

A large, stylized blue horse logo is centered on the page. The horse is depicted in profile, facing left, with its front legs raised and its mane flowing. The entire logo is rendered in a single shade of blue against a darker blue background.

**Director – Special Educational Needs
and Disability**

Kent County Council

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Director – Special Educational Needs and Disability

Dear Candidate

Director – Education Director – Special Educational Needs & Disabilities

I am delighted that you are interested in applying for one of these critical and senior posts at Kent County Council.

These two new Director posts are key roles within my Directorate and are pivotal in working with their colleagues in the Directorate's management team to ensure our aim of making Kent a county that works for all children.

Our vision is to ensure all Kent children feel safe, secure, loved, fulfilled, happy and optimistic. We aim to achieve this significant challenge by:

- Joining up services to support families at the right time and in the right place;
- Securing the best childcare, education and training opportunities;
- Being the best Corporate Parent we can be;
- Developing a culture of high aspiration and empathy for children and their families;
- Valuing children and young people's voices and listening to them.

I cannot stress enough that the successes we have had and how we have met many of the challenges we face is through working together as a Senior Management Team. You will no doubt see and appreciate the relationship between these two roles but I am looking for people who are prepared to work with me and my team to deliver the best children's and young people's services in the country and to do this we must ensure our services are fully integrated, capable of achieving the best outcomes by addressing needs in the right way at the right time and ambitious for what all children and young people can achieve in their lives, and for what our staff and volunteers can achieve with them.

Our relentless focus on improving standards and the quality of Education and Learning to help ensure every child and young person has access to a good or outstanding early years setting or school place will continue unabated.

We are keen to work with exceptional individuals who have the energy, ideas and ambition to make a sustained difference to the people of Kent; someone who shares our commitment to improving the quality of life of our residents and is able to maximise their impact through working in partnership across the Council and with other organisations. Our services will be designed as part of a whole system approach along the continuum of need.

This is a great time to join Kent, we are changing for the better and as the biggest County Council in the country there is the opportunity to make a big difference. It's a great county to live in, too, with excellent schools, vibrant cities, golden beaches and stunning countryside.

I do hope that having read the information we have provided, you will be motivated to apply to apply for one of these roles, with their profile and magnitude. I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Matt Dunkley". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping tail on the letter 'y'.

Matt Dunkley CBE

Corporate Director Children, Young People and Education

Introduction to Kent County Council

Visit our website at www.kent.gov.uk

We are the UK's largest local authority, with a workforce in excess of 30,000 people, including maintained schools, serving a population of 1.4 million. We have various offices in central locations and a large number of service establishments throughout Kent; our corporate office is based in Maidstone.

More than two thirds of our workforce provide services directly to the public – such as domiciliary Care Workers, Classroom Assistants, Social Workers, Teachers, and Occupational Therapists etc.

Our annual budget covers a huge range of services. This translates into a host of interesting roles and career paths awaiting those who want to work in a leading edge public sector organisation.

Aims and objectives

Our focus is to work as one council to design and deliver a cohesive, modern public service offer for all Kent's residents, businesses and communities. This will bring together change projects consistently across the council and create organisational design opportunities to transform the way we work, including our people, assets, technology, structures and service delivery.


Success in delivering this aspiration will be determined using the following criteria:

- Working beyond the limit of organisational and service boundaries
- Thinking beyond the limit of our statutory powers
- Building capacity to provide sector and system leadership
- Delivering at both strategic and local scale
- Supporting economic security
- Delivering a cohesive service offer
- Flexibly uses its assets as part of public service design and delivery

The [Strategic Delivery Plan](#) is our business plan for 2020 – 2023. In light of COVID-19 this has been revised to focus on those critical activities for 2020-21.

Our business plan plays an important part in delivering the outcomes of our strategic statement, [Increasing Opportunities, Improving Outcomes](#).

Before the pandemic the Council was consulting on its new, [draft 5 year plan](#). However, this has been paused and the County Council will consider an interim strategic plan at their meeting on the 22 October 2020.



To see further information relating to Education and Children in Kent, please see the below links:

<https://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children>

<https://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/special-educational-needs>

<https://www.kent.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/care-and-support/disability/help-if-youve-got-a-disabled-child>

<https://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/schools/school-transport/school-transport-for-children-with-special-educational-needs>

Political Arrangements

The County Council has 81 councillors and elections take place every four years.

