, design and implement initiatives that improve the quality and standards of social work practice across Children's Services - Ensure a robust quality assurance framework is fully implemented across the whole range of Children's Services and that intelligence gathered is used to improve practice, drive up standards and secure the best sustainable outcomes for the children and young people in North Somerset - Ensure findings and information gathered from framework are used to improve and develop practice and standards, and secure the best sustainable outcomes and life chances for children and young people and their families in North Somerset - Identify areas of unnecessary bureaucracy that hinders good practice and make recommendations or policy developments aimed at reducing or eliminating them - Keep current and appraised of latest research, practice methods, and statutory guidance and procedures and to see these are cascaded or changes implemented as necessary throughout the Children's Services Directorate - Support the Children's Services Directorate to consistently apply high standards of social work practice for the best sustainable outcomes for children and their families - Liaise with and support the voice of frontline teams ensuring findings and information gathered is used to improve practice, improve and develop standards and secure the best sustainable outcomes and life chances for children and young people and their families in North Somerset - Ensure a strengths-based approach to working with children and families grows and makes a real and sustainable difference - Seek continuous improvement, taking into account learning from quality assurance processes, and innovation in services to better meet the needs of children within the resources available	- Children's support and safeguarding vision & strategy is successfully delivered - Children's Improvement plan is successfully delivered - SEND Improvement plan is successfully delivered - Children's & families partnership priorities are achieved - Ofsted & SEND rating of good or outstanding following inspection - Successful National Audit Office (NAO) audits
4. Delivering high quality, value for money services whilst ensuring effective budgetary and performance management & contributing to the achievement of the council's overall aims, practices and policy objectives, including modelling the council's values and expected behaviours - Deliver high quality, value for money services leadership of assigned Transformation Programmes, whilst ensuring effective budgetary and performance management	- Budgets not exceeded and services perceived as good value for money - Positive feedback from CLT - Positive feedback from elected members - No data breaches

- Make an effective contribution to the Directorate Senior Leadership Team, ensuring the effective strategic planning of services, performance and budget management - Direct and control the management of services and ensure sound financial management and monitoring of budgets including pooled budgets and forward budget preparations, and workforce development and training - Manage services within allocated budgets, securing levels of service and staffing resources that match available funds and taking early action to address any budget pressures - Must at all times maintain security and confidentiality of all information and should be aware that, given the nature of the services provided by the directorate and council they may on occasions be exposed to information that they may find upsetting - Work with the Corporate Leadership Team as appropriate on council wide transformation programmes - Contribute to corporate and council wide objectives and to be accountable for the delivery of corporate objectives relating to Children's Services - Work alongside other senior managers to promote, develop, co-ordinate and facilitate service and strategic planning, in the directorate and across council - Ensure compliance with all Health and Safety legislation and associated codes of practice and authority policies - Be aware of and understand the council's equality policies and ensure at all times that the duties of the post are carried out in accordance with these policies - Bring the council's values to life in own dealings with team, colleagues and external agencies/partners - Ensure all services are provided in the most cost effective manner as possible, balancing the needs of safeguarding children with accountability to spending public funds efficiently and within the allocated budget - Undertake any other duties commensurate with the grade of the post - Be part of an on call rota	- Forward budget preparation is completed to a high standard - Ofsted & SEND Rating of good or outstanding following inspection - Successful National Audit Office (NAO) audits - Budgets not exceeded and services perceived as good value for money - Council vision and strategy achieved - Legislation is complied with - Transformation programmes are delivered on time and within budget - Corporate objectives relating to Children's Services are achieved - On-call rota is always fully resourced - Team, colleagues and external agencies/partners report behaviour that supports the values
5. Leading and delivering recruitment, induction, engagement, staff development and training plans, ensuring the directorate has an effective workforce capable of meeting its vision, strategy, objectives and statutory obligations - Ensure staff are well supported, have the right resources to carry out their duties efficiently, are motivated, managed, and developed to attain their full potential within agreed service area aims and objectives	- Ofsted & SEND rating of good or outstanding following inspection - Employment legislation is complied with - New starter retention KPI's are achieved

- Lead and manage a team where the performance and potential of people is maximised - Lead and manage development opportunities to cultivate high levels of engagement, performance and motivation - Identify resourcing requirements to meet existing and future demands; support the recruitment and onboarding activity - Maintain regular high quality reflective supervision and appraisal of direct reports to provide regular management oversight, timely decision making, reflective space, respectful challenge, recognise areas of good and weak practice, and support the ongoing learning and development of those within the service area - Ensure CPD is maintained and everyone is aware of their professional statutory obligations - Identify professional training and behavioural development needs that support the achievement of the Children's Services strategy and vision, ensuring CPD is maintained and there is a comprehensive awareness of the statutory duties and responsibilities within the within the Children Act 1989 & 2004, Children & Families Act 2014, Children & Social Work Act 2017, Care Act 2014, and Working Together to Safeguard Children - Lead, model, and influence the culture of a continual learning environment that supports respectful critical challenge, reflection, feedback, and showcases good practice examples across the directorate - Regularly engage with service area front line staff to understand what's getting in their way of doing a better job and develop plans to overcome/minimise them - Implement appreciation, recognition, and consequence management - Work in line with best practice HR throughout the colleague life cycle - Promote genuine support and wellbeing for staff including workload management, hours of work, administrative and ITC support	- Positive feedback from new starters - Positive feedback from team in staff survey - Number of days lost through sick leave are on a downward trajectory - Practitioner turnover KPI is not exceeded and is on a downward trajectory - Agency Practitioner usage KPI is not exceeded and is on a downward trajectory - CPD is maintained
6. Developing and leading strategic partnership working with a wide range of organisations and internal stakeholders to strengthen quality assurance, shared accountability and the delivery of high-quality services across Children's Services - Offer strategic professional advice to the Safeguarding Board and wider partnership forums, and work with senior managers and partner agencies to coordinate the response to Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews, multi-agency audits and other investigations - Communicate effectively with multi agency partners, colleagues and service users, both verbally and in writing, through the appropriate use of case notes and other record keeping, within information sharing protocols and record keeping policies	- Positive feedback from internal stakeholders as measured in staff survey - Positive feedback reported from partners/agencies - Children, young people and their families survey feedback results are positive and on an upward trajectory

