

JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title:	Regional Strategic Lead – Local Authority Fostering South East Recruitment Hub (12-month fixed term contract. 2 to 5 days per month office based at Time Square. Travel to other LA's in SE)		
Directorate:	People	Salary:	£59,197- £64,578 plus £706 LWA
Section:	Regional - Working on behalf of 17 South East Local Authorities	Grade:	BG-C SCP 49-54
Location:	Time Square	Work Style:	Hybrid with some in-person meetings across the SE

Key Objectives of the role

As we move into year two of the pilot scheme, the Regional Strategic Lead will be responsible for overseeing and directing this complex and high-profile regional program, one of only nine pilots and the largest in the whole country, on behalf of the region for central government.

The Regional Strategic Lead will regularly need to communicate with central government officials, be comfortable operating at the most senior levels working to brief elected members across the region and to ensure DCSs are kept up to speed.

The Regional Strategic Lead will be the visible face of the South East's recruitment hub and operate at pace to assure challenging timelines are met and any risks are adequately managed.

The Regional Strategic Lead will operate across the South East region, supported by a Data Lead, and an Operations & Workforce Manager. They will work in close collaboration with Directors of Children's Services (DCSs), Assistant Directors, Heads of Service, and Service Managers across 17 local authorities.

The Regional Strategic Lead will lead LAFSE and be take responsibility for its operational leadership, resolving emerging challenges and addressing development needs as the programme enters its second year of full government funding.

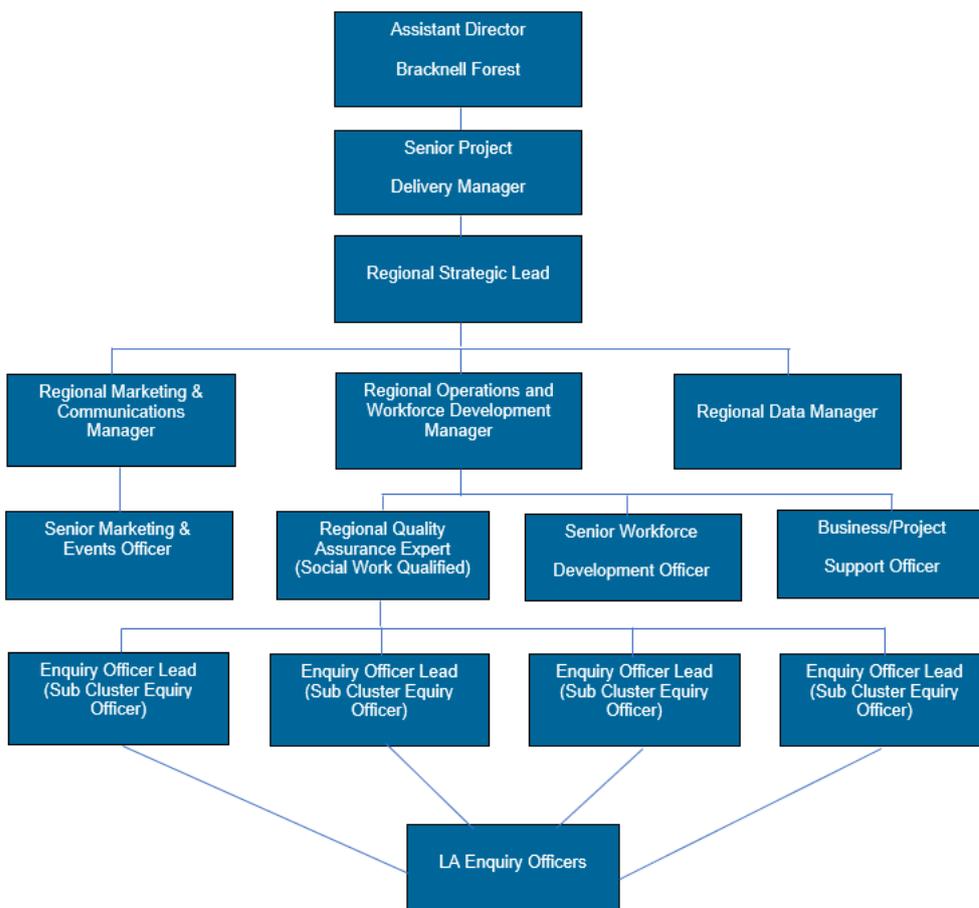
The Regional Strategic Lead will work in partnership with the Marketing Lead to oversee and shape a nationally funded regional fostering marketing campaign. They will also lead the continued development and optimisation of the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system to enhance fostering recruitment capacity across 15 organisations (17 councils). This includes ensuring timely processes, improving the quality and analysis of recruitment data,

and increasing the number of prospective foster carers progressing to Stage 1 assessment. These efforts are key to addressing significant financial pressures across the region. In addition, the Strategic Lead will collaborate with partners to align best practice in fostering recruitment and help shape a regional offer that supports greater efficiency and value for local authorities.

