Appeals and Complaints Officer

Personal Specification

We will use these criteria to assess your suitability for the job.

Essential

- Minimum of three years' recent experience working within either Children's Social Care or Education, with substantial experience of managing and overseeing children social care, education or SEND complaints, enquiries or complex casework, ideally within a local authority or education context.
- Proven experience leading complaints handling and quality-assuring complex cases to ensure timely, proportionate and compliant outcomes.
- Strong working knowledge of the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) code, with a clear understanding of the role and jurisdiction of the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO), including responding to investigations, determinations and enquiries.
- Significant experience of quality assuring complaint responses and case handling, including reviewing draft responses, checking adherence to legislation, policy and good practice, and providing constructive feedback to officers and managers.
- Proven ability to identify systemic issues, learning themes and service improvements arising from complaints, Ombudsman findings and internal reviews, and to contribute to embedding learning across children's services.
- Ability to confidently apply social care or education legislation and guidance to resolve complex or sensitive complaints and address poor practice where required.
- Experience of advising managers on complaint handling standards and drafting clear, high-quality, family-focused correspondence and reports suitable for senior management and Ombudsman scrutiny.
- Strong planning and organisational skills, with the ability to manage and quality-assure a complex caseload, balance competing priorities and meet statutory deadlines in a pressured environment.
- Ability to build and maintain effective working relationships with internal and external stakeholders, including schools, partner organisations, senior managers and regulatory bodies.
- High level of competence in using Microsoft Office applications and case management systems to monitor case quality, review data, identify trends and support performance reporting.

Essential (continued)

- Sound understanding of the Data Protection Act 2018, confidentiality and information governance, particularly in relation to complex, sensitive or high-risk complaints.
- A calm, professional and empathetic approach when dealing with residents and families in challenging or high-distress situations, while maintaining impartiality and decision-making integrity.

Desirable

- Ability to support and oversee school admission appeals or related statutory processes, recognising this forms a smaller but important element of the role.
- Experience of working directly with the LGSCO, including responding to investigations, implementing recommendations and supporting service learning.
- Knowledge of wider social care legislation and policy, including SEND and associated statutory frameworks
- Experience of preparing or contributing to performance reports, complaint trend analysis or service improvement activity linked to social care or education complaints.
- Experience of coordinating, clerking or supporting formal hearings, panels or statutory meetings.
- Knowledge of the Equality Act 2010 and a demonstrated commitment to equality, fairness and inclusion in social care and education service delivery.
- Experience of handling or contributing to Freedom of Information requests or Subject Access Requests within a education or local authority setting.

Our Values

Do you share our values of **proud**, **fair** and **ambitious**?