

Job description

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| Job title: | Better Homes Manager |
| Grade: | Grade 11 |
| Job evaluation reference: | HS530 |
| Job family: | Health and Social Care |

Purpose and Impact

1. The Better Homes Manager will lead key aspects of the Children's Services Valuing Care (VCARE) Programme, building strong partnerships to manage costs for independent children's home and fostering homes in line with national and regional trends. The role addresses challenges such as increasing complexity of need, limited foster care availability, and competition for scarce placements.
2. Valuing Care is an online scoring tool, strengths-based approach that allows professionals to identify, articulate and track a child's strengths and needs. This can be used to match children to homes which can best support them into the future, and commission additional homes or support where there are gaps.
3. The Better Homes Manager will provide strategic leadership for the VCARE and Better Homes initiatives, ensuring high-quality, cost-effective placements for children and young people. The role will manage a team, budgets, and shape policy and practice to improve outcomes and life chances. This position requires strong partnership working, strategic planning, and operational oversight across multiple service areas.

Key responsibilities

4. Manage and be accountable for agreed areas of responsibility and enable successful partnerships and joint working arrangements to implement the strategic priorities of the VCARE Programme.
5. Lead on the development and implementation of strategic plans for the VCARE Programme, aligning with directorate priorities.
6. Contribute to service development and policy formulation across children's services.
7. Hold delegated budget responsibility for the VCARE initiatives.
8. Monitor independent provider services to ensure value for money and compliance with quality standards.
9. Collating financial impact data and visualise for reporting, using developing mechanisms as work progresses.
10. To make and develop communication and working relationships with partner agencies and key professionals – such as Health, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, Special Educational Needs and Disability, Education, Virtual School and providers of children's homes and Independent Fostering Agencies.
11. Lead Better Homes Panels, ensuring robust decision-making and statutory compliance.
12. Chair Valuing Care Core Group.
13. Monitor performance against targets using data analysis to inform improvements.
14. Track and follow up panel actions and financial impact of interventions.
15. Oversight of tracking and following up of actions via liaison with colleagues across service areas.
16. Holding regular reviews of panels to refine approach.
17. Producing high quality and strength-based pen portraits from VCARE profiles.
18. Monitoring the impact of the work on improving the outcomes and life chances of children and young people.



19. Ensure data integrity and compliance with council policies and legislation.
20. Prepare reports and contribute to performance monitoring for panels and boards.
21. To have matrix management responsibility for several Assistant Team Manager roles across the service.
22. To take the lead for the development of policy, procedure and practice within VCARE.
23. Recruit, train, and supervise Better Homes Champions and Superusers.
24. Identify training needs, provide coaching, and ensure professional development.
25. Develop training materials, resources, and toolkits including audit tools and checklists.
26. Coordinate and deliver training for VCARE workstreams.
27. Lead special projects to enhance placement sufficiency and quality.
28. Collate and share staff feedback on the work.
29. Ensure VCARE profiles are completed and used effectively in provider negotiation.
30. Coordination of Quality Assurance processes for newly completed or updated profiles.
31. Oversight of VCARE profile completion and support with practice development elements of embedding, including being a point of contact between brokerage team and social care, to ensure profiles are produced and used effectively in conversations with providers.
32. Represent the service at internal and external boards, steering groups, and multi-agency forums.
33. Build and maintain effective relationships with internal and external providers of fostering and children's homes, education, Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services.
34. To develop constructive relationships and work with children and young people, parents/carers; a range of professional partners to meet the overall outcomes for children, young people and their families.
35. Promote and safeguard the welfare of children and young people.
36. Ensure compliance with safeguarding legislation and exercise professional judgment in complex situations.
37. Carry out any other duties which fall within the broad spirit, scope and purpose of this job description and which are commensurate with the grade of the post.

NB: The duties and responsibilities of this post are not restrictive, and the post holder may be required on occasion to undertake other duties. This will not substantially change the nature of the post.

Supervision and management

Reporting to: Head of Service

Responsibility for: Matrix management responsibility for several Assistant Team Manager roles across the service

Other factors

38. Ensure effective communication with the local community and actively promote initiatives that are relevant to the issues affecting young people within the local community.
39. Work is subject to changing priorities, circumstances or demands.
40. An Enhanced DBS check is required.
41. This position has a significant travel requirement. This means that there is a requirement for a vehicle (or transport deemed to be suitable by the council) to be available on most working days in order to carry out normal duties. Employees in positions with a significant travel requirement are required to provide a replacement vehicle if their usual vehicle is not available over an extended period.



