BURY COUNCIL

JOB DESCRIPTION

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| **Post Title:** Placement Finding & Brokerage Officer |
| **Department:**  Children’s Services | **Establishment/Post Number:**  |
| **Division/Section:** Children’s Commissioning | **Post Grade: 10** |
| **Location:** 3 Knowsley Place or any other establishment within the Borough / Agile | **Post Hours:** 37 hours per week |
| **Special Conditions of Service: (to be completed by Supervisor/Manager)**Subject to the Council’s Flexitime Scheme. Work outside normal office hours may be required.Monitoring the Children’s Commissioning Team email inbox Monday to Friday until 5.00 p.m. |
| **Purpose and Objectives of Post:*** To work effectively as part of a team collectively responsible for overseeing up to £20m spend on homes and services for vulnerable children and their families.
* To work with Children’s Fostering Team to source and secure foster care placements for children and young people taking into account quality, best value for money & the needs and outcomes for the child.
* To work with Children’s Social Care, including the Leaving Care Team, to source suitable residential and supported accommodation (pre and post-18) placements for children and young people taking into account: quality, cost, location & suitability to meet the child/young person’s needs.
* To provide advice on effective commissioning of services for children and young people.
* To work with a range of stakeholders across Children’s Services to develop and implement a coherent approach to commissioning for improving outcomes for children and young people.
* To assist the Commissioning Officer(s) and Strategic Lead(s) in taking the lead role within Children's Services for developing and writing appropriate contracts to support the commissioning of services
* To assist with providing data and management information in respect of placements and other contract requests
* To assist with the managing the Commissioned Placements Budget, and devolved resources.
* To provide support to the SEN Team by maintaining a record of placements, raising contracts and payment of invoices for out of borough schools
* To link with the Placements North West and other regional initiatives on behalf of Bury MBC Children's Services
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| **Accountable to:** Head of Strategy, Assurance and Reform |
| **Immediately Responsible to:** Strategic Lead |
| **Relationships:** **Internal:**Children’s Services Management TeamEmployees within Children’s Services department, including Directors, Head of Services, Service Managers, Team Managers and wider staffEmployees in other departments of the authority and within the One Commissioning Organisation, particularly Adult Social CareHealth ProfessionalsService Providers, including schools and collegesVoluntary Organisations and Community GroupsContracts and Commissioning Officers in other LAsEmployees of Placements Northwest and any other relevant professional bodiesParents and young people |