- Influence and establish effective working relationships with Council Members, Children's Partnership Boards, Directors, Assistant Directors, headteachers, health partners, police, providers and other service leads on the full range of issues within the scope of this role, providing timely information, assurance and high-quality reports for committees, partnership boards and management forums as required - Provide assurance and evidence to political leaders, senior leaders and strategic partners on the safe management of risk, the quality of practice and the effectiveness of services across the whole of Children's Services - Work with colleagues to ensure the directorate is proactively working to maintain resilience in practice - Develop, lead and sustain strong and effective strategic partnerships that promote shared accountability, learning, quality improvement and the best outcomes for children and families across North Somerset - Develop good working contacts with Government agencies e.g. Ofsted, to ensure such agencies are kept informed of developments in North Somerset, and the directorate is prepared appropriately for inspection visits, etc. - Engage with other agencies e.g. private sector, voluntary sector, etc., and convene and chair liaison meetings and project management meetings as part of the local authorities' overall objectives and joint arrangements - Attend, where appropriate, convene and chair meetings and conferences. Participate in national, regional and local activities as appropriate, e.g. Ofsted - Develop and maintain good working relationships with other Directorates and other agencies to ensure appropriate consultation and agreements are made to support strategies in support of the council's Corporate Plan priorities - Deputise for the Assistant Director as appropriate - Play a key leadership role with internal and external partners to ensure Children's Services is at the forefront of best practice, quality assurance, learning and continuous improvement	- Complaints are on a downward trajectory - Compliments are on an upward trajectory
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Enablers to the Role (Skills, Knowledge, Experience)

Skills

- Ability to lead and manage in a service area that deals with a high level of risk and complexity in a manner that promotes the safety, welfare and corporate parenting responsibilities we have toward the children and young people we serve

- Promotes the use of Signs of Safety practice principles by helping to create an environment where workers feel valued, respected, and motivated, and translate these same values into their work with children and families
- Demonstrate the ability to understand the importance of the child and family's diverse cultures, faith, abilities, identities, and experiences to inform the work and best practice undertaken with children and families
- Ability to develop, influence and sustain multiagency networks to coordinate a broad range of support services and reduce or eliminate impediments to providing high quality of support to the children and families we serve
- Models a leadership style that promotes respectful challenge, allows others to admit mistakes, recognises good practice, and supports continual learning and development environment within the service and across the directorate
- Successfully manage budgets in a manner that achieves the best value for money balanced with the best delivery of service possible within the allocated budget for the service
- Provide regular supervision to service managers within the service that balances case management decisions with reflective space
- Can model, implement and support a continual learning environment that promotes the sharing of good practice, challenges weak practice, draws upon latest research or statutory guidance, and creates a respectful culture of professional challenge across the Children's Service directorate
- Can promote professional judgement and decision making by practitioners in the service wherever appropriate
- Is confident to acknowledge when mistakes have been made and recognising areas where things could improve
- Has a proficient ability to speak, write, and read in English, with confidence and accuracy, whilst using the right kind of vocabulary appropriate to a given situation without a great deal of hesitation
- Is focused on the child so as to not allow complaints to diverge from the good, timely and safe planning for children
- Ability to listen to our children and families, understand their needs, and respond clearly even in complex situations
- Able to demonstrate a high level of resilience and decision making in stressful or crisis situations to be available to support workers and managers within the service and across the directorate with clear guidance and direction

Qualifications & Knowledge

- Possess a relevant social work degree (i.e.: DipSWA or CQSW or degree in social work) and necessary training and experience to confidently perform at a senior management level
- Registered with the professional regulator for social work (Social Work England).
- A proficient familiarity with relevant laws, statutory guidance, local safeguarding procedures, or internal policies and procedures that govern the work that we do with children and families
- Be attuned to the emotional impact that the stress and demands of this work can pose to workers and managers within the service and provide an empathetic, supportive, and pragmatic response

- Confident in exercising statutory powers necessary to safeguard children from significant abuse or neglect.

Experience

- Experience in promoting and maintaining a high standard of professional evidenced based practice in the service through modelling good practice, management oversight, and motivating members to perform at their best
- Experience promoting, sharing and using the latest research and professional practice theories across the directorate to inform the work undertaken with children and families
- Have a good understanding of and ability to use mainstay IT systems, such as case recording systems, Microsoft Word, Microsoft Outlook, Internet search engines, computers, mobile phones, and secure remote working systems, including Teams and Zoom
- Extensive strategic experience working in a statutory child protection setting at a senior management level
- Experience in leading and managing strategic and operational change, projects and programmes to achieve desired outcomes and applying project management skills effectively
- Experience of investigating and providing timely responses to any complaints raised by children, families or professionals
- Satisfactory enhanced DBS disclosure certificate) relevant applications and checks will be carried out before and job offer is confirmed
- Will need the personal resources to deal with these demands within a supportive management environment and to have the capacity to support other

Vision - To make North Somerset a truly great place for children and young people to thrive; where all have the best possible life and opportunities, including those who are vulnerable, disadvantaged and/or have special educational or additional needs