

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

PART A: JOB DESCRIPTION

DIRECTORATE:	Children, Young People and Education
JOB TITLE:	Head of Quality Assurance
GRADE:	Band 14
JD REF:	H218
RESPONSIBLE TO:	Director of Children Young People and Families
RESPONSIBLE FOR:	Council Services within the portfolio. These may change to reflect need and maximise resources across the Council.
Service/ Functions:	<p>Leadership and management of functions which ensure the effectiveness and coordination of quality assurance of Children's Social Care and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and Performance and Systems for Children's Services.</p> <p>This includes the development and implementation of quality assurance framework including systematic approaches to understand practice quality and support continuous learning and improvement for staff and services;</p> <p>The development of an engagement team that is listening to the voice of service users and co-producing approaches to meet the needs of children, families, carers and strategic partners through service improvement.</p> <p>Management of statutory safeguarding unit/independent reviewing service and any other services with the remit of the role.</p>
Employees:	<p>This service provides a range of specialist quality assurance approaches for Childrens Services including a broad range of teams who underpin the voice of service users, quality monitoring and assurance routines.</p> <p>The staff complement for the service is circa 19 FTE.</p>
Budget:	<p>The postholder will work with colleagues across Children's services to make best use of all available budget. The postholder is responsible for managing the gross budget allocated to the service which amounts to circa £700k.</p>
Other resources	<p>As required to ensure that all normal and transformational activity is undertaken to deliver resident focused and value for money services in line with the Council Vision and Corporate plan. This post has particular responsibility for working with</p>

	Childrens Services Teams, Service Users and Stakeholders and to ensure they have measures in place to underpin continuous improvement.
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JOB PURPOSE:

In support of the Executive Director of Children, Young People and Education, the Director Children, Young People and Families (reporting to) and the Director of Education, SEN and Skills provide strategic direction of all the quality assurance for Children's Services supporting the Council's key corporate and partnership priorities that fall within the remit of the post and in line with the corporate plan - a council that works for everyone, to benefit the people of Northumberland.

Lead the delivery of innovative services and initiatives that support children and young people, deliver a high quality service that meets national requirements and expectations for all children. This includes designing and implementing the quality assurance approaches to review Childrens Social Care, SEND and the performance and systems to underpin continuous improvement and in support of statutory and regulatory reviews.

This postholder needs to understand statutory legislative requirements and best practice in order to provide a framework for assurance that the specialist teams are delivering high quality services. The postholder has lead responsibility for understanding where there are opportunities to access additional income which will both extend and expand opportunities for growth and development of the Childrens service quality assurance function supporting the wider service infrastructure.

Lead the management and development of safeguarding partnership arrangements.

As a member of the Children's Services management team participate fully in the planning management and assurance of the functions undertaken across Childrens services and connect with corporate teams to co create collaborative and connected systems and approaches.

To undertake work with key partners across education and care sectors to ensure efforts are aligned and operating cohesively to maximise the opportunities of all children across the County and provide assurance that plans and targets are being achieved. This work needs to pay particular attention to the Council's ambitions to address inequalities and differences so that every effort is taken to address inequalities for all of our children and families.

To play a full and positive role as a member of the Directorate and Council's Senior Management Team ensuring the delivery of effective strategic direction, leadership and resource management (people, finance and other assets) to secure the delivery of public services across the locality.

Lead by example and foster a culture, both within the service and across the Council, which engages all staff and partners in the development and delivery of services that meet residents' needs and expectations. This will involve being involved in cross Council initiatives to make best use of individuals' strengths and foster collaboration across the whole organisation.

To lead the work on engagement partnership across education, health and care with children, young people and representative groups supporting cross service collaboration.

Ensure, as a senior executive, that effective governance and assurance processes are applied in all activity as set down in the Constitution and Council policies and procedures to safeguard the Council's financial and statutory duties and demonstrate public accountability and scrutiny of its decision-making processes.

