

# Applicant Pack

## Director of Children's Services



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## Welcome letter from Becky Shaw, Chief Executive

Dear Candidate,

Thank you for your interest in joining East Sussex as our Director of Children's Services.

East Sussex is a great place to live and work. It is a county of huge contrasts. The countryside is beautiful and largely unspoilt and our towns and villages are vibrant, but we also have areas of significant need and challenge. We have strong, local communities and work closely with them and our partners from all sectors to help all to fulfil their potential.

East Sussex has a strong reputation for good services, effective partnership working and innovation. Our robust business planning focuses our all resources on our four priority outcomes:

- driving sustainable economic prosperity;
- keeping vulnerable people safe from harm;
- helping people help themselves; and
- making the best use of resources.

We are committed, both politically and managerially across all departments, to serving all our residents to the very best of our abilities. Making sure children and young people are able to thrive at home and at school is at the heart of that commitment. We have worked hard and well both within the Council and with our partners, local communities and the users of our services to continuously improve the quality of what we offer. We are proud of what we have achieved and are determined to build on our strong foundations to remain a well run and effective council.

We are looking for a leader with strong business, commissioning and partnership skills and an excellent understanding of local authority activity and partnerships. We want someone who can help us ensure we achieve the best possible results for our children and young people by making the most effective use of all available resources. This needs not just an excellent professional, but someone with real interest in people, ingenuity, stamina and the ability to both listen and engage with young people, the public, partners, Councillors and staff.

We are looking for an able, positive, creative and flexible leader, with an outstanding track record of delivering positive change and service improvement, to join a successful and supportive organisation. We hope that, after reading this information pack, you will want to join us at East Sussex, and we look forward to receiving an application from you.

Becky Shaw

Chief Executive



# About the Role

## The Advert

# Director of Children's Services

up to £152,000

East Sussex is a high performing authority serving strong local communities. Surrounded by unspoilt countryside and coastal towns that are vibrant and inviting, many of our residents are very satisfied with their quality of life. However, a number of our communities are facing significant challenges and rely heavily on the core services that we provide with our partners.

Our Children's Services were judged Outstanding at our last inspection so there is a strong foundation on which to develop services. We are far from complacent though. The service is recognised for innovative practice, and a relationship-based approach for helping children and their families achieve the best possible outcomes. You will lead the Council's work with schools through school-led partnerships to improve standards and ensure inclusive educational practice.

The opportunities and challenges that we are facing require a strong and collaborative leader, able to work in partnership with other agencies and stakeholders. In joining the corporate leadership of East Sussex, you will be a valued member of an experienced and ambitious team that works as One Council in delivering high quality services in a tight fiscal environment.

Whether your background is education or social care, we are looking for a creative and flexible leader with an outstanding track record of achieving service improvements. Your natural tendency to innovate will be welcomed in a positive, mature and challenging environment where our ethos of continuous improvement helps to drive us forward.



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For further information please visit [www.færfield.co.uk/jobs/a000044](http://www.færfield.co.uk/jobs/a000044) and for a confidential discussion, please call either Sarah Longbottom or Martin Tucker on 0121 312 3755.



## Grade, Department, Location and Reporting

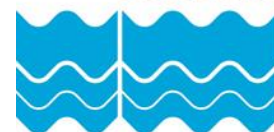
<b>Grade:</b>	Chief Officer – Band B: £140,435- £152,031
<b>Department:</b>	Children’s Services
<b>Location:</b>	Lewes
<b>Responsible to:</b>	Chief Executive

### Additional benefits

The Council offers a comprehensive range of staff benefits including:

- Between 28-30 days annual leave per year for Chief Officers, depending on length of service
- Access to an online staff benefits portal, containing various offers and discounts from major retailers and service providers
- Vehicle, bicycle, rental deposit and season ticket loan scheme
- A variety of initiatives to support staff wellbeing – for example guided mindful meditation sessions
- Enhanced maternity pay
- Access to health cash plans at a corporate rate
- Access to the Dell and Microsoft Home Use programmes, as well as the O2 open scheme
- Access to credit unions and Give as You Earn schemes via payroll deduction
- A range of support for remote and flexible working
- An additional leave purchase scheme
- Access to a car leasing scheme
- Access to the Local Government Pension scheme, which offers an excellent range of benefits, including a career average pension when you retire. You can find out more on the [East Sussex Pension Fund website](#).





### EAST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL JOB DESCRIPTION

**JOB TITLE:** Director of Children's Services

**DEPARTMENT:** Children's Services

**LOCATION:** County Hall, Lewes

**GRADE:** Chief Officer - Band B

**RESPONSIBLE TO:** Chief Executive

**Purpose of the Role:**

To lead the delivery of services within Children's Services department and be accountable for the implementation of the local and national agenda, and discharging the statutory obligations of the Director of Children's Services

To work with elected Members, the Chief Executive and Corporate Management Team (CMT) to drive forward the Council's work to ensure it is flexible, customer focused, responsive and dynamic.