The political composition of the County Council is as follows:

Conservative	65 members
Liberal Democrat	7 members
Labour	5 members
Independent Groups	4 members

The Leader of Kent County Council is Roger Gough.

There is a Cabinet of Executive Members which meets regularly to debate policy issues and make key decisions. The cabinet comprises of:

Roger Gough	Leader of Kent County Council
Peter Oakford	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate and Traded Services
Clair Bell	Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health
Susan Carey	Cabinet Member for Environment
Sue Chandler	Cabinet Member for Integrated Children's Services
Mike Hill OBE	Cabinet Member for Community and Regulatory Services
Richard Long	Cabinet Member for Education and Skills
Michael Payne	Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation
Shellina Prendergast	Cabinet Member for Communications, Engagement and People
Mike Whiting	Cabinet Member for Economic Development

Sue Chandler's portfolio incorporates the roles and responsibilities of the Director – Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

Structure of KCC

The structure of the organisation is as shown [here](#)

The Senior Officer team consists of six Corporate Directors. For more information on the Corporate Management Team please follow this [link](#)

The four directorates are as follows:

Growth, Environment and Transport

The Directorate comprises a range of key frontline, strategic, policy and commercial functions, and plays a major role in making Kent a better place to live, work and visit. The services provided, and the future the directorate helps to shape, affects every household in Kent. This includes strategic responsibility for the future of the county in terms of planning, economic development, transport policy, and major transport improvement schemes, waste disposal and recycling services. In addition, GET manages country parks; libraries; and delivers enforcement services including trading standards, community safety and emergency planning.

Responsible for services that include:

Highways, Transportation & Waste, Regulatory Services, Economic Development, Community Safety & Emergency Planning, Libraries, Registration & Archives, Sport & Country Parks, Arts including Kent Film Office, Development Planning, Planning Applications, North Downs Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Flood Risk & Environment, Sustainability & Climate Change and Heritage Conservation

Adult Social Care and Health

The Directorate commissions and provides a range of services to improve outcomes for older and vulnerable adults, including those with mental health issues or disabilities, and their families. The Directorate supports vulnerable adults to live independently by promoting their wellbeing and supporting their independence. Services for adult mental health and learning disability already work in integrated teams with NHS colleagues and as a key partner in the Kent and Medway STP we are developing multi-disciplinary teams within communities to support local care.

Responsible for services that include:

Adults Central Referral Unit, Adult Community Teams, Safeguarding and quality, Kent Enablement at Home, Sensory and Autistic Spectrum Conditions Service, Integrated/Registered Care Centres, Day Centres, Community Learning Disability Teams, In-House Provision and Mental Health Services.

Children, Young People and Education Directorate

This Directorate combines and integrates the statutory responsibilities of Specialist Children's Services together with Education services and the targeted and universal services for children and young people within Early Help and Preventative Services. There is a strong focus on alignment of resources to help ensure achievement of one of the key County Council strategic outcomes: 'Every child and young person in Kent gets the best start in life'. To improve outcomes for children and young people, services within the Directorate are working together with relevant partners to deliver the vision set out in the Children and Young People's Services Integration Programme.

Responsible for services that include:

Children's Social Care, Adoption & Fostering, Standards & School Improvement, Skills & Employability, Early Years and Childcare, Provision Planning, Fair Access, Educational Psychology, SEN Assessment & Placement, Youth Justice, Outdoor Education Centres, Children's Centres and Youth Hubs, Inclusion & Attendance, Early Intervention and Community Learning & Skills and Disabled Children and Young People Teams.

Strategic and Corporate Services

The Directorate supports the delivery of our front line services. The Directorate leads and co-ordinates major change, organisational design, development and provides a critical client and contracting role with our trading companies including property, legal and customer contact. It provides organisational wide governance, financial management and a major contribution to our political and external relationships.

Responsible for services that include:

Engagement, Communications, Organisation Design & Development, Finance, Governance & Law, Infrastructure, Policy and Strategic Commissioning including Procurement & Business Intelligence and Public Health

Job Description

Director – Special Educational Needs and Disability

Directorate:	Children, Young People and Education
Grade:	KR17
Responsible to:	Corporate Director Children, Young People and Education

Job outline:

Lead the delivery and strategic development of services to disabled children and young people and those with Special Educational Needs ensuring those services (in-house and commissioned) meet the needs of all those children, are aligned to information on need and that they continue to meet the changing needs of children and young people in Kent.