Designation of post and position within departmental structure

The Regional Strategic Lead will also be responsible for supporting the region in ensuring that progress and efficiencies related to the Mockingbird scheme are effectively documented, monitored, and realised, in collaboration with the Project Manager.

Structure chart:



Daily and monthly responsibilities

The Regional Strategic Lead will provide both strategic leadership and operational management to ensure the effective delivery of the Local Authority Fostering South East (LAFSE) programme.

Key Responsibilities:

- Drive improvements in conversion rates to ensure more children in the South East

are placed with local authority foster carers, reducing dependence on Independent Fostering Agencies (IFAs) and improving overall timeliness.

- Ensure ongoing compliance with National Minimum Standards and Fostering Regulations.
- Champion innovation across the region and promote an ambitious, forward-thinking approach to fostering recruitment and practice.
- Provide supervisory oversight—through the regional team and in partnership with local authority services—for recruitment officers across South East councils, fostering a collaborative culture rooted in continuous learning and shared best practice.
- Monitor and review the performance of local authorities in the region using a bespoke data platform developed for the recruitment hub.
- Contribute to policy development and strategic planning, using hub performance data to influence the national direction of fostering recruitment.
- Collaborate with DCS leaders to explore sustainable funding options for the hub beyond the pilot phase, based on the successful delivery of regional outcomes.
- Provide strong leadership within LAFSE to ensure the delivery of high-quality, effective support services to prospective foster carers.
- Build and maintain positive relationships with foster carers and oversee the continued development of the new innovative group of Fostering Ambassadors to support and inspire prospective carers.
- Model strong leadership and inspire teams across the region to deliver consistently high standards.
- Ensure accurate and timely performance reporting to support regional oversight and continuous improvement.
- Support local authorities in meeting all statutory, regulatory, and national minimum standards.
- Foster effective partnerships with external agencies and local authorities to promote joint working and the sharing of services and good practice.
- Ensure that the views and experiences of children, young people, and families are actively considered and used to inform service improvements.
- Investigate and respond to complaints from service users, relatives, carers, and partner agencies in a professional and timely manner.
- Lead the design and delivery of a comprehensive regional training programme, delivered in partnership with the Operations and Workforce Manager, to build capacity and capability across the LAFSE region.

Scope of role

To ensure £2.6m funding allocated to the region to deliver year two of the programme has been well spent (supported by the Assistant Director and Project Manager)

To lead the strategic development and delivery of regional fostering services within LAFSE working with sub-clusters to identify opportunities for harmonisation (including securing political agreement where needed)

Commitment to the Council's Equal Opportunities policy at all times

Commitment to working within the bounds of the Data Protection Act and GDPR legislation at all times

Such other duties as may from time to time be necessary, compatible with the nature of the post. It should be noted that the above list of main duties and responsibilities is not necessarily a complete statement of the final duties of the post. It is intended to give an overall view of the position and should be taken as guidance only.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

KEY CRITERIA	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE
Skills and qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Work qualified and registered with Social Work England. • Have demonstrable and substantial social work experience, preferably working at a senior role level in fostering services for a significant length of time. • Demonstrate established experience of managing an operational service, such as a local authority fostering service or team. • A successful track record of working alongside senior managers, stakeholders and partner organisations, delivering services. • Experience of leading a team in successful service delivery and motivating a team to deliver high quality, consistent services. • Working within a local government/ children's environment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of identifying, mitigating and managing risks and effectively reporting these through upper tier local authority governance structures. • Experience in fostering recruitment or related leadership roles. • Knowledge of emerging technologies and their applications in social care. • Formal management or leadership qualifications. • Proven experience in a senior leadership role within a social care or local government context.
Competence Summary (Knowledge, abilities, skills, experience)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding and commitment to the requirements of safeguarding children, young people, vulnerable adults and promoting their welfare. • Ability to demonstrate strategic and ambitious leadership. • Ability to demonstrate delivering an operational service. 	

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- Effective understanding of the fostering landscape.
 - Actively promotes the council's values.
 - Employee engagement and management to deliver innovative effective services.
 - Excellent customer service focus, committed to providing a kindly and supportive service.
 - A proven ability to monitor performance and identify areas of improvement.
 - Good negotiation and influencing skills, based on personal credibility as well as managerial authority.
 - An ability to engage with all partners (including senior politicians, national government, foster carers and children) and employees effectively, providing challenge and support where needed.

Work-related Personal Requirements

- Out of hours working when required.
- Willingness to travel within the South East region as required.

Other Work Requirements

A satisfactory enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check.

This role has been identified as public facing in accordance with Part 7 of the Immigration Act 2016; the requirement to fulfil all spoken aspects of the role with confidence in English applies

This post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974

Role models and

Our values define who we are. They outline what is important to us. They influence the way we work with each

demonstrates the Council's values and behaviours	other – and the way we serve our residents and engage with our communities. We make our values real by demonstrating them in how we behave every day.
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All staff should hold a duty and commitment to observing the Council's Equality & Dignity at Work policy at all times. Duties must be carried out in accordance with relevant Equality & Diversity legislation and Council policies/procedures.