To ensure that the Council operates within the required governance framework to deliver the efficient and appropriate use of public money.

**Key accountabilities:**

1. Contribute with the Chief Executive and Chief Officers, through CMT and elected Members, to the formulation of the Council's overall strategy, the securing and allocation of resources and the integrated planning, commissioning, delivery and monitoring of services.
2. To have lead accountability across the Council for the commissioning of outcomes for children and young people and where ESCC is the provider, management of children and young people's services.
3. To be an advocate for children, young people and their families as well as the wider population, businesses and communities of East Sussex.
4. Discharge the statutory obligations of the Director of Children's Services.
5. To advise the Council on its statutory and professional obligations in relation to Children's Social Care and education, ensuring that statutory requirements are met and adhered to.
6. To work closely with the Director of Adult Social Care and Health to ensure there is an integrated approach between adults, children's and young people's strategies which meets the needs of Adults' and Children's Social Care and education in East Sussex. To provide fully integrated and targeted specialist adults, children's and young people's services in collaboration with public, voluntary and private sector partners.

7. To work with schools, academy providers and other partners to drive the improvement agenda through a clear strategy of support, challenge and (where appropriate) intervention which has support from all partners.
8. To lead the development and implementation of strategies to ensure services are in place to support young people and their families with social care needs during their childhood and their transition to adulthood.
9. To work proactively with health to improve outcomes for children and young people.
10. To build strong networks and undertake a strong leadership role to influence and facilitate others to meet the needs of children, young people and their families.
11. To define the required service provision commissioning and decommissioning services in order to meet the changing needs of the people of East Sussex.
12. To ensure services provided by voluntary, independent and private sector organisations are appropriately monitored to ensure service delivery meets required standards and represents value for money.
13. To lead corporate and service related projects and programmes.
14. To drive forward the cultural, workforce, and other changes necessary to ensure services cohere around people's needs and secure improved outcomes for all.

This job description sets out the duties of the post at the time when it was drawn up. Such duties may vary from time to time without changing the general character of the duties or the level of responsibility entailed. Such variations are a common occurrence and cannot of themselves justify a reconsideration of the grading of the post.

## The Person Specification

### EAST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL PERSON SPECIFICATION

**JOB TITLE: Director of Children's Services**

**GRADE: Chief Officer – Band B**

#### Essential key skills and abilities

These criteria will be assessed at the assessment centre and interview stages.

- Excellent interpersonal, communication and negotiating skills.
- Broad knowledge and understanding of public sector service delivery and strategic commissioning approaches.
- Commercial / business acumen and strong awareness of changes in the external environment.
- Structured, and able to set and meet tight deadlines.
- In-depth knowledge and effective application of the national agenda relating to children and young people.
- Able to work effectively within a political environment.
- Ability to converse at ease with customers and provide advice in accurate spoken English

#### Essential education and qualifications.

These criteria will be evidenced via certificates and/or at interview as appropriate

- Degree and / or relevant professional / management qualification or equivalent.

#### Essential experience

These criteria will be assessed at the application, assessment centre and interview stages.

- Substantial experience of managing and commissioning at a senior level in Children's Services.
- Experienced in all aspects of change management.
- Recent experience of successfully leading delivery and transformation in a large public sector organisation.
- Good understanding of local authority business and local markets.



### **Desirable experience**

These criteria will be assessed at the application, assessment centre and interview stages.

- Local government experience

### **Other essential criteria**

These criteria will be assessed at the assessment centre and interview stages.

- A collaborator who can develop productive relationships with a varied and broad range of stakeholders and communities.
- Motivate and develop staff and promote team working.
- Innovative and influential.
- Consultative leadership and encouraging style.
- An effective Corporate team player.
- Ability to network and establish effective relationships and influence them to adopt required policies and standards.
- Confident manner and resilient.
- Willingness and ability to travel inside and outside of the county.

**Date (drawn up): March 2021**

**Name of Officer(s) drawing up person specifications: BS/SM**

## Application Process

**Closing date for applications:** Thursday 8 April 2021

**Technical Interviews:** 14-15 April 2021

**Youth Panel:** Monday 26 April 2021

Likely to be a late afternoon/early evening commitment (tentatively 4:00 - 6:00 p.m.)

**Assessment Day:** Tuesday 27 April 2021

Interviews with officer and stakeholder panels.

**Final Member Interviews:** Wednesday 28 April 2021

A final interview with a panel of Councillors.

All interviews will be held remotely.