To contribute as a member of the Directorate Management Team to the strategic leadership of the Directorate.

To champion the needs of children with additional needs ensuring an inclusive high-quality service that works in partnership with families to maximise children's potential.

Job accountabilities:

Directors will work within the KCC Corporate Responsibilities for Senior Officers. In addition, as members of Extended Corporate Management Team, Directors and Corporate Directors will work together to make strategic decisions on the most effective use of the Council's agreed budget, resources and policies and enhance the reputation of Kent as a place as well as Kent County Council as the democratic agent of change in the region.

Lead the operational delivery and strategic development of all services to disabled children and young people (0-25yrs) and those with SEND in Kent, ensuring that services match needs, are developed in partnership with parents and young people and adapt to Kent's changing needs and demography.

Lead the development of a culture across KCC, schools and other partners that works in partnership with parents and focusses relentlessly on the needs of children through consultation, engagement and co-production with families.

To take a key role in the inclusion agenda, liaising with other Directors and where appropriate, schools to ensure that services are inclusive and supportive of children achieving their potential.

Lead the delivery of high-quality services to disabled children that safeguard their needs in line with national standards, policies and procedures.

Lead the development of services, ensuring that they are client centred, high quality and fit for purpose, driving the earlier identification of emerging need and be responsible for putting into place a range of services that prevent those needs escalating as young people grow older and working with families to provide tailored support which allows them to stay together.

Ensure that SEND assessments are of the highest quality and that they result in the appropriate educational provision for children.

Lead the delivery and development of the Education Psychology service, ensuring that it is fully integrated with the SEND offer, meets statutory requirements and provides a streamlined and efficient service to children and their families.

Undertake a key role in the joint strategic commissioning for disabled children and SEND services across Kent including those with learning disabilities and Autistic Spectrum Disorders, ensuring a seamless fit between in-house and commissioned provision.

Lead the establishment of key governance frameworks and a culture that ensure services are delivered within budget, to local and national standards and in line with the relevant policies and frameworks.

Determine, develop and maintain systems to enable strategy and policy development, effective performance management and statistical analysis.

Ensure that schools maintain a relentless focus on inclusion and the improvement of educational standards for those with SEND, liaising with The Education People and Director of Education as appropriate.

Lead the development of district-based working so that there is coordinated and integrated delivery of children and young people's services in each district, working in partnership with schools and other providers, and with other directorates in KCC.

Services

- Special Educational Needs service including the Local Offer
- Education Psychology
- Disabled children and young people's social care services 0-25yrs
- Short Breaks services

Recruitment Selection Criteria

The qualifications, knowledge and experience criteria below will be used in shortlisting. Applicants should describe in their application how they meet these criteria.

Qualifications:

- Evidence of continuing professional development
- Educated to degree level or equivalent

Experience:

Extensive experience and successful track record of strategic leadership and successful delivery in local government and/or other relevant large and complex organisations working within the children's services arena.

Experience of SEND and (preferably) disabled children services at a senior level. Experience of the interface between the local authority statutory function (code of practice) and schools for vulnerable pupils and those with special educational needs.

Extensive experience of working with schools, school-based organisations, related partners and regulatory/support bodies such as Ofsted and the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC)

Experience of effectively managing and delivering a range of key integrated services and change programmes for children and families within a designated budget

Extensive experience and successful track record of achieving improvements in service delivery and improved outcomes for children and young people.

Extensive experience and track record in delivering a range of services in partnership with other agencies and stakeholders, both internal and external.

Experience of Planning and performance monitoring across agencies

Experience of commissioning and decommissioning of services

Extensive experience of working and influencing the direction of services within a highly political environment.

Skills and Abilities:

Able to operate effectively as a member of the Extended Corporate Management Team, shaping the strategic Council priorities and setting clear direction, and service commitment to the successful delivery of the Council's strategic priorities.

Able to establish strong positive relationships across the education sector at all levels, in order to

provide effective leadership and direction including a relationship of both personal and professional credibility and trust with elected Members.

