

# **Executive Director of Children, Young People and Learning (DCS)**

## **Join us – make a difference in our communities**

West Sussex as an area is rapidly changing with increasing pressures from our demographics, continuing challenges to provide our residents and communities with greater levels of choice to support improved outcomes in their lives and of course we need to do this within tighter financial constraints. We recognise therefore that our organisation, working with and alongside our partnerships, needs to fundamentally change.

Within this context, West Sussex County Council is committed to putting Children First and improving the services in everything we do. We are clear that the positive change we want to achieve for our children will require everyone to work together, across the council, and partner agencies that all have a vital role in creating the environment where good practice can flourish.

By working together with our partners, we intend to ensure consistently high standards in the care, protection and opportunity we provide to children, enabling the best possible outcomes. The service has recently received significant financial investment in recognition of the challenges that it faces in the context of a very recent Ofsted ILACS inspection. Plans are in place to address these challenges, but we need to move at pace.

## **About the job**

As the statutory Director of Children’s Services, you will have a key leadership role within WSCC and in working with other agencies, to improve the outcomes for children and young people. You will be accountable for the leadership, strategy, and effectiveness of children’s services and you will be professionally responsible for children’s services. You will therefore be accountable, alongside the Lead Member for Children’s Services, for discharging the education and children’s social care functions of the county council. This will include responsibility for children and young people receiving education or children’s social care services, and all children looked after by West Sussex County Council.

You will provide professional leadership to the County Council’s achievement of improved outcomes for all children and for the delivery of our Children First Improvement Programme.



## Job Description & Person Specification



Through partnership working and system leadership across West Sussex you will ensure that the safety, educational, social, and emotional needs of children and young people are central to the vision for West Sussex. Crucial to the role will be ensuring that views of children and their families are at the heart of what we do, ensuring that this enhances our understanding of the impact of our improvement actions, and ensuring that our wider strategy is supported by our children's participation.

As an Executive Director, reporting directly to the Chief Executive you will champion the interests of parents, families and vulnerable children and young people across all services. You will work directly with the Chief Executive, Leader of the County Council, and the Lead Member to improve outcomes for children and young people and to ensure that the county council's mantra of Children First is made a reality across our five core priority outcomes;

1. Best start in life,
2. Prosperous place,
3. Strong, safe and sustainable places,
4. Independence in later life, and
5. A council that works for the community

### What you'll need to succeed

Credibility and evidence of success as a senior leader in children's services, working collaboratively to lead and embed a performance focussed culture, which delivers high quality outcomes. A proven track record of leading across organisations to transform services and achieve significant, sustainable, service improvements and better outcomes for children and families. Extensive experience of operating successfully at a strategic and corporate management level, leading, shaping and influencing innovative and high-quality practice in high performing teams and services.

### Job details

Grade: Senior Management Group (SMG)

Directorate Group: Children, Young People and Learning

Location: County Hall, Chichester

### Required experience and skills

(These will be used as the shortlisting criteria)

#### Key Skills:

1. Highly developed communication skills with the ability to influence, negotiate and establish credibility to represent the Council and enhance its reputation and form positive relationships with external partners and elected members.
2. Able to work in partnership with stakeholders and communities, recognising potential opportunities for joint agendas, to develop, design and deliver services that reflect the needs of our community, and deliver the best outcomes for vulnerable children.



## Job Description & Person Specification



3. A moderniser with ability to think innovatively within general principles and national agenda to develop vision and direction of travel.
4. An effective and 'visible' leader with the ability to inspire and motivate, providing vision and direction, promoting a 'can do' attitude and an environment of creativity and innovation.
5. Highly developed ability to relate to demonstrate political awareness and its application to problem solving and judgement.
6. Ability to delegate responsibility and provide constructive feedback and coaching to individuals in roles where there is a high degree of discretion in decision-making.

### Qualifications and / or Experience:

- Educated to post-graduate level or equivalent experience and evidence of ongoing professional development.
- Knowledge of relevant legislation, policy and good practices that relates to education provision, early intervention, children's social care, safeguarding and high-risk adolescents.
- An understanding of the requirements of effective financial governance and probity and a thorough understanding of the effective operation of corporate governance.
- Proven track record of leading and improving education and children's social care services, and managing the inspection regime, delivering required improvement and responding to regulatory requirements related to improvement.
- Evidence of successfully managing competing budgetary priorities within the tight financial limits, with increasing demand and delivering effectiveness and value for money.
- Experience of having worked at a senior level in a political environment in a large organisation.
- Significant experience of successfully leading the delivery of strategic objectives and business plans.
- Experience of leading successful transformational change programmes working with a wide range of stakeholders, including practitioners, staff and residents.

