

Job Title: Children's Placements & Brokerage Officer	Role Profile Number: PCDN68
Grade: M	Date Prepared: Reviewed July 2020
Directorate/Group: Commissioning – Children & Families Commissioning	Reporting to: Children's Placements/ Brokerage Team Manager

Job Purpose

- The Children's Placement/ Brokerage Officer will be responsible for seeking external placements and Independent and Non-Maintained Special School (INMSS) places, arranging individual placement contracts, and undertaking the associated monitoring and review of such placement contracts for children coming in to care (and/or with Special Educational Needs), those already in care and care leavers with varying and complex needs. The children and young people will be referred to the Placements/ Brokerage team by operational social work teams and/or other case professionals.
- The Children's Placement/Brokerage Officer will ensure that the placements commissioned meet the needs of the children and young people placed, are of high quality to deliver the outcomes required for each child and also achieve value for money.
- The Children's Placements/ Brokerage Officer will use existing frameworks/ contracts and market knowledge to secure respite, short breaks and support services for children with disabilities.

Key Accountabilities

Placement/ Brokerage functions (searching and securing services/ placements)

- Respond to placement and service requests sent by operational social work teams and/or other case professionals by supporting them to complete necessary paperwork, and checking them on receipt for process compliance before sending them out to providers to request a service. The officer will need to build good relationships with placement suppliers across the market.
- Liaise with social workers and/or other case professionals and providers to enable the placement/service finding process to be completed within the required timescales.
- Ensure that service and placement searches can be completed in a timely and efficient manner and when required undertake placement searches in emergency situations in order to ensure children and young people are placed safely and appropriately and with a match to their needs.
- Develop and maintain a good working knowledge of children services placement/ Education markets and develop effective working relationships with providers, social work teams and other case professionals.
- Undertake due diligence and reference checks for new providers and services, interpret information and make judgements about quality of information provided.
- Undertake (and assist in) the negotiation of fees that achieve best value and are realistic and fair.

- Support the development and maintenance of effective procedures for managing the referral and service/placement finding processes. This will include responsibility for the keeping of electronic records and data which provide an audit trail regarding placement type, choice, location, safeguarding and quality assurance checks, and costs.
- To play a key part in the development of the commissioning of services/placements that can inform operational social workers and/or other case professionals about the availability and type of services/placements being provided by the independent market sector, the cost of such services/placements and associated quality.
- To be able to obtain read and interpret OFSTED inspection reports, registration details for placement providers and other pertinent documents, alerting the line manager to any areas of concern or risk which could impact on children being placed.
- Support other team members with placement/ service finding for the most complex cases.
- Work with financial officers to provide cost information.

Arranging Individual Purchasing Contracts

- Complete individual contracts for all children and young people placed/ services set up ensuring those contracts are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time measurable.
- Support and Promote competent care planning by social workers with identified outcomes so those outcomes are able to be translated in to individual placement/services contracts, where providers can then be made accountable.
- Liaise with providers to enable the completion of the individual placement/service contracts and to ensure that these are despatched promptly once a placement has been made/ service set up.

Monitoring and Review of Individual Purchasing Contracts and Placement/ Service Providers

- Develop effective professional working relationships with placement providers, social work teams and other case professionals as necessary.
- To be able to obtain read and interpret OFSTED inspection reports, registration details for placement providers, and other pertinent documents alerting the line manager to any areas of concern or risk which could impact on children placed.
- To be able to understand the key terms and conditions of contracts relating to the placements and services.
- To play a key part in working with the Contract Monitoring Officer to resolve any issues around contract compliance and adherence to contractual terms and conditions and have the ability to challenge placement providers where necessary under the guidance of the line manager.
- To undertake reviews of individual placement/ service contracts in association with placement providers, social work teams and other case professionals as necessary within the council to ensure that the provider is still supporting the needs and aspirations of the child/young person placed.
- Undertake (and assist in) the negotiation of placement fees that become necessary as a result of reviewing the individual placement contracts ensuring that such fees remain realistic and fair whilst delivering best value for the council.
- Visit residential children homes and other accommodation, as necessary and in collaboration with the Brokerage Social Worker and/or Contracts Officer, to ensure contractual compliance and compliance with quality assurance standards. It should be noted that in some cases children and young people are

placed at a distance from Swindon.

