Commissioning and Contracts Officer

Reports to:	Children's Placement Commissioning Manager		
Department:	Children and Young People, Forward Planning, Performance and Partnerships	**Grade:**	PO1
DBS Status:	Enhanced Children and Adults	**Politically restricted:**	No

Job Purpose:

1. To commission, monitor and quality assure placements for children and young people in the care of Brent Council 19 and children with disabilities and Children with Special Educational ensuring that independent sector provision is high quality, safe, capable of and effective in meeting the particular needs.

2. Ensure that commissioning activity including all stages of the 'analysis plan, do and review' commissioning cycle is a collaborative activity and establish strong relationships with internal colleagues and external partners, such as WLA, to support the achievement of good outcomes for children and young people through commissioning.

3. To negotiate and agree the fee to be paid for individual placements, taking into account best value and service quality requirements.

4. To conduct contract discussions with non-Pan London and WLA providers and implement the Pan London Contract where appropriate.

5. To act as a representative for the department at Pan London Steering Group meetings/WLA.

6. To act as negotiator, on behalf of the department, with service providers in the independent and voluntary sector to ensure fee increase and service development requests are reasonable and appropriate.

7. To develop and implement Service Level Agreements/Contracts in those areas where Pan London Contract terms and conditions do not apply.

8. To identify gaps in service provision in the independent sector and develop strategies, in partnership with service providers and internal/external agencies, to ensure that those identified gaps are filled and the needs of particular social/ethnic groups are met.

Values

Collaborate proactively.
Lead inclusively.
Embrace change.
Be bold and curious.
Celebrate and share our success.

Job specific roles and responsibilities

1. To commission high quality placements based on needs of Brent Looked After children and Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Educational Needs within a best value framework and improve outcomes for children and young people.

2. To assess the extent to which existing service providers are likely to be able to meet current and projected placement needs of Brent Looked After Children.

3. To research and identify all current and likely future demand of placement needs of Brent Looked After Children.

4. To support the service in driving sufficiency of high quality placements suitable to meet these identified needs.

5. Carry an allocated caseload of children and young people for placement finding and contracting and monitoring. This involves being responsible for ensuring that high quality placements are sourced according to team procedures and maintaining robust contract monitoring arrangements for all allocated cases.

6. To be a source of advice and expertise on commissioning standards and be the link for other commissioners and for providers and senior management .

7. To be responsible for a programme of Quality Assurance and visits to individual providers and to challenge providers where performance on contracts is not up to the expected standards. To write reports of these visits and liaise as necessary with the relevant inspection and registration authorities.

8. To supervise and participate in the implementation and ongoing management of the Placements module of Mosaic/Oracle.

9. To ensure that information and records on each placement resource are monitored and retained in an orderly manner and to acquire information for placement, financial or other purposes as required.

10. To liaise, problem solve and negotiate with Social Workers and service providers in the independent sector in the event of dispute or lack of clarity in communication or information to ensure the best interests of the child are met.

11. To develop and maintain a knowledge/data base of independent sector service providers able to meet the service standards set by the department.

12. Work collaboratively with external partners, stakeholders and suppliers to commission services to meet identified and emerging needs and act as an ambassador and advocate with external organisations.

13. Contribute to Care Standards Meetings in relation to allegations made against external IFA providers.

14. Responsible for ensuring that LAC performance data in relation to legal status and placements are accurately reflected on MOSAIC within given timescales.

15. Responsible for ensuring compliance with statutory elements of commissioning, including the timely processing of out-of-borough placement approvals and notifications.

16. To attend and represent the Service at regional and national Pan London and WLA meetings.

17. To keep abreast of relevant legislation and regulations, Ensure the Department complies with legislative, regulatory, and/or the council's own policies and procedures relating to the commissioning of services with partners or the external marketplace.

18. Employees should embed environmental sustainability into their work, actively contributing to Brent becoming a carbon-neutral borough in 2030.

19. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and all employees are required to act in such a way that at all times safeguards the health and well-being of children and vulnerable adults.

20. We are committed to an inclusive workplace where everyone is treated with dignity, respect, and fairness. All employees are expected to promote equality, diversity, and inclusion, and candidates may be assessed on their ability to contribute to an inclusive working environment.

21. Undertake any other duties commensurate with the general level of responsibility of this post.

Essential Requirements (key skills & qualifications)
Knowledge and Qualifications

1. Evidence of relevant Continuing Professional Development (CPD).
2. Knowledge of the delivery of services to looked after children and their families/carers and a good understanding of the national/local policy environment.
3. Knowledge of the relevant legislative framework for looked after children.
4. Knowledge of the principles of, and cycle of commissioning, contract monitoring and/or market management.
5. Knowledge of relevant legislation in accordance with the Children Act 2004 Experience
6. A track record of working positively with a range of internal and external partners to achieve measurable and sustained success
7. Knowledge and experience in working with contracts in a Social Care field
8. Knowledge and experience of administrative and financial processes and practice
9. Evidence of success in developing and monitoring a broad range of commissioned placement services and commissioning strategies for children and young people
10. A successful track record in achieving best value and quality services through the commissioning of services for vulnerable children
11. Evidence of successful collaborative working with a range of internal and external agencies and stakeholders, including staff, external bodies and customer groups.
12. Experience of responding to rapidly changing work contexts with creativity and flexibility
13. Experience of undertaking price negotiations with providers
14. Experience of managing difficult conversations

Skills and Abilities

1. Good Communication, written and verbal skills
2. Ability to negotiate effectively with a range of service providers and stakeholders
3. Good organisational skills, demonstrating an ability for self management and motivation, initiative, creativity and flexibility
4. Ability to respond positively to changing demands as a result of changing legislation or working practice
5. Commitment to and understanding of how to develop high quality and best value services
6. The ability to plan, organise and manage a heavy workload
7. Commitment to the Council's Equal Opportunities Policy and the ability to understand and implement the policy in relation to the job responsibilities
8. The strong ability to utilise IT effectively, including MOSAIC, e-mail, the Electronic Case Management System and basic word processing and Word Excel spreadsheets
9. Ability to analyse and understand complex issues; to investigate and mediate, devise and implement solutions to resolve disputes
10. Commitment to high quality and best value services
11. The ability to evaluate service quality to ensure that services are delivered to the highest achievable professional standards, that quality standards are identified and measured and that any remedial action is undertaken where necessary
12. The ability and to network across organisational boundaries and to influence partners (statutory, independent and service users) and to communicate effectively to deliver positive outcomes for children
13. The ability to recognise potential and actual abuse (of any kind to an adult or a child) and respond effectively

Budget Responsibility N/A
Overall Headcount: N/A

Within reason these key deliverables may evolve to meet service need and it is expected that the postholder will be flexible and adaptable in their delivery to meet both service and council wide needs