### Key responsibilities

Discharge all statutory responsibilities of the Director of Children's Services in relation to education and children's social services functions leading across the local system for outcomes for children.

Secure the provision of services which address the needs of all children and young people, including the most disadvantaged and vulnerable, and their families and carers, working closely with other local partners to improve the outcomes and wellbeing of children and young people.

Ensure that children's safeguarding is an organisational priority, through effective performance monitoring and management within the department and through wider leadership across the county council.



## Job Description & Person Specification



Working with head teachers, school governors and academy sponsors and principals, support the drive for high educational standards for all children and young people, particularly the most disadvantaged groups.

Work with partners to promote prevention and early intervention and offer early help so that emerging problems are dealt with before they become more serious, to enable improved educational attainment, narrowing the gap for the most disadvantaged, and promoting the wider wellbeing of children and young people.

Ensure that children and young people are involved in the development and delivery of services.

Promote the interests of children, young people, parents and families, and work with local communities to stimulate and support a diversity of school, early years and 16-19 provision to meet local need.

Protect children and young people from significant harm through high quality social work that is integrated with other key services and partners.

Provide strategic advice and support for relevant bodies such as the Safeguarding Children Board.

Ensure the council's compliance with the relevant statutory obligations and statutory guidance relating to vulnerable children and young people. Ensure that these obligations and responsibilities, including appropriate training, practice development and improvement, are complied with by the department as well as internal and external commissioned providers.

Work in partnership with the Executive Director of Adult Services' and Health and the Director of Education and Skills to ensure achievement of the statutory responsibilities of the Director of Children's Services and Director of Adults' Services in line with the Constitution of West Sussex County Council, legislative requirements, and best practice.

Create such working arrangements as are necessary with the Executive Director of Adults' Services and Health, the Director of Education & Skills, and Lead Cabinet Members to ensure that statutory compliance is achieved and any overlaps are managed effectively and in compliance with legislation and best practice.

Through the Director of Education & Skills, lead and direct the development of school and young people's learning services, ensure that the Council meets its legal and statutory obligations for young people and their achievements, commission strategies to work with schools and other associated bodies to influence and inform the level of school performance and pupil attainment.

Strategic lead for delivering on our ambitions and outcomes for giving children the best start in life and the associated key performance indicators.

Working with the Lead Member for Children's Services, and the Executive Leadership team to ensure the local voluntary and community sector, charities, social enterprises, private sector, and children and young people are included in the scope of planning, commissioning, and delivery of children's services.



## Job Description & Person Specification



Lead on all aspects of Corporate Parenting to ensure excellent outcomes are achieved for looked after children.

Provide guidance and support to Cabinet and Members in translating their political objectives and priorities into coherent initiatives that will deliver their intended outcomes for West Sussex.

Create a cohesive, responsive management team who are able to drive through change, work with partners and achieve best value for money and positive outcomes for residents.

Provide strong, visible and motivational leadership across the Council and its partners to build a culture of high performance. Inspire and support the delivery of the County Council's ambitious objectives and deliver outcomes in line with the West Sussex Plan ensuring the health, safety and wellbeing of children and young people in the county.

Working collaboratively with the Executive Directors and Directors to ensure the delivery of agreed priority outcomes for individuals, communities and collaboration and partnership.

As a member of the Corporate Leadership Team, you will be expected to lead by example, role modelling our values and work collaboratively and cohesively to deliver the West Sussex Plan. Leading with value-based behaviours, you will create a workforce who is committed to our organisational values and cultural aspirations.

## Our Values

You will lead, promote and demonstrate the values of our organisation.

- Trust and Support
- Listen and Act Upon
- Customer Centred
- Honest and Realistic
- Genuinely Valued

You will lead, promote and demonstrate the cultural ambition of our organisation:

*"We have an inclusive and supportive culture, work in partnership and reward individual and team contribution."*

JD Code: SMG

Date: February 2021