Discharge the functions within the remit of the post having regard to the decision-making framework and arrangements in the Council.

KEY FUNCTIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES:

In support of the Executive Director, Director of Children, Young People and Families and Director of Education, SEND and Skills to lead and implement the quality assurance for Childrens which complements the vision for the County particularly supporting inclusive communities and reducing inequalities. This will involve leading the implementation of supporting programmes, initiatives structures, processes and systems which create and maintain a strong culture of quality assurance in Childrens Social Care, SEN and Performance and Systems and safeguarding partnership.

To develop and implement alongside colleagues in Childrens Services a comprehensive approach to quality assurance that meets all national requirements including inspections but also demonstrates understanding of both a diverse population and mix of abilities in order to ensure that opportunities are provided to maximise these abilities and skills.

The postholder will also ensure all the framework is children focused, uses the voice of our service users and stakeholders to inform change, approach and continuous improvement plans and test the performance of the service against these plans. Working collaboratively with other practitioners and partners as part of an holistic approach to service performance and providing qualitative and quantitative evidence whereby the services are meeting statutory and regulatory requirements but most importantly making a positive difference for our children and their families.

Support Members of the Council, the Chief Executive, and colleagues in Children's Services develop the vision and priorities for the County and ensure best advice is

provided on the most appropriate response to internal and external pressures for change. This will involve providing specific advice relation to the functions within the Directorate and effecting the changes required from the regulatory frameworks affecting Childrens Services.

Manage well the interface between Elected Members and Officers within the Directorate, maintaining and developing essential Member / Officer partnerships and processes which support and promote a positive and respectful relationship between Members and Officers.

Champion a coherent multi agency approach to service delivery and provide support for colleagues in the Directorate to ensure the delivery of the Council's priorities and provision of high-quality, cost-effective services based on community needs.

Participate and develop the Council's commitment to actively collaborate in major local and regional partnerships to achieve, within the overall skills strategy, maximum benefit for the Council and its communities. These partnerships will be essential to deliver sustainable growth, reduce inequalities and provide opportunities for residents as they leave education or look to change employment opportunities.

Contribute to successful management of the Council's reputation, ensuring that it always acts in the best interests of Northumberland and that its activities are explained to stakeholders in an open and transparent manner.

PRINCIPAL ACCOUNTABILITIES

Act as principal adviser on quality assurance of Childrens Services ensuring that the Council implements all national and professional standards, including OFSTED inspections and statutory process and audits and requirements in a timely manner while recognising the interests of local communities and individuals in delivering successful children's education pathways to reduce inequalities.

Oversee the provision of timely and accurate advice to ensure provision of high quality professional support and advice on matters which will support the effective operation and planning of learning services across schools, colleagues and other educational establishments which meet the needs of children with special educational needs.

To lead work which seeks to maximise funding from external sources and ensure that a robust performance framework is in place to track all initiatives and demonstrate impact and the outcomes in line with the overall Strategy and supporting plans.

Act as a role model and exemplar in achieving a people-centred, collaborative, values based and inclusive organisational culture that promotes innovation and creativity, nurtures growth, and focuses on developing and maximises potential of the workforce to improve services.