Our values

Our values act as guiding principles, defining what we believe is important in the ways we work together. Our values are Respect, Together, Accountability, Openness and Curiosity. You will need to be able to demonstrate these values in action through the way you work, regardless of your role within the organisation. Information about our values can be found on our website.



Person specification

Your application will be assessed based on your demonstration of how you fulfil the following criteria; you should include clear examples of how you meet these criteria within your application form and during the assessment process.

Essential

Essential criteria are the minimum requirement for the above post and will be assessed through a combination of your application form, assessment and interview (as specified below). We'll also use references to confirm that you meet the criteria for this role. We will require evidence of the qualifications, training or registrations listed below.

| Qualifications, training or registrations Required by law or essential to the performance of the role or both | Assessed through: |
|---|---|
| 1. A recognised professional qualification in social work with a specialist in children's services and current registration with the relevant regulatory body | Application form |
| 2. CQSW, DIPSW, CSS or equivalent professional qualification in social work | Application form |
| 3. Registration with Social Work England | Application form |
| 4. Evidence of continued professional development | Application form |
| Experience | |
| 5. Substantial post-qualification experience in children's services, including complex case management | Application form |
| 6. Proven experience in staff supervision and performance management | Application form |
| 7. Strategic planning and service development in a multi-agency environment | Application form |
| 8. Proven ability to negotiate and manage provider relationships to achieve value for money | Application form |
| 9. Experience of working in collaboration and partnership with other relevant agencies and the voluntary and community sector | Application form |
| 10. Experience in managing programmes or projects within a complex, multi-agency environment | Application form |
| 11. Extensive experience of dealing with complex cases and managing conflict | Application form |
| 12. Proven experience of the regular and effective use of performance monitoring and management tools | Application form |
| 13. Experience of working within a setting where formal written records are required to be maintained alongside the use of IT data and information systems | Application form |
| 14. Previous experience of working in a large organisation or local authority | Application form |
| Knowledge | |
| 15. Knowledge of relevant legislation and statutory guidance relating to children's placements | Application form Interview Assessment |
| 16. Confident knowledge of safeguarding and child protection procedures and social policy | Application form Interview Assessment |
| 17. Understanding of child development and parenting issues, including the range of factors that lead to poor outcomes for children and young people | Application form Interview Assessment |



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| 18. Understanding of and ability to embed SMART and evidence-based plans in working to support children and their families | Application form Interview Assessment |
| 19. Knowledge of performance and budget management principles and control and effective resource management principles | Application form Interview Assessment |
| 20. Comprehensive understanding of the role and contribution of other agencies | Application form Interview Assessment |
| Skills and abilities | |
| 21. High-level leadership and negotiation skills | Interview Assessment |
| 22. Ability to represent at statutory meetings and make executive decisions under pressure | Interview Assessment |
| 23. Strong analytical and problem-solving abilities, with experience using data to inform decisions | Interview Assessment |
| 24. Ability to provide support and challenge within the context of professional supervision | Interview Assessment |
| 25. Ability to give clear, constructive advice to team members regarding complex cases | Interview Assessment |
| 26. Competence in data analysis and use of IT systems for performance monitoring | Interview Assessment |
| 27. Ability to prioritise workload and evaluate risk | Interview Assessment |
| 28. Excellent partnership-building and stakeholder engagement skills | Interview Assessment |
| 29. Ability to lead and motivate staff, manage complex cases, and resolve conflict | Interview Assessment |
| Our values | |
| 30. Respect | Interview Assessment |
| 31. Together | Interview Assessment |
| 32. Accountability | Interview Assessment |
| 33. Openness | Interview Assessment |
| 34. Curiosity | Interview Assessment |
| Other | |
| 35. Ability to manage competing priorities and deliver results under pressure | Application form |
| 36. Commitment to improving outcomes for children and young people | Application form |
| 37. Strategic thinker with a proactive approach to addressing challenges | Application form |
| 38. Resilient and adaptable in a changing environment | Application form |
| 39. Provide a supportive working environment to colleague | Application form |
| 40. To undertake training as required | Application form |
| 41. Able to fulfil the travel requirements of the post | Application form |
| 42. An Enhanced DBS check is required | Application form |



Desirable

Desirable criteria will be used in the event of multiple applicants meeting the minimum essential requirements and if applicable, will be assessed through a combination of your application form, assessment and interview (as specified below). We'll also use references to confirm that you meet the criteria for this role. We will require evidence of the qualifications, training or registrations listed below.

| | Assessed through: |
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| Experience | |
| 43. Experience in policy development or commissioning strategies | Application form |
| Knowledge | |
| 44. Understanding of financial modelling and cost analysis in social care settings | Application form Interview Assessment |

Approval

Manager's job title: Head of Service

Date: February 2026

