Job Description

Job title	Access to Resources, Placement Officer
Directorate	PEOPLE : Children and Adults
Division	Children's Commissioning
Range	MPR 3
Reports to	Placement Co-ordinator / Access to Resources Manager

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Main purpose of the job:

To support the authority to meet its statutory responsibilities relating to the accommodation needs of care experienced children and young people under the Children's Act 1989. To receive and process all requests for placements, liaising with in-house and independent providers to ensure that appropriate and high-quality placements are brokered to meet individual need. Provide advice and support to social workers and other professionals as appropriate.

The role encompasses a range of responsibilities including administrative support, financial management, quality assurance and negotiation with both internal and external stakeholders. Those in the role will be expected to manage their own day-to-day assigned administrative tasks, ensuring smooth operations and adherence to teams' policies and procedures. Financial responsibilities will involve, negotiation with providers, monitoring expenditures, and providing accurate financial data to support informed decision-making processes.

The role requires strong negotiation and coordination skills to facilitate collaboration between various stakeholders. Placement Officers will work closely with internal teams, external agencies, and service providers to ensure that services are aligned with the needs of children and families. Effective communication and problem-solving skills are required to successfully navigate the complexities of this multifaceted role. Placement Officers will be proactive, detail-oriented, and committed to enhancing the well-being of children and families in Medway through the delivery of high-quality and essential support services.

Liaise with stakeholders in a way that promotes the One Medway Council Plan and embeds our values and behaviours.

Accountabilities and outcomes:

Play a key role in the right placement, right time, right cost agenda, adopting a child centred approach to supporting Medway children and young people

Identify, broker and liaise with providers and monitor placements for individual children as authorised by the Access to Resources Panel.

To receive and process all requests for placements, liaising with in-house and independent providers to ensure that appropriate and high quality placements are brokered to meet individual need.

Develop knowledge of in-house and external providers and be able to give advice and make recommendations to social workers

Update Framework-i with information and details of the placement

Liaise directly with providers in order to ensure that changes to the child or young person's assessed needs are provided in a timely manner.

Contribute to meetings with service providers to ensure services are continually reviewed and improved

Support the quality assurance of placements for Children in Care and Care Leavers

Negotiate with providers on placement cost and quality

Contribute to meetings related to placements and other resources ensuring best value for the authority and the right outcomes for the child

At the discretion of the Head of Service, such other activities as may from time to time be agreed consistent with the nature of the job described above.

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 Job Profile

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 into the role of another member of staff who is responding to a Major Civil Incident.

Accountabilities to Children and Young People

The children and young people of Medway have said the following qualities are really important to them:

- Be a good listener.
- 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 for young people and promote others to share the same drive.

Champion Children and Young People's views and rights in everything you do.

Ensure Children and Young People's voices are listened to and acted upon.

'Do what you say and say what you do'.

Organisation:

This role reports to the Placement Co-ordinator directly, but is overseen by the Access to Resources Manager..

The post holder will not be required to line manage others but may be required to direct, coordinate or train other employees.

The post holder will be required to liaise with all stakeholders both internal and external to the organisation.

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.

Person specification

All criteria at level A are considered essential unless stated otherwise.

Qualifications

Level A

Good general level of education with GCSE or equivalent in Maths and English.

A good working knowledge of Microsoft office applications.

Medway Council Job Profile

Level B (in addition to level A criteria)

At least 12 months experience as an ART officer.

Completion of training, e.g. Kent Safeguarding Children, Multi-Agency Partnership training courses including e-learning.

Safeguarding (level 1,2), courses relating to exploitation and mental capacity act and missing children.

Level two safeguarding children, level one safeguarding vulnerable adults, Mosaic system training, cyber security, and data protection. Including reading and understanding Medway mandatory policies.

Level C (in addition to levels A and B)

Equivalent or commitment to NVQ3 (A-levels) or higher in relevant area with transferable skills, e.g. business, management, accounting, or other relevant professional area.

At least 18 months experience as a Placement Officer.

Commitment to CPD including working towards a supervision/management qualification such as NVQ Level 3 in Business or management.

Completion of level 3 safeguarding.

Knowledge

Level A

Awareness of childcare legislation e.g. Children's Act 1989, 2004 and SEND Code of Practice 0-25, Disabilities Act 2010.

An understanding of the importance and principles of safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.

An understanding of equality and diversity principles.

Awareness of data protection and confidentiality.

An understanding of the role and function of social work in keeping children and young people safe.

An awareness of the different sections and legal status's that impact on children and young people in the care system.

Aware of Medway Councils responsibilities under the Sufficiency Duty.

Level B (in addition to level A criteria)

• A good awareness of Medway Councils responsibilities under its Sufficiency Duty.

•A good awareness of council's financial regulations and guidelines.

•A good awareness of relevant policies and procedures.

•A good understanding of the concepts of risk management and safeguarding children.

•A good understanding of the quality assurance procedures and the quality framework.

•Ability to apply procedural policy knowledge in a specialist area and can turn theory into practical solutions to a good standard.

A good understanding of the concepts of risk management and safeguarding in the placement context including attendance at strategy and other meetings as required.