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| **Duties/Responsibilities:*** To act as first point of contact when a child/young person looked after by Bury, requires a placement (residential, fostering and supported accommodation pre and post-18) including emergency situations where a child requires a same day placement, extra staffing to maintain a placement or outreach support to prevent a child coming into care.
* To source and support the provision of placements and services (residential, fostering and supported accommodation pre and post-18) for children who are looked after by Bury Council; through provider contractual arrangements, to ensure timely placements are made that meet the needs for the children, are of high quality and of competitive costs.
* Maintain contact details for off contract providers and source placements (residential, fostering and supported accommodation, pre and post-18) in the event that no suitable placements (residential, fostering, supported accommodation pre and post-18) are available through contractual arrangements. Carry out due diligence checks including Ofsted Reports, references from others LAs, company house checks and gain feedback from social care visits. Notify manager to carry out necessary monitoring visits.
* Working with colleagues in the team to monitor the Children’s Commissioning email inbox and respond to any queries and matters raised, prioritising any urgent issues.
* To review and quality assure referral forms from social workers and personal advisers for placements (residential, fostering & supported accommodation pre and post-18) ensuring they are strength based, accurate and balanced and meet the necessary GDPR standard.
* To provide advice, guidance and direction to social care colleagues on the referral processes and levels of decision making with financial agreements that need to be sought before services can be commissioned for their families. Prior to services being commissioned ensure funding authorisation has been received and recorded in accordance with internal audit requirements.
* To co-ordinate the requirements of the commissioned placements (residential, fostering & supported accommodation pre and post-18), which may include organising secure transport, liaising with providers & social care staff and notifying other LAs and Police of Bury Children who have been placed/removed from their area.
* To assist Children’s Services in all aspects of planning, commissioning and de-commissioning individual care placements (residential, fostering & supported accommodation pre and post-18) which includes serving appropriate notice on placements (residential & fostering & supported accommodation pre and post-18) and managing the financial impact on the Council by negotiating reduced notice periods with providers.
* To produce detailed monthly budget reports which closely monitor & forecast costs relating to commissioned placements (residential, fostering & supported accommodation pre and post-18). Produce a monthly summary of changes that have affected the budget, reconciliation work with budget advisor at key points throughout the financial year and follow financial year end guidance and procedures.
* At the start of each financial year create a new database and payment records for all active placements (residential & fostering) and raise purchase orders and Individual Placement Agreements (contracts) accordingly reflecting any changes, price increases or discounts.
* To manage placement contract finances including raising purchase orders, ensuring invoice compliance against finance schedules and appropriate sibling and long term discounts are applied in line with the contract costs sheets. Keeping a record of expenditure, financial projections and calculating unit costs.
* To ensure that where Health, Education and Care colleagues agree jointly supported packages that recharges occur in line with the agreed level of contribution.
* Ensure all contracting and commissioning management information for placements (residential, fostering & supported accommodation pre and post-18) is stored and maintained effectively, so that it is accurate and complete. This includes maintaining and developing the list of approved providers and the placements database, ensuring that storage of this information is compliant with all relevant organisational and legal requirements, and assisting with analysing and providing such information to enable decision making by senior officers.
* To support SEN Team with school and college placements in non-maintained LA provisions including maintaining a record of placements, drawing up NASS contracts, ensuring invoices are in accordance with the IPA, payment of invoices and giving notice when school placements are ending.
* Produce data for quarterly Placement Northwest Census Reports from our placements database with snapshots of Look After Children’s placements showing providers, how services were commissioned, relevant costs and area of provision, which provides current progress against all the GM authorities.
* To be aware of the resources available locally to meet the assessed needs of children, young people and families i.e. Outreach Support, Family Group Conferences, Mockingbird, Placement Stability meetings and additional children related supported services.
* To contribute to the development of commissioning strategies for Children’s Services
* To attend meetings on behalf of the Commissioning Officer in times of absence and deal with any necessary issues/complaints/queries that may arise
* To contribute to writing, updating, implementing, supporting and managing the contractual arrangements for commissioned services across Children’s Services. This shall include providing assistance with contracting, supporting partnership management groups, providing a point of contact for providers, helping to deal with any issues of concern promptly and equitably and assisting with managing the financial arrangements that support the contracts.
* To provide support in planning and managing procurement to ensure that all relevant Council procurement policies and procedures are adhered to in addition to the legislative obligations placed on Councils through the EU procurement regulations, and all other relevant legislation. This shall include providing support in ensuring appropriate financial and legal advice is taken in relation to all Contracting and Commissioning activity undertaken. To administer elements of the procurement process for Children’s Services effectively and efficiently maintaining clear and transparent audit trails.
* To assist with the development and delivery of contractual monitoring mechanisms to monitor placement providers performance and compliance against agreed service specifications including Ofsted, Placements Northwest standard terms and conditions of contract and existing quality standards and regulations. This shall include assisting with the development and delivery of such mechanisms that seek the views of Children’s Services Staff and Service Users.
* Ensure that all Commissioned Services operate within the Council’s safeguarding policies and procedures, and that these principles are embedded in all contracts with providers.
* To contribute to the development and implementation of the Children’s Commissioning Team plan.
* Working closely with the Quality Assurance and Improvement Officers to ensure that children’s placements are safe, meet the child’s needs and provide value for money.
* Developing productive working relationships both internally and externally including Placements Northwest and other regional partnerships.

Where an employee is asked to undertake duties other than those specified directly in his/her Job Description, such duties shall be discussed with the employee concerned who may have his/her Trade Union representative present if so desired. |
| Job Description prepared by: Head of Strategy, Assurance & Reform | Sign: | Date: January 2025 |
| Agreed correct by Postholder: | Sign: | Date: |
| Agreed correct by: | Sign: | Date: |

To be responsible for and committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and for ensuring that they are protected from harm.

