

Job Description

Job title	Head of Specialist Services
Directorate	Children and Adults
Division	Adult Social Care
	Service Manager
Reports to	Assistant Director, Adult Social Care

Main purpose of the job:

The postholder will provide strategic and operational leadership for Specialist Services across Adult Social Care, including AMHP, DoLS, Transitions and Transforming Care. They are accountable for ensuring services are safe, effective, lawful and person-centred, delivering improved outcomes that maximise independence and enable people to live as full and ordinary a life as possible.

They will lead the strategic development and direction of specialist services, setting a clear vision and ensuring delivery aligns with corporate priorities, national policy and statutory requirements. The role is accountable for the effective discharge of duties under the Care Act, Mental Capacity Act and associated legislation, including shared responsibilities with health partners, and for ensuring robust governance, assurance and professional standards.

As a member of the Adult Social Care Senior Leadership Team, the postholder contributes to corporate and system-wide leadership, shaping integrated pathways and driving service transformation. They hold responsibility for workforce leadership, financial management and performance, ensuring services operate sustainably within a complex, high-risk and politically sensitive environment.

The postholder will work collaboratively with internal and external partners, including health, Children's Services and providers, to strengthen system integration, improve pathways and deliver high-quality, outcome-focused services. They will provide authoritative professional advice, influence strategic decision-making and deputise for the Assistant Director as required.

Accountabilities and Outcomes:

- Provide strategic and operational leadership for Specialist Services, ensuring safe, effective and person-centred delivery aligned to statutory duties and organisational priorities.
- Ensure the effective discharge of statutory responsibilities under the Care Act, Mental Capacity Act and associated legislation, maintaining robust governance, assurance and lawful decision-making.
- Lead the development and delivery of a clear strategic vision for specialist services, working in partnership with Children's Services, SEND, health partners and stakeholders to design and implement integrated pathways.

Medway Council Job Profile

- Drive quality assurance, performance management and continuous improvement, establishing clear standards, monitoring outcomes and taking decisive action to address underperformance and risk.
- Lead transformation and service improvement programmes across specialist services, ensuring delivery against agreed outcomes, timescales and financial parameters.
- Hold accountability for financial management and resource allocation, ensuring value for money, financial sustainability and effective use of resources within a cash-limited environment.
- Provide strong workforce leadership, ensuring effective performance management, workforce planning and development to build a skilled, resilient and high-performing workforce.
- Influence and collaborate with senior leaders, Members and system partners to align service priorities with corporate objectives and wider system plans.
- Build and maintain effective relationships locally, regionally and nationally to support service development, benchmarking and adoption of best practice.
- Contribute to the Adult Social Care Senior Leadership Team, providing collective leadership, supporting corporate priorities and ensuring cohesive service delivery across the directorate.
- Deputise for the Assistant Director and provide leadership cover as required, ensuring continuity of decision-making, governance and statutory oversight.
- Champion strategic stakeholder engagement to advance the [One Medway Council Plan](#) ensuring our [values and behaviours](#) are consistently modelled and embedded across all levels of the organisation.

Key Corporate Accountabilities:

To work with colleagues to achieve service plan objectives and targets.

To understand and actively keep up to date with GDPR responsibilities, including completing regular refresher training.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility: all employees are required to act in such a way that safeguards the health and well-being of children and vulnerable adults.

As a corporate parent, all council employees are responsible for ensuring the well-being and positive outcomes of Medway's care-experienced children and young people.

To participate in the Performance Appraisal process and contribute to the identification of own and team development needs utilising the Career Progression Framework.

Work in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation. Promoting equality of opportunity, fostering good relations and improving the quality of life and opportunities for everyone living and working in Medway.

To ensure full compliance with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, the Council's Health and Safety Policy and all locally agreed safe methods of work.

To fully understand and be aware of the commitment to the duty under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to prevent crime and disorder.

Promote the Medway Carbon Neutral by 2050 commitment; supporting the Council action plan to ensure we play our part in addressing the climate emergency.

Medway Council is a Category One responder in relation to the Civil Contingencies Act (2004) and as a result all staff working for the Authority may be asked to carry out Category One response duties or stand in the role of another member of staff who is responding to a Major Civil Incident.

Accountabilities to the Adults we Work With.

- Be a good listener.

Medway Council Job Profile

- Be non-judgemental.
- Be consistent and stable.
- Be contactable.
- Understand me.
- Be honest.
- Be focused.
- Be realistic.
- Be a good timekeeper.
- Be resourceful in your approach.