The ability to gain the confidence and trust of Head-teachers across Kent.

Able to establish strong positive relationships across partner and other external organisations that command professional confidence.

Able to demonstrate effective motivational strategic leadership and vision to staff at all levels including a positive attitude to change in order to maintain and develop services in a constantly changing environment.

Able to command respect, influence and negotiate at a strategic professional and political level both locally and nationally in order to ensure the best interests of the Council are met.

Able to demonstrate a high level of personal resilience, challenge and focus in order to ensure the whole Organisation delivers the right services in the right way.

Highly developed communication and presentation skills.

Able to lead, influence and implement strategic policies and decisions.

Effective management of large budgets and ability to demonstrate value for money for customers with a string focus on maximising a return on investment

Ability to analyse complex data and problem solve

Ability to plan, monitor and review all areas in the discipline

Knowledge:

Expert knowledge in the relevant professional area and proven track record of using professional expertise to develop and deliver strategic objectives and expected outcomes

Knowledge of complex statutory duties and codes of practice as it relates to the role

Knowledge and understanding of the relevant inspectorates and the roles of DFE and the Regional Schools Commissioner.

Broad knowledge of the range of children's services across partner agencies and sectors
In depth understanding of the strategic challenges and operational realities of managing services for children and young people in a large and diverse authority.

Organisational Responsibilities

All Corporate Directors, Directors and Heads of Service have an explicit responsibility to work as part of a team to deliver, collectively, the agenda of the County Council. These are fundamental elements of their role not an addition and are summarised as follows

Whole Council

- Seek to improve the lives of all residents in Kent and the economy of Kent
- Act as corporate parent to the Council's Looked After Children
- Take an active role in promoting and ensuring the Council's responsibilities for safeguarding are met
- Understand, communicate and contribute to the delivery of KCC's strategic aims
- Meet statutory obligations and promote and ensure compliance with policies and procedures and the Council's Code of Conduct (Kent Code)
- Advise elected Members and support the democratic process
- Promote the Council brand and enhance the overall reputation of the Council
- Understand and monitor the measures of performance, including customer insight, which define successful outcomes for KCC services
- Maintain and ensure a relentless focus on the customer
- Act to support the Council-wide need to deliver services within budget, thereby avoiding an overspend that could damage the financial viability of the Council
- Overcome professional and service silos to achieve the County Council's objectives

Integration of Services

- Focus resources where they have the biggest impact
- Deliver services that are flexible and adaptable
- Integrate services within KCC and work with partner agencies to ensure a seamless customer experience
- Fully and inclusively engage all staff in the delivery of services, demonstrating the Council's leadership values and competencies

Embedding Commissioning and Engaging Relevant Markets

- Establish an outcome focused organisation
- Meet the financial regulations and standing orders of KCC
- Challenge the status quo and engage with the market to constantly improve
- Ensure all services are delivered effectively and efficiently
- Proactively and continuously seek to improve service delivery
- Proactively manage risk to avoid inertia whilst not exposing the Council to needless and avoidable challenge or loss

Managing Change

- Understand and support the Authority's overall change agenda
- Deliver required outcomes of service specific change on time and to budget
- Understand the quality of staff, support their development, nurture those with talent
- Identify the skills for the future and the level of staff through robust workforce planning
- Identify and deal with underperformance
- Deliver to agreed budget and income targets

Kent Values

Kent County Council aspires to a culture which is:

Flexible/agile - willing to take (calculated) risks and want people that are flexible and agile

Curious - constantly learning and evolving

Compassionate and Inclusive - compassionate, understanding and respectful to all

Working Together - building and delivering for the best interests of Kent

Empowering - Our people take accountability for their decisions and actions

Externally Focused - Residents, families and communities at the heart of decision making

The values that underpin and align with this are:

- We are brave. We do the right thing, we accept and offer challenge
- We are curious to innovate and improve
- We are compassionate, understanding and respectful to all
- We are strong together by sharing knowledge
- We are all responsible for the difference we make

As a senior leader you will be expected to role model and drive the Council's cultural aspiration and its related values. In doing this the leadership traits we expect of you are:

- Courage and integrity
- Making a difference – sense of purpose
- Compassion and inclusion – community leadership
- Drive for results -
- Curiosity and learning

Working for Kent County Council

Salary and Status

This post is offered as a permanent contract.