A developed knowledge of the sections and legal status's that impact on children and young people in the care system

A full understanding of the multi-agency environment in which placements operate for example, virtual schools, police, etc.

A developing knowledge of the full range of providers that Medway works with to meet it sufficiency responsibilities.

Evidence of the developing of contacts and a personal network of relevant professional contacts

A developing knowledge of the QA function and the role of regulatory bodies such as Ofsted and the CQC

Understanding of and contribution to the panel process (access to resources, disability, move-on etc)

Clear understanding of the qualities of a good referral and the confidence to appropriately challenge colleagues on the quality of referrals submitted.

Level C (in addition to levels A and B)

Knowledge, understanding and ability to put into practice the needs and trends relating to area of work on a national and local level.

Demonstrate the ability to put into practice the ability to speak with confidence and authority in order to lead negotiation, problem solving with stakeholders and colleagues.

Comprehensive knowledge of safeguarding policies and procedures and how to put them into practice.

Highly developed knowledge of risk management and safeguarding in relation to meeting sufficiency responsibilities.

Knowledge and understanding of the market that supports a lead role in negotiations around placements including costs and quality.

High-quality data management and interpretation skills, able to contribute to market analysis and budget management and other reporting cycles.

Able to speak with confidence and authority in order to lead negotiation with providers and colleagues in relation to placements (including residential, foster care, supported accommodation etc).

Experience

Level A

Experience of a customer or service user facing environment preferred but not essential.

Previous administrative experience preferred but not essential.

Level B (in addition to level A criteria)

Experience of using judgement and creativity to assess situations and solve varied problems and/or develop short term plans to a good standard.

Experience of being accountable for small expenditures from an agreed budget with supervision.

At least 12 months experience of working in an environment involvement in the commissioning and/or management of resources

Demonstrability ability to use judgement and creativity to assess situations and solve varied problems and/or develop short term plans.

Demonstrable ability to use written and oral communication skills to present varied information in an understandable way to a range of audiences.

Demonstrable ability to work within defined procedures and to work independently, using initiative to deal with straightforward situations, referring to supervisor/line manager for unusual or difficult problems.

Demonstrable ability to carry out tasks and/or advise on internal procedures, which impact on the health and wellbeing of people.

Level C (in addition to levels A and B)

Experience of analysing financial data with precision and speed or demand to assess a company's financial health and/or performance.

Experience of being accountable for small expenditures from an agreed budget within defined procedures.

Experience of giving advice and support to colleagues on procedures with confidence.

Experience of supporting new members of staff, apprentices' wellbeing and development.

Experience of managing working related pressures and meeting deadlines.

Demonstrable technical/specialist/policy and procedural knowledge which can be applied across a wide range of activities.

Ability to complete a range of complex tasks such as report writing, presentations, detailed assessments and calculations.

Skills

Level A

Filter and present basic data for analysis.

Problem-Solving Skills: Capacity to identify financial issues, analyse root causes, and propose solutions or recommendations to improve performance or efficiency at a basic level.

Ability to attend meetings and take basic notes.

A basic level of organisational skills.

Good standard of written and oral communication skills and confidence to present to a range of audiences.

Ability to work within a team and carry out tasks independently.

Good basic IT skills including word and Excel, use of teams etc.

Ability to understand and organise data.

A flexible approach and team player.

Awareness of data protection and confidentiality.

Ability to demonstrate an awareness and understanding of equal opportunities.

Personal resilience, energy and enthusiasm.

Strong organisational skills and ability to meet deadlines.

A can-do, solution focused approach to working.

Strong interpersonal and communication skills

Level B (in addition to level A criteria)

Demonstrable ability to use written and oral communication skills to present varied information in an understandable way to a range of audiences at a good level.

Ability to pay close attention to detail when reviewing documents, preparing reports, and conducting data analysis to ensure accuracy and precision to a good standard.

Willingness to learn and adapt to new tasks, procedures, or software systems as needed in a dynamic business environment.

Strong IT skills, in particular use of spreadsheets to manage data and information.

Commitment to ethical behaviour and compliance with financial regulations and company policies to maintain trust and integrity in financial transactions and reporting.

Ability to work collaboratively as part of a team, sharing information, coordinating tasks, and supporting colleagues to achieve common goals and objectives.

Ability to exchange complicated and / or sensitive information, written and verbal, which can be complex and / or contentious.

Ability to work independently within defined procedures to a good standard.

Level C (in addition to levels A and B)

Strong Excel Proficiency: Proficiency in Microsoft Excel, including the ability to create financial models, perform data analysis, and generate reports.

Communication Skills: Strong communication skills, both written and verbal, to effectively communicate information and analysis to stakeholders, such as management, clients, or stakeholders.

Able to use initiative and respond effectively to complex situations, making appropriate decisions in a solution focused manner and referring to line manager when appropriate.

Deal with considerable levels of work-related pressure, meeting deadlines or the equivalent of between one and two hours undertaking manual calculation or other work with figures, report writing or preparing presentation

Demonstrate co-ordination or skills where there is either some demand for precision and speed or demand for precision in the use of data processing.