Be ambitious and professionally curious for adults with care and support needs and promote others to share the same drive.

Make no decision about me without me.

Organisation:

This role reports to the Assistant Director, Adult Social Care

Initiative and independence

The postholder operates with a high level of autonomy, authority and professional judgement, holding accountability for the strategic and operational direction of specialist services within a complex, high-risk and politically sensitive environment. They are responsible for interpreting legislation, policy and statutory guidance, assessing and managing significant organisational risks, and determining priorities and resource allocation. Decisions are made within a framework of governance and delegated authority but require independent judgement in highly complex and ambiguous situations. Decisions carry significant safeguarding, legal, financial and reputational implications. The postholder provides authoritative advice to senior leaders and Members, shaping decision-making, strengthening governance and ensuring safe, effective and sustainable service delivery.

Supervision and Management of Staff

The postholder provides visible, inclusive leadership, creating a high-performing culture based on accountability, integrity and continuous improvement. They are directly accountable for operational managers and the performance of a wider, multi-disciplinary workforce. They ensure robust performance management, supervision and workforce development arrangements, including succession planning aligned to service priorities. Through effective leadership, support and challenge, they build a resilient and motivated workforce, promoting innovation and collaboration. The role includes decisive management of underperformance, oversight of complex workforce issues, and influencing standards across partnership and commissioned services to ensure consistent, high-quality delivery.

Number of people managed by postholder: 4

Medway Council Job Profile

Job Context

The role operates at senior leadership level, with strategic and operational responsibility for specialist services including AMHP, DoLS, Transitions and Transforming Care within a highly regulated statutory environment. The postholder leads service strategy and delivery, working routinely with senior leaders, Members and system partners to shape integrated pathways and improve outcomes. Relationships are critical to influencing policy, resolving complex issues and delivering system-wide change. They are accountable for statutory duties under the Care Act, Mental Capacity Act and related legislation, ensuring robust governance, lawful decision-making and high professional standards.

Resources

The postholder holds direct accountability for the effective, lawful and efficient use of financial and physical resources across specialist services, ensuring strong governance, financial sustainability and value for money. This includes budget management, workforce deployment and resource allocation within a cash-limited environment. They ensure appropriate use of resources in line with statutory duties and corporate priorities, maintaining financial control and addressing risks or variances. Decisions have significant financial, legal and reputational implications, with responsibility for ensuring resources are used safely, effectively and in compliance with all requirements.

Work Environment:

Working Style

HYBRID - a flexible working arrangement whereby an employee can undertake their work either in the office and/or partially or mainly from home on a temporary or permanent basis. |

Work Demands

The postholder operates in a fast-paced, high-risk environment, managing multiple complex and competing workstreams including performance, risk, workforce leadership, service improvement and partnership delivery. The role requires sustained concentration to interpret legislation, analyse complex risks and provide expert advice under significant professional, legal and organisational scrutiny, often within tight and competing deadlines. This includes oversight of urgent and high-risk Mental Health Act assessments, where decisions impacting an individual's liberty must be made rapidly, often in unpredictable and time-critical circumstances involving multiple agencies. Priorities shift frequently and at short notice in response to safeguarding risks, Mental Health Act activity, system pressures and operational challenges, requiring rapid reprioritisation and decision-making. The postholder must balance conflicting demands and limited resources, ensuring timely, proportionate and legally compliant responses across the service and wider system.

Physical Demands

The role is primarily office-based within a hybrid working structure, requiring extended periods of concentrated work including analysis, reporting and meetings requiring sustained attention. The postholder may need to travel between council offices, health settings and partner organisations. Physical demands are generally limited but include the need to work effectively for sustained periods in a concentrated and regularly.

Medway Council Job Profile

Working Conditions

The postholder operates within a hybrid environment with regular multi-agency engagement. The role involves frequent exposure to sensitive and distressing situations, including high-risk cases, mental health crises, deprivation of liberty and legal processes. Working conditions include sustained professional scrutiny, competing priorities and politically sensitive issues. The role requires resilience and professionalism in managing emotionally challenging situations and maintaining accuracy under pressure.