### For a confidential discussion please speak to:

**Sarah Longbottom**

Senior Consultant, Faerfield Limited

**Tel:** 0121 312 3755

**Email:** slongbottom@faerfield.co.uk

**Martin Tucker**

Managing Director, Faerfield Limited

**Tel:** 0121 312 3755

**Email:** mtucker@faerfield.co.uk

TO APPLY FOR THIS ROLE, PLEASE CLICK [HERE](#)

## About East Sussex County Council

East Sussex County Council has a strong reputation as a well led and well managed council, with positive feedback from external inspections and reviews. The Council employs approximately 4,400 people in its corporate departments, and approximately 5,900 people in its maintained schools.

The Council provides services used by all residents in East Sussex, including care and support to children, families and adults; maintaining the roads and providing library services; and working to boost the local economy. We have a long term track record for delivery, producing excellent results for the public. The Council has four overarching priority outcomes: driving sustainable economic growth; keeping vulnerable people safe; helping people help themselves; and making best use of resources.

Despite the severe funding restrictions affecting all local authorities, we have maintained our position as a well-run and high-performing council. We have met the unprecedented challenges of the Coronavirus, continuing to provide vital services to our local communities, and we will have a critical role to play, working with our local partners, in the recovery from the pandemic. We have been democratic, open and honest in determining the best quality services we can provide, within available resources, as set out in our Core Offer. In this context, the Director of Childrens Services will play a vital role in ensuring we continue to serve residents effectively.

Further information about our key plans and strategies and the County of East Sussex can be found on our website via the links below:

[Your Council](#)

[The East Sussex Community](#)

### Organisational context

Along with all other Council services the Children's Services Department is actively involved in working as One Council delivering quality services within a reduced budget.. In our Social Care service this is achieved through an exciting innovation programme based on our relationship based approach to social work, and a range of bespoke in-house services including an integrated early help offer with health partners. Ofsted rated Children's Services as Outstanding in 2018 ILACS. Driving up educational attainment and skills is a key part of driving economic prosperity. In addition, as a Council, we are reshaping services to schools to address the changing relationship with academies, free schools and other providers while maintaining a shared focus on cost effective services and the improvement agenda. This builds on the base of good practice that we have in our Children's Social Care Services.

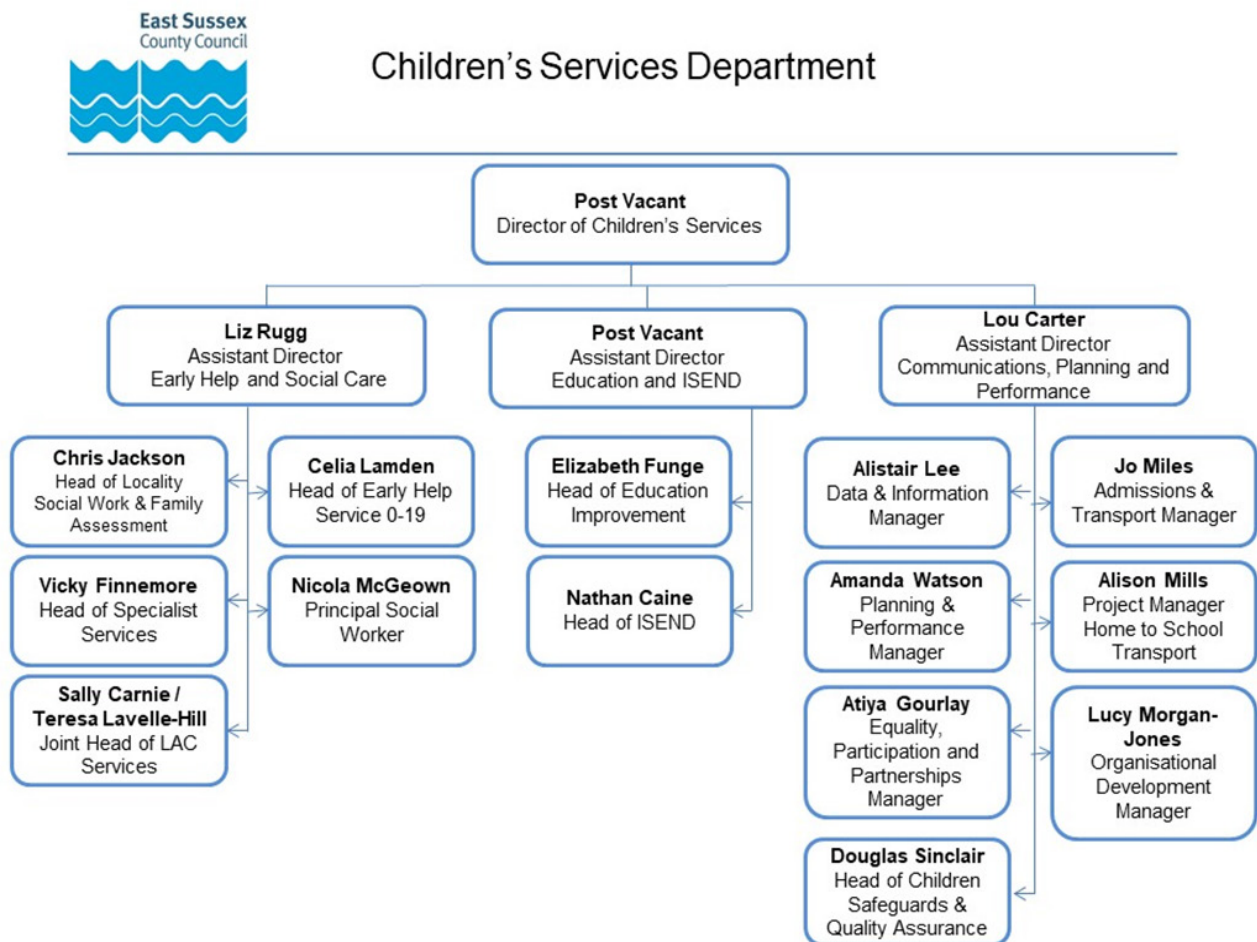
Partnership working is at the core of our future success. ESCC plays a leading role in regional developments through the SE7 arrangements which bring together seven of the councils serving the south east to work on shared approaches to issues important to our communities. In East Sussex we are leading on innovative work on Special Educational Needs (SEN) and meeting the health needs of young people with emotional and behavioural issues.

