

## LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM

### JOB DESCRIPTION

<b>Designation:</b>	Commissioning Lead – Children’s Placements	<b>Grade:</b>	P06
<b>Reports to (Designation):</b>	Group Manager – Placements and Short Breaks	<b>Grade:</b>	SMG1
<b>Directorate:</b>	Family Help and Care	<b>Department:</b>	Care Resources

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#### Main Purpose of the job:

To lead the strategic and operational commissioning of placements for children and young people in care, including foster care, residential care, and supported accommodation. The role ensures placements are safe, high-quality, cost-effective, and tailored to individual needs, in line with Lewisham’s statutory responsibilities and sufficiency strategy.

The role requires a manager with excellent leadership skills to manage a team in a fast paced environment, able to deal effectively with the pressures related to high demand for homes that are the best match for children we care for, within scarce resource availability and time and budget constraints. Skilled in motivating and inspiring to the immediate team and other internal and external stakeholders.

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#### Summary of Responsibilities and Personal Duties:

##### Key Responsibilities:

##### Leadership & Management

- Strategic Commissioning & Planning
- Lead on the commissioning cycle: needs analysis, service design, procurement, contract management, and review.
- Develop and implement placement strategies that reflect Lewisham’s priorities and statutory duties under the Children Act 1989.
- Develop and implement commissioning strategies for children’s placements, aligned with statutory duties and local priorities.
- Monitor provider performance and lead contract reviews and renewals.
- Identify gaps in provision and co-develop innovative solutions with providers.
- Operational Delivery & Collaboration
- Lead and oversee the home finding function within the service; including the quality assurance of placement referrals, allocation of searches, to monitor the progress of searches and ensure accurate documentation and data reporting.
- Lead service improvement initiatives and drive innovation in placement commissioning.

##### Safeguarding & Care Planning

- Promote evidence-based decision-making and maintain accurate records to support placement activity and reporting.
- Provide expert advice and support to operational teams on placement matching and Ensure the voice of children and young people is central to commissioning decisions.
- stability.
- Undertake other duties, commensurate with the grade, as may reasonably be required.

- Oversee the teams close work statutory safeguarding partners to ensure that all processes are followed as per the council's guidance
- Undertake Quality Assurance Visits to the homes of children and young people

### **Regulatory Compliance**

- Ensure that providers are registered with Ofsted and other regulatory bodies where required
- Ensure that all provider offers are high quality and set out how they will meet the child's needs and that these are recorded in Service Provider Offer Forms and Individual Placement Agreements.

### **Partnership & Engagement**

- Market Engagement & Provider Management
- Build and maintain relationships with external providers, ensuring compliance with regulatory frameworks and Lewisham's quality standards.

### **Resource & Financial Management**

- Negotiate placement costs and service specifications to ensure value for money.
- Use data and feedback to inform service development and commissioning decisions.

### **Staff Development**

- Work closely with Senior Placements Officers and Placement Officers, social work teams, business support officers, finance officers, and external agencies to ensure timely and appropriate placements.
- Management oversight of the Placements Team, supporting and developing the team, ensuring regular supervision meetings, appraisals and attendance to training and development opportunities.
- Support and mentor Commissioning Officers and junior staff.

### **Corporate Responsibilities**

- Contribute to multi-agency planning and sufficiency strategy development.
- Ensure placement sufficiency and diversity to meet the needs of looked-after children, care leavers, and those with complex needs.
- Promote a culture of learning, innovation, and continuous improvement.
- To carry out the duties of the post with due regard to the Council's relevant codes and procedures.

### **Internal Contacts:**

These include senior managers, heads of service, team leaders, social workers, HR colleagues, finance officers, commissioning teams, and other departments across Children's Social Care and the wider Council.

### **External Contacts:**

This will include children and families, carers (including kinship and foster carers), external commissioned providers, health professionals, education providers, voluntary and community sector organisations, Ofsted, legal representatives, and other local authorities.

### **Number of fully managed staff to be confirmed:**

<b>Title:</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>No of posts</b>
Placement Officer	9	3
Senior Placement Officer	10	3

## PERSON SPECIFICATION

**Job Title:**Commissioning Lead – Children’s Placements      **Grade:**PO6

**Department:** Family Help and Care

### Note to Candidates

The Person Specification is a picture of the skills, knowledge and experience needed to carry out the job. It has been used to draw up the advert and will also be used in the shortlisting and interview process for this post.

Those categories marked 'S' will be used especially for the purpose of shortlisting.

Please ensure that Equality and Diversity issues are addressed specifically in relation to the role for which you are applying when addressing the requirements of this person specification where appropriate.

If you are a disabled person and are unable to meet some of the job requirements specifically because of your disability, please address this in your application. If you meet all the other criteria, you will be shortlisted and we will explore jointly with you if there are ways in which the job can be changed to enable you to meet the requirements.

<b>Equality &amp; Diversity</b>	
Awareness of and a commitment to Equality of Access and Opportunity in a diverse community	<b>S/I</b>
Understanding of how equality and diversity relates to this post	<b>S</b>
Commitment to equality, diversity, and anti-discriminatory practice	<b>S</b>
<b>Knowledge</b>	
In-depth knowledge of Children’s Homes Regulations and Quality Standards	<b>S/I</b>
Strong understanding of safeguarding legislation and procedures	<b>S/I</b>
Knowledge of trauma-informed practice, child development, and contextual safeguarding	<b>S</b>
Strong knowledge of relevant legislation (Children Act 1989, Care Standards, fostering regulations, Reg 44, Reg 32)	<b>S/I</b>
<b>Skills</b>	
Ability to lead, motivate, and manage a multidisciplinary team	<b>S/I</b>
Excellent communication and interpersonal skills	<b>S/I</b>
Proven ability to manage budgets, contracts, and provider relationships.	<b>S</b>
Excellent negotiation, leadership, and stakeholder engagement skills.	<b>S/I</b>
Ability to analyse data and translate insights into commissioning strategies.	<b>S</b>
The ability to support and challenge when there are discrepancies between information held in referrals and child’s care plans.	<b>S</b>
Ability to critically reflect on placement referral forms in order to improve practice across the placement service and wider	<b>S</b>
<b>Experience</b>	
Significant experience in a supervisory or management support role	<b>S/I</b>
Significant experience in commissioning and/or brokerage environments.	<b>S</b>
Ability to manage budgets and resources effectively	<b>S/I</b>
Experience of overseeing home searches with children with complex needs, emotional and behavioural difficulties	<b>S/I</b>

Experience of service development or policy implementation	<b>S/I</b>
<b>Circumstances</b>	
Ability to work flexibly, including evenings and weekends	<b>S</b>
Full UK driving license	<b>S</b>
<b>Physical</b> Generally candidates must meet the standard Lewisham requirements for the post	

**DBS Disclosure Required**    **Basic**     **Standard**     **Enhanced**

(Tick as appropriate – guidance available from your HR Advisor, if a DBS is not required please leave boxes blank)

To carry out the duties of the post with due regard to the Council’s relevant policies, codes and procedures.

To carry out duties with due regard to the Council’s values and behaviours

All employees are required to participate in Appraisal and Performance Management processes and to undertake appropriate training and development, including mandatory induction training, identified to enhance their work.

Undertake other duties, commensurate with the grade, as may reasonably be required.

Consideration will be given to restructuring the duties of this post for a disabled postholder.

**THIS JOB DESCRIPTION MAY NEED TO BE AMENDED BY THE DIRECTORATE TO MEET THE CHANGING NEEDS OF THE SERVICE.**