Work Context

The postholder operates within a complex, highly regulated statutory environment, with responsibility for safeguarding, Mental Health Act activity and specialist services requiring expert professional judgement and continuous oversight of high-risk situations. The role involves regular exposure to sensitive and distressing circumstances, including safeguarding concerns, mental health crises and Mental Health Act assessments, where decisions regarding an individual's liberty and safety must be made lawfully and proportionately. This includes working within environments where there may be heightened risk, conflict, or challenge from individuals, families or partners. The postholder works closely with health partners, police, regulators and other stakeholders in managing complex, and at times contested, situations requiring negotiation, professional challenge and resolution of differing views. The role carries significant emotional, legal and reputational implications, requiring resilience, sound judgement and the ability to maintain professional authority in high-risk and sensitive contexts.

Person specification

Qualifications

- A recognised professional qualification (Social Work, Occupational Therapy, Nurse)
- SWE or HCPC registration
- Up to date knowledge and understanding of changes to legislation and practices across the Social care sector.
- Evidence of continuous professional development.
- Post qualifying learning, extensive evidence of CPD
- Holds an advanced, formally accredited postgraduate qualification at Level 7 or above relevant to senior leadership in Adult Social Care (e.g., Master's degree, CMI/ILM Level 7 Leadership qualification, MBA, or equivalent), or a recognised advanced statutory/specialist qualification (such as AMHP, AMCP or PEPS Stage 2) demonstrating the highest level of professional capability.

Knowledge

- Authoritative knowledge of adult social care legislation, including the Care Act, Mental Capacity Act, DoLS and associated statutory guidance, with responsibility for assuring compliance across services.
- Advanced expertise in specialist practice areas including AMHP, Mental Health, Learning Disability and Autism, Transitions and Transforming Care.
- Strong working knowledge of Court of Protection processes, deprivation of liberty frameworks and complex decision-making under the Mental Capacity Act.
- Extensive strategic understanding of adult social care systems, including commissioning, community provision, prevention and integration with Children's Services and health partners.
- Highly developed knowledge of integrated health and care systems, including ICB arrangements, NHS pathways and system pressures such as discharge and community capacity.
- Comprehensive knowledge of financial management within adult social care, including budget accountability, cost drivers, market pressures and value for money.

Medway Council Job Profile

- Clear and applied understanding of equality, diversity and inclusion, embedding these principles into strategy, commissioning and service delivery.
- Specialist and authoritative expertise across the specialist services portfolio, recognised as a lead professional resource across the organisation and wider system.
- Proven ability to analyse highly complex, high-risk situations and provide expert advice that shapes governance, professional standards and strategic direction.

Experience

- Significant experience of leading complex specialist service areas within adult social care, with full accountability for quality, performance, workforce and outcomes.
- Proven track record of leading transformation and service redesign across specialist pathways (e.g. AMHP, DoLS, Transitions, LDA), with measurable improvements in outcomes, flow and service effectiveness.
- Extensive experience of managing complex budgets, including identifying cost pressures, ensuring sustainability and delivering value for money in high-cost, specialist services.
- Strong experience of performance and quality management, including addressing underperformance, managing risk, and delivering sustained service improvement.
- Experience of managing complex, high-risk situations, including mental health crises, deprivation of liberty decisions, transitions risk and system pressures.
- Demonstrable experience of working with senior leaders, Members, regulators and system partners to influence decisions, shape priorities and strengthen governance.
- Experience of leading integrated working across Adult Social Care, Children's Services, health partners and providers to improve pathways and outcomes.
- Proven ability to identify service gaps (e.g. workforce capacity, backlog, pathway delays), assess risk and implement effective solutions.
- Strong experience of analysing complex performance, financial and demand data to inform strategic decision-making.
- Experience of delivering complex programmes and improvement plans with clear governance, accountability and measurable outcomes.

Skills

- Highly developed strategic thinking, with the ability to lead complex service development and transformation across specialist services.
- Advanced communication, influencing and negotiation skills, with the ability to challenge and secure commitment from senior leaders, Members and partners.
- Strong political awareness, with the ability to operate effectively in complex and sensitive environments.
- Proven ability to lead and develop high-performing teams, including senior managers, through effective performance management, coaching and succession planning.
- Ability to interpret and apply complex legislation and policy to shape service delivery and strategic direction.
- Expertise in analysing complex performance, financial and risk data to inform decision-making and drive improvement.
- Ability to lead through change and complexity, maintaining service quality, workforce engagement and resilience.
- Strong system leadership and partnership skills, enabling effective delivery across organisational boundaries.
- Ability to manage risk, competing priorities and high levels of complexity while maintaining professional credibility.

Medway Council Job Profile

- Ability to anticipate emerging pressures and challenges across specialist services, taking proactive action to ensure sustainability and continuous improvement.