Oversee the most effective utilisation, performance, and deployment of resources (Human, Physical and Financial) that puts at its heart the provision of high quality, value for money services and ensure that there is sufficient capacity within the directorate to deliver successfully against the Council's ambitions and priorities bearing in mind statutory requirements.
Oversee performance and systems providing business intelligence to inform practice, interventions and decision making.
Play a lead role in statutory and regulatory requirements for children's services.
Actively demonstrate commitment and action to develop an inclusive, supportive, and constructive environment where everyone is treated with dignity and respect and diversity is valued in the workplace, in service delivery and communications.
Play a full role in the implementation of major programmes and initiatives that are central to the achievement of the Council's objectives across and support the effective deployment of Council resources.
Provide assurance that strategies and plans are in place to enable appropriate levels of financial and governance control are in place across the postholder's portfolio and any other activities where they are the Lead Officer.
Oversee the scrutiny and advice on the plans and actions of Central Government and other external agencies to determine their impact on the development of local policies and priorities such as they relate to skills enhancement and position the Council as a decisive and influential organisation to maximise all available assets.
Ensure the promotion, development, and maintenance of good relationships with the media and public as an individual and across the Directorate and ensure effective communication and engagement strategies are applied to support delivery of services and change activities.
Ensure equality, diversity and cohesion principles are embedded across all services. Provide leadership around diversity and inclusion, ensuring that the policies and services of the Council reflect the changing needs of all our communities and workforce and that equality of opportunity is ensured, and diversity celebrated.
Represent and negotiate on behalf of the Council at local, regional, and national levels, promoting inter-authority working across the region and demonstrating flexibility and responsiveness to change. This work will particularly relate to the need to ensure appropriate measures are in place to protect children and young people working closely with all Education establishments such as Schools, colleagues and early years facilities to secure the best possible quality of services.

Where required play a role in the Council's Corporate Emergency Planning arrangements (This includes a requirement to be available in the event of an emergency to perform the duties allocated to the post within the Emergency Plan).
To undertake functions in the event of local or National elections, supporting the Returning Officer ensure the democratic nature of such activities is undertaken efficiently and in compliance with all statutory requirements.
Ensure that all duties and responsibilities are carried out in accordance with Council's Constitution, governance arrangements, policies, and procedures.
Special Conditions:
This position has been identified as a politically restricted post under the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. Therefore, the post holder is restricted from undertaking or participating in any political activity.

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PART B: SENIOR MANAGERS CORE COMPETENCIES

Working with Partners	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work collaboratively across services and departments to deliver corporate excellence. • Work collaboratively with external partners to deliver excellent service. • Seek opportunities for partnership working at a local, regional, and national level. • Clarify expectations, objectives and working arrangements of partnerships. • Contribute effectively to multi-partner projects. 	
Serving our Community	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the Community Plan. • Seek and act on feedback from the community. • Influence Service and Corporate plans to reflect community needs • Develop, deliver, and improve access to services based on an awareness and understanding of the diverse community • Promote equality of opportunity in service delivery 	
Working within the Political Arena	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand and actively support the role of Councillors. • Understand and actively support the democratic process within Northumberland Council. • Recognise the impact of Government and legislation on Council strategy and services. • Consult, support, and keep Councillors informed. 	

Delivering Excellence

- Understand how corporate performance is measured.
- Monitor and evaluate services in relation to objectives and performance indicators.
- Establish a culture that embraces the agreed Vision and Values.
- Be positive ambassadors for the organisation.
- Contribute to strengthening corporate leadership capacity.
- Identify opportunities where organisational performance could be improved.

Focusing on the Future

- Scan the external environment, look ahead, assess strategic options, and develop the Council in the medium and long term.
- Lead the development and implementation of corporate policy at a strategic level.
- Challenge what we do and how we do it.
- Influence relevant national and regional organisations and partners.
- Connect plans, policies, strategies, and services to provide consistent service delivery.
- Generate innovative ideas.
- Translate strategy into action.
- Consider the implications of decisions across the Council and act in the overall interests of Council performance.

Building Shared Vision and Values

- Scan the internal environment and engage employees in compelling visions of the future.
- Create an environment in which a culture embracing our Vision and Values can thrive.
- Involve all stakeholders in building a vision for the future.
- Have a clear picture of the direction the organisation is taking and communicate it with insight, energy, and vision.
- Translate the Council's vision into practical and achievable plans.

Strengthening Corporate Leadership Capacity

- Continuously develop the political leadership and managerial interface.
- Operate with others as a cohesive senior managerial team.
- Create time with staff and other managers for discussion about their development rather than firefighting.
- Coach and mentor staff and other managers.
- Lead, delegate and empower others at a strategic level.
- Identify and develop potential senior managerial successors.