We are looking for a leader with strong business, commissioning and partnership skills and an excellent understanding of local authority business, markets and partners. We want someone who can help us ensure we achieve the best possible results for our residents by

making the most effective use of all available resources, irrespective of whether services are provided in-house or externally. This needs not just an excellent professional and leader but someone with real interest in people, ingenuity, stamina and the ability to both listen and engage with young people, the public, partners, Councillors and staff.

Charts showing the general structure of the service, as well as key functions, are included below.

## The Children's Services Department Structure



## The County of East Sussex

East Sussex is a great place to live and work. Not only is the countryside beautiful and largely unspoilt, but our coastlines, towns and villages are vibrant and inviting. We are a county of contrasts and also have significant areas of deprivation facing significant challenges. Across East Sussex we have strong, local communities and we work closely with them to improve their quality of life.



Located on the south coast of England we have a mild and, on average, sunnier climate than much of the rest of the UK, beautiful coastline and a number of coastal towns and villages including Eastbourne, Bexhill, Hastings, Seaford, Newhaven and Peacehaven. We have a direct link to France from Newhaven and Gatwick is our nearest international airport.



Some of the county sits within the South Downs National Park and two-thirds of East Sussex is designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), including the Sussex Downs, Ashdown Forest and the High Weald AONB. Inland there are many picturesque villages and towns such as Lewes, Rye and Battle. There are numerous and significant historic sites of interest to visit across the County, including the site of the 1066 Battle of Hastings and the Seven Sisters.

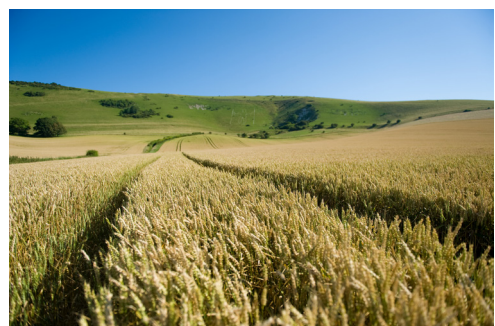


Our economy comprises a large number of very small businesses and is mainly service based consisting of public services, education, financial services and tourism. We have a higher than average proportion of residents aged over 65 and 85 and this is set to increase based on current population projections.

East Sussex, Brighton and Hove and the surrounding counties (West Sussex, Surrey and Kent) offer a variety of urban and rural settings in both coastal and inland locations in which to live. There are many sports, leisure and cultural activities. There are also good schools and public facilities for you and your family to use.



There is a variety of housing available in East Sussex, both to rent and buy. Despite the South East being above the national average for house prices, there are many thriving coastal towns that offer good value housing including Eastbourne, Newhaven, Seaford, Bexhill and Hastings as well as inland towns such as Uckfield, Crowborough and Hailsham. Brighton, Haywards Heath and Lewes are also popular places to live in Sussex and have good transport links to London and the South East.



## **Additional Information**

For additional information, please follow these links:

### **East Sussex County Council**

[Website](#)

[Core Offer](#)

### **Children's services**

[Ofsted Children's Social Care Services Report - July 2018](#)

### **Tourism**

[Visit England - East Sussex](#)

[Visit South East England - East Sussex](#)

### **Relocating to East Sussex**

[Rightmove - East Sussex](#)

[Zoopla - moving to East Sussex](#)

[ESCC School Search Page](#)

### **Living and Working in East Sussex**

[Locate East Sussex](#)

[The South-East Local Enterprise Partnership](#)

