

JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title	Access Casework Officer			
Directorate	Education			
Reporting to	Service Manager Preventing Exclusion			
Grade	11			
Evaluation ref:	AG0989	Job ref:	Family	RPG
Role purpose				
Responsible for the Local Authority's statutory duties in relation to section 19 of the Education Act 1996. This includes children permanently excluded from school, children who have been unable to secure a school place and meet the criteria for the Panel for Excluded and Vulnerable Pupils and children who are unable to attend because of health reasons.				
Responsibilities				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Act as the first point of contact for Head Teachers, Governors, Clerks, other professionals, parents, and pupils for advice on the statutory process governing the exclusion of pupils from school. Provide advice and guidance on alternatives to exclusion, the graduated response and Core Standards, training for school staff and/or Governors if necessary and DfE statutory guidance. • Co-ordinate the administrative process in line with standard operating procedures for pupils excluded from school and ensure compliance with all the statutory timescales and obligations and that pupils receive suitable education provision by day 6. • Prepare the LA response (where required) for School Governors Disciplinary Committees (GDC) and Independent Review Panels and presents the information as required, e.g. prepare for the hearing, and synthesise a variety of professional reports to create a cohesive written response. Evaluate the individual case paperwork to ensure that the decision to exclude a pupil has regard to the statutory guidance on exclusions and the school's behaviour policy, raising any discrepancies, as necessary. • Where the criteria are met undertake an assessment via a home visit of the educational requirements for excluded pupils ensuring adherence to the DfE statutory guidelines, the terms of reference for the Panel for Excluded and Vulnerable Pupils (PEVP) and procedural timelines. • Identify and monitor the vulnerable pupils in the area who are at risk of exclusion (either permanent or fixed), children who are hard to place or those who are deemed vulnerable under the Fair Access protocol, being mindful of safeguarding. Liaise with Children's Social Care in relation to children in Care. • Coordinate and attend fortnightly PEVP meetings, e.g. prepare agendas, collect information, produce equitable share data, present statutory cases to the panel, clarify the facts and concerns, complete and monitor outcomes. 				

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Ensure process complies with PEVP terms of reference (Somerset Fair Access Protocol and DfE School Admissions Code).

- Provide a written report to PEVP for all statutory cases including synthesis of a variety of professional reports to create cohesive written documents and ensure recommendations and actions from the panel are enacted.
- Liaise on behalf of the Local Authority with other professionals to ensure appropriate education provision is in place. Co-ordinate the meetings for reintegration of pupils into mainstream schools in the area, for permanently excluded pupils or other unplaced pupils placed by PEVP and work with professionals to ensure a smooth and appropriately timely integration. Support schools and other professionals by drawing up the individual integration plan and monitor and track those cases. Ensure effective multi-agency working to achieve the best educational outcomes for these vulnerable pupils.
- Ensure there is consistent application of requirements for Children in Care, children on 'No Provision' and pupils educated otherwise than that at school and that children who are vulnerable under the Fair Access protocol enter suitable educational provision as quickly as possible via PEVP. Provide advice and guidance to social workers, parents, and other professionals about PEVP criteria and processes as well as sign posting as appropriate.
- Obtain information and maintain the Capita ONE database for all permanent exclusions and long fixed period exclusions and ensure it is up to date and accurate.
- Communicate with schools, parents and outside agencies and support services. Monitor cases to ensure compliance with all statutory timescales. Liaise with parent's, schools and other professionals and arrange home visits, visits to schools and attend multi professional meetings.
- Collect information and monitor and/or produce data in relation to exclusions, re integrations and other work.
- Provide cover across the county when necessary.
- Identify where problems or disagreements exist and in liaison with other professionals agrees acceptable and effective solutions. Clarify issues arising from decision to exclude pupils from school through the interpretation of statutory guidance on exclusions. Take a lead in resolving 'stuck cases,' escalating when appropriate.
- Prioritise a workload ensuring statutory timescales are maintained.
- Take a thematic lead for specific areas of work across the team, when necessary, e.g. draft information, review and improve processes, advise, and liaise with colleagues.
- Support the service by sharing and helping to resolve issues, offer suggestions for revising policy and practice to ensure quality of service delivered is maintained and developed.
- Monitor the recording and maintenance of relevant data to ensure appropriate, accurate and timely information is available to Senior Managers to support decision making processes.
- Responsible for promoting the welfare of children and young people and where relevant support schools in safeguarding children through being

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aware of relevant policies and procedures and understanding how to use these to ensure that children and young people are protected, and all suspicions and allegations of abuse are taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.

Impact

- Provides information and advice to a wide variety of contacts including:
- Members of the public, schools, parents, pupils, other parts of the local authority, members, partner, and other external organisations as required, sometimes in challenging circumstances which require sensitivity and tact.
- Liaise with Head Teachers and other school staff, Educational Psychologists, other support services, PRUs, SEN Team, Admissions Officers, Transport Officers, and other specialists as appropriate throughout all processes.
- Work closely with other team members providing support and cover when necessary.
- Responsible for approximately 120 permanent exclusions across the county in an academic year.
- The four area PEVP meetings discuss approximately 365 children each academic year, often multiple times.
- There are approximately 5700 fixed period exclusions across the county in an academic year.
- Secures new school places and facilitates the integration of approximately 80 children across the county in an academic year.

Knowledge / Experience / Skills

	Essential	Desirable	
Knowledge			
Good practice in casework & community-based interventions.	X		
Experience			
Experience of the education system, and legislative framework.	X		
Working with children, young people, and families.			
Multi-agency work.			
Equal opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice.			

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<p>Working with schools, including work on attendance and other related issues.</p> <p>Preparing for/attending court proceedings. – Previous experience as ESO.</p> <p>Experience of working in a business environment, delivering purchased services.</p> <p>Management experience.</p> <p>Knowledge and understanding of school systems. Knowledge of statutory legislation relating to school attendance and childcare.</p> <p>Report writing and recording skills.</p>		X	
Qualifications / Registrations / Certifications			
<p>Educated to A level or equivalent or Level 4 NVQ standard.</p> <p>GCSE grade A- C in Maths and English or equivalent.</p> <p>Evidence of continued professional development to update skills and knowledge.</p>	X		
<p>Qualifications in Social Care, Education Safeguarding, Youth Work, or teaching (including further education).</p> <p>Experience of working with vulnerable children and families in welfare, educational and legal context.</p>		X	
Skills			
<p>Ability to be independent, using available sources of information to inform practice and key decision making, and to guide others.</p> <p>Ability to use initiative, to think creatively and to problem solve.</p> <p>Ability to challenge and use appropriate systems to support necessary action.</p>	X		

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<p>Ability to prioritise and manage time and workload effectively.</p> <p>Ability to communicate clearly, concisely, and logically both verbally and in writing.</p> <p>ICT literate.</p> <p>Work to deadlines.</p> <p>Ability to build strong relationships with customers, colleagues, and all partners.</p> <p>Ability to speak fluent English as stated in Part 7 of the Immigration Act (2016)</p>			
Working Conditions			
Working Arrangements			
Somerset Council's dynamic Working Strategy will be applied to this position.			
Corporate Responsibilities			
<p>Understand, uphold, and promote the aims of the council's equality, diversity, and inclusion policies; health, safety and wellbeing of self and others; and Organisational values in everything you do. Equality and Diversity practice covers both interaction with staff, service users and communities and includes challenging discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity for all.</p>			

Date: April 2025