Promoting and Facilitating Change

- Critically evaluate the reasons that prompt change and take appropriate action.
- Proactively steer internal change.
- Proactively manage the exchange of information between the public and the organisation.
- Consider the resource implications of change.
- Anticipate and respond to emotional and morale issues brought about by change.
- Monitor and evaluate the change process to ensure aims are met.

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PART C: PERSON SPECIFICATION

DIRECTORATE:	Children, Young People and Education
JOB TITLE:	Head of Quality Assurance
GRADE:	Band 14

Qualifications/Professional Development
Relevant professional and general management qualification or an equivalent demonstrable portfolio of experience to evidence understanding of education standards including SEN, social care and performance and systems.
Evidence of relevant up to date leadership and management training.
Evidence of recent relevant Continuous Professional Development.
Experience, Knowledge, and Skills
Proven achievement of leadership success in setting Education standards including Special Educational Needs Services, social care and performance and systems within an organisation of comparable complexity.
Significant experience in creating innovative solutions and initiatives which underpin exciting opportunities for all children and young people.
Demonstrable ability to work collaboratively with other leaders in the sector and across the council's performance and accountabilities framework.
Ability to interpret complex requirements and legislation whilst delivering services with strong social impact which address different needs and abilities. This includes the need to understand how provision needs to be tailored to meet the needs of people who need highly specialised support as well as those who can benefit from more mainstream activity but with targeted help.
Understanding of the children and young people's landscape and innovative practice in order to create new opportunities and secure financial support which delivers measurable benefits for individuals, communities and educational establishments.
Understanding of national performance frameworks and inspection requirements in order to ensure that all services have best practice embedded so that there is a culture of 'No surprises' in the event of inspection, audits or other reviews.
Up to date knowledge and understanding of legislation affecting the service, best practice and current issues.

<p>Ability to create strategies and plans which recognise the challenges facing the children's sector in delivering high quality learning including workforce development activities which support the retention and attraction of staff.</p>
<p>Ability to operate sensitively in a political environment, developing relationships with all members gaining respect, trust, and confidence and being accountable for effective delivery within a challenging financial environment.</p>
<p>Experience of managing major change that challenges existing ways of working, and different service delivery models which provide better outcomes for citizens especially vulnerable children and adults.</p>
<p>Evidence of personally leading within an organisational culture that models and embeds the practice of co-design and co-production and collaboration with people inside and outside the organisation.</p>
<p>Evidence of success in personally leading the development of external relationships and influential partnerships that have delivered tangible benefits and created a collaborative environment.</p>
<p>Evidence of using strong option appraisal, analytical skills, and innovation to achieve organisational success in an environment of reducing financial resources. This includes a proven track record on using these skills to access external funding on a sustainable basis.</p>
<p>Ability to develop long term strategic thinking and bring new ideas, approaches, and solutions.</p>
<p>Highly skilled communicator who communicates with clarity, conviction and enthusiasm and can demonstrate integrity, create rapport, and build trust and confidence to positively influence outcomes.</p>
<p>Ability to translate complex ideas and information into meaningful and 'user-friendly' information; 'tells the story' to bring people along and ensure all audiences understand the key messages.</p>
<p>Ability to develop strong relationships with senior leaders from a range of organisations especially in the education sector.</p>
<p>Personal and professional integrity and credibility that establishes respect, trust, and confidence.</p>
<p>Demonstrate personal resilience and ability to thrive in challenging circumstances.</p>

Model and demonstrate organisational values and leadership behaviours, creating a shared purpose and positive permission culture that enables people to thrive through development, involvement, and well-being.

Motivation

Confident leader with a vision for Northumberland with high levels of energy, stamina, and resilience.

Fully committed to the principles and values underpinning the Council

Demonstrably strong corporate orientation and a commitment to tackling issues that inhibit organisational progress to high quality service delivery.

Personality, behaviour, conduct and credibility that engages and commands the confidence of Council Members, senior managers, staff, the public, external partners, and other stakeholders.