The appointment will be subject to 3 months' notice.

KCC pays salaries to bank accounts on the 25th of the month unless this falls on a weekend or public holiday.

Terms and Conditions

The appointment is subject to the terms and conditions contained within the Kent Scheme of Conditions of Service.

30 days annual leave is provided excluding Bank Holidays. You will also receive paid time off for public holidays plus a concessionary day at Christmas.

An excellent relocation package is available to assist with costs, including removal companies, temporary lodgings and professional expenses.

The postholder will be expected to provide a car for official journeys.

Personal Interests

Kent County Council policy requires all employees to declare membership of any organisation that falls within the following definition:

Any lodge, chapter, society, trust or regular gathering or meeting, which:

- is not open to members of the public who are not members of that lodge, chapter, society or trust;
- includes in the grant of membership an obligation on the part of the members to make a
- commitment (whether by oath or otherwise) of allegiance to the lodge, chapter, society, gathering or meeting; and
- includes, whether initially or subsequently, a commitment (whether by oath or otherwise)
- of secrecy about the rules, membership or conduct of the lodge, chapter, society, trust, gathering, or meeting

A lodge, chapter, society, trust, gathering or meeting as defined above, should not be regarded as a secret society if it forms part of the activity of a generally recognised religion.

Pensions

The post holder will have the choice of contributing to the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS). Further details will be available for the successful applicant.

Politically Restricted Posts

This is a politically restricted post which means that the post holder cannot stand for public elected office (other than to a parish council) and is subject to further restrictions on more general political activity.

Whole Time Employment

The person appointed will be required to devote their whole time service to the work of Kent County Council and should not engage in any other business without the express consent of the County Council.

Health and Safety Policy

The County Council recognises and accepts its responsibility as an employer, and will take positive action to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all employees and other persons who may be affected by its operations, by providing safe working conditions and a healthy and safe working environment.

Sickness Provision

Our sickness benefit scheme exceeds statutory requirements. Actual paid absence depends on how long you have worked for KCC and the circumstances of your absence. For example, after 6 years' service your benefit would be 6 months full pay and 6 months half pay.

Training and Development

KCC is committed to supporting staff to reach their full potential through annual appraisal and personal development plans, enhanced by a range of career development opportunities.

Managers from KR9 to KR20 will be required to undertake our Kent Manager standard programme within the first year of employment.

Green Travel

Our Green Travel Plan is exploring alternative modes of transport to improve travel choice and reduce congestion and pollution. This includes:

- Car sharing and emergency taxi home.
- Discounted fares, free tickets, trip planning and improved travel information.
- Pool car and bikes

Other benefits

KCC offers a range of family friendly policies including:

- A generous maternity scheme
- Emergency leave
- Parental leave
- Special leave
- Help Fund – all employees have the opportunity both to pay into the fund and to apply for help from it when experiencing financial hardship
- An in-house confidential counseling service and Occupational Health Service
- Kent Rewards - discounts at over 1,200 retailers ranging from reduced rates at Health Clubs to house and car insurance to holidays

Living in Kent

With great schools, vibrant cities, golden beaches and stunning countryside Kent has lots to offer you. Find out more about [locations in Kent](#).

Selection Process

How to Respond

To apply please visit [Kent CC Microsite](#).

For further information, please call our Executive Search partner Faerfield:

Martin Tucker

T: 0113 532 5900

E: mtucker@faerfield.co.uk

Sarah Longbottom

T: 0121 312 3755

E: slongbottom@faerfield.co.uk

Bee Lucas-Buckley

T: 0113 532 5900

E: blucas-buckley@faerfield.co.uk

Closing Date

This post will close at midnight on 9 October 2020.

Selection Process

A Preliminary/Technical interview will take place for shortlisted candidates week commencing 26 October 2020.

Candidates shortlisted after the preliminary interviews will be invited to attend a Stakeholder, Service User Panel(s) and a Member Panel during the last two weeks of November 2020.

As part of the interview process for this role you will be required to complete an occupational personality questionnaire and telephone feedback session if you are successful at the preliminary interview.

In light of Covid-19 it is likely that all assessments will be held remotely rather than face-to-face. We will keep you up to date with any changes.