- Provide visit and contact reports for all at distance or face to face meetings. Maintain and monitor these reports.

Supplementary Accountabilities

- To develop knowledge of where all children in care in Swindon are placed.
- To ensure that all necessary stakeholders/service users are aware of and adhere to written policies and procedures for accessing placement services.
- To ensure the wishes and feelings of the young person (as far as it is possible) are taken in to account and that their human rights as detailed in the Human Rights Act are considered.
- To attend any regular panel or management meetings as required.
- To arrange and attend meetings with providers and others as required.
- Be available for supervision and team meetings to provide information about work being undertaken.
- To ensure compliance with the council's scheme of delegation, contract and financial standing orders.
- To provide related management information to an appropriate standard as and when required.

Knowledge & Experience

- History of working in or aligned to the social care field or a business background within a local authority with an awareness of the services provided.
- Previous experience of partnership working with private and voluntary sector organisations.
- Previous experience of managing relationships and demonstrating monitoring and reviewing performance, and where necessary taking appropriate action.
- An awareness of the main legislative framework within which children services is provided specifically relating to children in care.
- Resilience and tenacity (Placement breakdowns and other emergency situations do arise and deadlines to source new placements or services may be extremely tight.)
- Experience of listening, gathering and interpreting information supplied whilst working under pressure
- The post holder will be involved in individual case discussions with both social workers and providers about individual children. Tact, diplomacy and sensitivity are key qualities.
- Ability to team work and support team members when working under pressure and with matters of a distressing nature.
- Ability to keep up to date with new and relevant legislation.
- Ability to use own initiative and think laterally to take a problem solving approach to placement finding and contract management.
- Ability to interpret information about children's needs and make recommendations about appropriate resources.
- Ability to build relationships with providers and social work teams.
- Ability to communicate clearly to a range of audiences both verbally and in writing.
- Ability to analyse quantitative and qualitative information to produce clear reports.
- Ability to complete tasks within agreed deadlines.
- Excellent organisational and IT skills.

Qualifications

- Educated to level 3 standard including vocational equivalent or additional compensatory experience or with transferable skills and experience.
- Educated to degree level or holding a qualification in social care or health would be desirable although not essential.

Decision Making

- Ensure in collaboration with the line manager that placements/ services are found which meet the requirements of the referral documentation, meet the needs of the child and are procured in a manner that is compliant with procurement regulations and Council standing orders.
- Ensure in collaboration with the line manager that individual purchasing contracts are completed, monitored and reviewed to ensure the children and young people placed receive a quality service.
- Ability to prioritise own workload.
- Ability to work under pressure with minimum supervision and to tight deadlines.
- Ability to recognise issues that may require escalation to the line manager.

Creativity and Innovation

- Ability to think creatively in how services can be delivered to meet the needs of an individual child or young person based upon developing knowledge of the children services placement market.
- To work with placement providers to understand and shape how outcomes for children and young people may be achieved.
- Ability to think about the development of placement finding systems moving forward.

<u>Job Scope</u> Number and types of jobs managed None	Budget Holder Responsibility	No
Typical tasks supervised/allocated to others N/A	Asset Responsibility	None

Contacts and Relationships

- The role requires contact with placement providers, other external service providers, commissioning colleagues, operational social work staff and other case professionals.
- The role requires the post holder to develop and maintain effective relationships with the above.

Other Key Features of the role

- Due to the nature of the work and in accordance with the demands of the post the post holder may be required to work outside of normal office hours from time to time for which time off in lieu of payment may be taken at a time to be agreed with the line manager. Overtime will not be paid.
- The post holder will be required to maintain strict confidentiality in relation to individual children and young people and must accept that he/she may come in to contact with information which he/she may find distressing. This post is subject to a DBS check.
- Ability to drive would be preferred given that operational social work teams are based in various locations within the Swindon area and there will be occasions when the post holder will need to meet with those teams. There are also some children placed at some distance from Swindon and the post holder will on occasions need to visit those establishments.

Employee Signature:	Print Name:
Date:	
Line Managers Signature:	Print Name:
Date:	