**Buckinghamshire County Council Children’s Services Candidate Pack**

**Supervised Contact Practitioner**







## Dear Candidate,

Hello and thank you for expressing an interest in joining Buckinghamshire’s Children’s Services.

This is an exciting time to come and work with us. This candidate pack contains everything you need to know to assist you with your application.

We have already started out on an ambitious improvement programme following the Ofsted re- inspection outcome in November 2017.

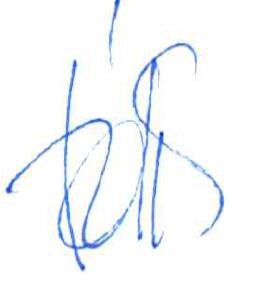
I joined Buckinghamshire in October 2017 and quickly set about recruiting a new, experienced and permanent social care senior leadership team. Our number one priority is to make sure we get it right for our children and young people and do everything we can so that they go on to achieve great things in their lives. To make this happen, we are determined to improve the quality of our social work practice.

A ‘high support, high challenge’ learning culture is actively being promoted across the service with enthusiasm, expertise and pace. Staff are encouraged and supported to collaborate on what good looks like and work together to implement our improvement plan. But ultimately, we want to see concrete evidence of improved outcomes.

We are looking to recruit employees who are skilled, knowledgeable, experienced and inspiring. We want to attract professionals with the necessary drive, resilience, ambition and integrity to embrace our values and take forward our vision to improve services for the children, young people and families we work with.

We recognise that in order for our staff to work to the best of their ability we have an organisational and professional responsibility to create the right conditions within which their best practice can develop. We have a great deal more to do and we are determined to do it all and do it well. It’s a great time to join us and become part of our improvement journey. If this sounds like a good fit for you and you’re up for the challenge, we would welcome your application!

Best wishes and good luck.



**Tolis Vouyioukas**

**Executive Director Children’s Services Buckinghamshire County Council**

**Life in Bucks…**

**The county** - Stretching from the outskirts of London to the Midlands, the county offers a unique mix of bustling towns, alongside the Chiltern Hills and the River Thames. Buckinghamshire has areas of outstanding natural beauty and ranks as one of the top rural areas to live in the country.

**The council** - Public services are currently delivered on a two-tier system split between Buckinghamshire County Council and a number of district councils. The Government is currently considering its decision regarding a single unitary council. The County Council’s New Municipal Offices are located in Aylesbury with the three main Social Work Area Offices based in Aylesbury, High Wycombe and Amersham.

**Transport** - There are superb travel links that give quick and easy access to London, Oxford, Milton Keynes and Birmingham. As part of the London commuter belt Buckinghamshire is well connected to the national rail network with local commuter and inter-city services. There are four main lines running through the county including the West Coast Main Line, the London to Aylesbury Line, Chiltern Main Line and Great Western Main Line.

Buckinghamshire's road network is still largely composed of single carriageway roads, with a few noticeable exceptions. The M40 and M1 motorways both pass through the county on their routes from London to the North. The A41 connects [Oxfordshire](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oxfordshire) to [London](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/London) through Buckinghamshire. Aylesbury is the focal point of Buckinghamshire's road network; the [A413](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A413_road), [A418](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A418_road), A41 and [A4010](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A4010_road) roads all converge on the town. Similarly to Aylesbury, High Wycombe is a nexus of major roads in the southern part of the county. The A4010 from Aylesbury meets the [A404](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A404_road) from [Amersham](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amersham) as well as the M40 motorway, which passes the town to the south. The A404 continues south beyond the M40 towards Maidenhead.

