



## **Home Finding & Commissioning Team Leader - Home Finding & Commissioning Team**

**Salary:** Band 12, £52,412 to £56,759 per annum.

**Hours:** 37 hours per week

**Reports to:** Head of Children We Care For

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Portsmouth City Council is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, and young people, and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

DBS Disclosure at Enhanced level will be required prior to any offer of employment and this post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

Every post is subject to PCC and Portsmouth Safeguarding Children's Board safer recruitment procedures.

### **The Service**

Children's Social Care provides social work interventions to children in need (including children with disabilities and those subject to protection plans), and children looked after and care leavers. It is the responsibility of Children's Social Care to offer a range of options for children who need homes outside their families, including fostering, residential care, and connected carers arrangements.

Our Home Finding Team sits within the wider Children We Care For service. The purpose of the team is to ensure that every child who cannot live with their family is placed in safe, supportive, and high-quality homes that meet their needs, reflect their identity, sustain relationships, and support long-term stability.

We work closely with internal fostering and residential homes, and with external providers across the regional and national marketplace, to secure homes that keep children close to home wherever possible, maintain sibling relationships, and ensure their needs, experiences and voices are central to the matching process.

As a service we take pride in our work by valuing others, focusing on what's important, and making a real difference to children, young people, and their families. Our practice model is trauma-informed, relationship-based, and rooted in kindness and collaboration.

### **The role, duties and responsibilities**

You will lead and supervise the Home Finding & Commissioning Support Officers and associated roles to deliver a timely, high-quality, and cost-effective home finding and brokerage service. You will also undertake complex or high-risk placement searches yourself and act as an escalation point for urgent situations.

Your responsibilities will include:

- Lead, supervise and develop Home Finding & Commissioning Support Officers (and associated roles), providing day-to-day direction, reflective supervision, coaching and quality assurance of referral information, matching rationales and documentation.
- Oversee allocation and workflow for placement referrals, ensuring timely searches, clear communication with social work teams and providers, and appropriate escalation of risks or delays.
- Undertake complex searches and negotiations for internal and external provision, securing suitable, safe matches and value for money agreements; resolve provider disputes or performance issues promptly.
- Quality assure IPAs/contracts and placement records, ensuring accuracy, compliance and clear outcomes/review points; approve offers prior to final sign-off in line with scheme of delegation.
- Lead provider engagement within allocated portfolio, building effective relationships and using market intelligence to improve availability, quality and pricing; contribute to preferred provider approaches/frameworks.
- Monitor performance, finance and demand trends (e.g. timeliness, stability, costs, response rates), maintaining accurate trackers and contributing to monthly performance and budget reports.
- Coordinate multi-agency working with social work teams, fostering, finance, procurement/legal, education/SEND and health partners to unblock barriers and support safe, sustainable matches.
- Support inspection readiness and compliance, ensuring practice aligns with statutory and procurement requirements, Ofsted expectations and council policies; promote learning and continuous improvement.
- Provide out-of-hours/urgent response leadership when needed, ensuring business continuity for emergency searches and moves.

Other duties will include:

- Producing clear management information, briefings and reports on activity, market risks and cost pressures.
- Contributing to sufficiency planning, provider forums and regional commissioning work as directed.
- Supporting the induction and ongoing training of new staff within the team, and maintaining high standards of record-keeping and data quality.
- Support the Quality and Assurance and Commissioning Support Officer to undertake quality assurance visits (announced/unannounced) to external residential homes, supported accommodation and fostering agencies, nationally, reviewing children's experiences, safeguarding arrangements, and care practice.

## Who is the person?

### You will need to:

- Have a recognised professional qualification in Social Work (DipSW/Degree/MSc) or a Level 6 management qualification, or equivalent senior experience in placements/commissioning leadership.
- Evidence continued professional development; commissioning/procurement training desirable.
- Evidence leadership experience ideally in children's placements/home finding, commissioning or brokerage, with proven ability to manage staff, workflow, quality and performance in a fast-paced environment.
- Demonstrate strong negotiation and commercial skills, with experience agreeing placement terms, managing provider relationships and addressing under-performance while maintaining stability for children.
- Have an excellent understanding of matching, risk appraisal and professional challenge, including when to escalate safeguarding or suitability concerns.
- Understand the regulatory and procurement context for children's placements (eg Ofsted registration/standards, contract compliance, council procurement rules).
- Be highly organised and data-confident, able to interpret performance, quality and cost data to drive improvement and inform decision-making.
- Communicate clearly and collaboratively with social work teams, providers and partners, modelling PCC values and trauma-informed, relationship-based practice.
- Be flexible and resilient, able to respond to urgent or out-of-hours placement activity when required.

## General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

As part of any recruitment process, Portsmouth City Council collects and processes personal data relating to job applicants. Portsmouth City Council is committed to being transparent about how it collects and uses that data and to meeting its data protection obligations under the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

Completing and sending an application in for a vacancy is your consent for us to process your data for the purpose of recruitment. Your data is not used in any other way and you can withdraw your consent at any point in the recruitment process and we will destroy or delete your information.

For more detailed information on what we collect, how we use, store, delete data and your rights you can access a privacy statement on our Job board.

This role is eligible for a DBS check and the DBS have published a privacy notice to ensure individuals are fully informed of the use of their personal data; their rights and that Portsmouth City Council are meeting the necessary requirements when submitting DBS checks.



You will need to demonstrate that you have the Right to Work in the UK. No post will be offered without it.