**Bury Council**

**Children and Young People**

# PERSON SPECIFICATION

Placement Finding & Brokerage Officer

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| ASSESSMENT METHOD | SHORT-LISTING CRITERIA | ESSENTIAL | DESIRABLE |
|  | **Qualification and Training**Professional qualification in a related discipline (ie Management, Procurement, Commissioning, Project Management) at NVQ level 3 or above. |  | **✓** |
|  | CIPS NVQ level 3 in Supply Chain Management |  | **✓** |
|  | **Experience** Significant experience of working within Local Authority, or other public sector setting, in particular within a social care context. |  | **✓** |
|  | Significant working knowledge of procurement, contracting and commissioning processes for Children’s Services and partnership working, and the legislative and regulatory framework that supports it. |  | **✓** |
|  | Experience of building and maintaining relationships with a wide range of people including colleagues, providers, service users, partnership initiatives and regulators. | **✓** |  |
|  | Experience of building contractual relationships including negotiating, establishing, monitoring and reviewing contracts, and using sanctions, if necessary. | **✓** |  |
|  | Working with vulnerable and challenging groups of people. |  | **✓** |
|  | Experience of the development and iteration process for new contracts for commissioned services (including drafting service specifications). |  | **✓** |
|  | Experience of sourcing and decommissioning placements both in-house and through external providers placements; managing the transition between placements |  | **✓** |
|  | Experience of undertaking placements reviews dependent on level of risk to ensure they continue to meet the needs of the young person, are of high quality and competitively priced  |  | **✓** |
|  | Experience of collaborative working with a range of partner professionals to affect change and problem solve  | **✓** |  |
|  | Experience of developing and implementing office database systems and effective financial management systems |  | **✓** |
|  | Experience of budget monitoring and providing budget information. Raising purchase orders for services/goods & paying invoices via a computerised accounting system. |  | **✓** |
|  | **Knowledge**Understand the issues affecting the commissioning of Children’s Services and the related government legislation supporting the modernisation of these services. | **✓** |  |
|  | Understand the principles of best value in the commissioning of Children’s Services. | **✓** |  |
|  | Have knowledge of procurement, contracting and commissioning processes for Children’s Services. | **✓** |  |
|  | Understand contract compliance, and the processes that support this function. | **✓** | **✓** |
|  | Have knowledge of financial regulations, procedures, EU procurement legislation and all other relevant legislation. |  | **✓** |
|  | Knowledge of key national policy drivers relating to placements and understanding of Children Act 1989 guidance and regulations  | **✓** |  |
|  | Understanding of good placements practices and their successful application. | **✓** |  |
|  | Knowledge of the range of services and current issues in Children’s Social Care at a local and national level and its implications for practice and service planning | **✓** |  |
|  | Experience of working in Children’s Social Care & knowledge of the Children’s Homes, Fostering, Care Leaver & Supporting Living Regulations |  | **✓** |
|  | **Skills and Abilities**Ability to analyse and evaluate financial, qualitative and quantitive information from a wide range of sources to form judgements about performance, quality and value for money. | **✓** |  |
|  | Good communication and interpersonal skills in one to one and group settings. Must demonstrate the ability to be able to liaise, guide, influence and negotiate with a variety of stakeholders. | **✓** |  |
|  | Good written communications skills. Must be able to be clear, accurate, concise and efficient when producing written reports to a variety of stakeholders. | **✓** |  |
|  | Ability to reach negotiated agreements with providers in challenging circumstances. | **✓** |  |
|  | Competent in using IT, in particular Microsoft Word, Excel and Access. | **✓** |  |
|  | Project management skills. |  | **✓** |
|  | Time management skills to meet deadlines and manage own workload effectively. | **✓** |  |
|  | Source, negotiate, review and consider suitable placement options and make recommendations based on best value and quality to ensure appropriate placements and services are provided and achieve desired outcomes as necessary. | **✓** |  |
|  | Strong decision making and problem solving skills with the ability to think clearly and rationally under pressure of time and competing demands and interests to resolve complex issues.  | **✓** |  |
|  | Effective organisational and planning skills and the ability to coordinate a variety of different activities simultaneously ensuring appropriate and often changing deadlines are met | **✓** |  |
|  | The ability to process and manage information effectively including the establishment and maintenance of appropriate systems | **✓** |  |
|  | Analytical and administrative skills in relation to the establishment and maintenance of appropriate recording systems in order to manage and retrieve accurate up to date information and present it effectively through a variety of ICT channels. | **✓** |  |
|  | Ability to take a proactive rather than reactive approach to work | **✓** |  |
|  | Ability to analyse situations, diagnose problems, identify key issues, establish and evaluate alternative courses of action and produce a logical, practical and acceptable recommendation | **✓** |  |
|  | Ability to advise others and deal with sensitive issues in difficult situations | **✓** |  |
|  | **Personal Competencies**Self-motivated | **✓** |  |
|  | Sound judgement in devising and evaluating options and dealing with complex issues | **✓** |  |
|  | Flexible approach | **✓** |  |
|  | Personal integrity | **✓** |  |
|  | Manage self-development | **✓** |  |
|  | **Commitment**An understanding of and a personal commitment to the Vision and Values of Bury Council and its key partners | **✓** |  |
|  | Commitment to the Council’s Performance Management Framework, training and continuous improvements | **✓** |  |
|  | Commitment to delivering the best professional services possible to service users. | **✓** |  |

Employees of Bury Council have a responsibility for, and must be committed to, safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and for ensuring that they are protected from harm.