**Children’s population** - Approximately 122,200 children and young people under the age of 18 years live in Buckinghamshire which is 23% of the total population of the area. Children and young people from ethnic minority groups account for 21% of all children living in the area, identical to the level in the country as a whole, with the largest minority ethnic groups of children and young people in the area being Asian or Asian British and Mixed Ethnicity. The proportion of children and young people with English as an additional language in primary schools is 17% (the national average is 20%) and in secondary schools is 16% (the national average is also 16%). Approximately 11% of the local authority’s children, aged below 16 years of age, are living in low- income families. The proportion of children entitled to free school meals in primary schools is 7%

## Our Vision

Children and young people are central to Buckinghamshire County Council’s strategic priorities. Successful implementation of our improvement plan will help to deliver our vision to ensure that all children and young people:

* Are safe, happy and healthy
* Feel valued and value others
* Are treated fairly
* Have lives filled with learning
* Thrive and are able to enjoy life
* Spend quality time with family and friends

## Our Values

Our values describe the behaviours that underpin the successful implementation of our vision and the delivery of our improvements. There needs to be a step change and cultural shift so that we will focus on:

* Keeping children and young people’s lived experiences at the heart of everything we do
* Working collaboratively with and for our children and families, acknowledging their contribution and building on their strengths
* Remaining passionate about keeping children safe and well and focusing on making a positive difference every day
* Making sure that everyone’s voice is heard, including children, families, our staff and partners, so that we work reflectively, openly and with integrity
* Assuring the quality of practice and managing our performance to inform service improvement and development

## Our Conditions

We recognise that in order to support our staff to work to the best of their ability we have an organisational and professional responsibility to create the conditions within which their best practice can flourish. In order for this to happen we will strive to deliver:

* A clear vision and values that everyone models and promotes
* Visible and inspiring leadership
* Proactive and solution focused management
* Regular and reflective supervision and support
* Manageable and balanced caseloads
* Evidence based approaches and tools that promote ‘good’ practice
* Opportunities for staff to collaborate and be part of the solution
* Strong partnerships and commissioning arrangements
* A relentless focus on recruitment and retention as an everyday priority

## Our Employment Benefits

* Competitive salary
* Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) with employer contributions equivalent to 26.4% of salaries paid to scheme members
* 23 days holiday (plus bank holidays) rising to 28 days (plus bank holidays) after more than 5 years’ service
* New Car Lease Scheme (being launched in late Autumn 2018)
* Exclusive Council discounts on buses and trains
* Access to our corporate health and wellbeing services including:
  + Employee Assistance Programme
  + Occupational Health Service
  + Exclusive discounts at local gyms and wellbeing centres
  + Seasonal health checks
* Annual performance appraisal with a personal learning and development plan

## Our Learning & Development Offer

As an integral part of promoting our ‘high support - high challenge’ learning culture we are committed to investing in our employee’s learning and development and see this is one of the key building blocks to creating the right kinds of conditions that enable our staff to deliver their best practice.

So, as part of your annual personal learning and development plan, there will be time for you to engage in self-directed learning, reflective practice, e-learning, training courses, workshops, reading, action learning sets, work shadowing, coaching and mentoring…the options are almost endless!

We have recently reviewed, consolidated and streamlined our learning and development offer to bring everything together under the banner of our Children’s Learning Academy which includes a dedicated Social Work Faculty. Our new Learning Platform will publicise, promote and support all the many and varied learning and development opportunities that we offer. This process has provided an opportunity to further strengthen existing relationships between our Principal Children and Families Social Worker, Quality Assurance ‘Beyond Auditing’ Team, Learning and Development Team and the Corporate Organisational Development Team to provide an evidence and best practice basis to our overall improvement and development.

## Our Senior Leadership Team

The Buckinghamshire Children’s Services Senior Leadership Team is as follows:

**Tolis Vouyioukas**

**Executive Director**

**Richard Nash Service Director**

**Children's Social Care**

**Sarah Callaghan Service Director Education & Learning**

**Mark Green Development Manager**

## Our Children’s Social Care Teams and Services

Buckinghamshire Children’s Social Care Services has five service areas located mainly across the three key area office sites which are in Aylesbury, High Wycombe and Amersham:

**Amanda Andrews, Head of First Response Service** (including the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub plus the SWAN, Assessment & Emergency Social Work Teams)

The First Response Service manages the ‘front door’ and works together with key internal and external partners, from BCC Early Help, Thames Valley Police and Health Services, including out of hours overnight, at weekends and on bank holidays. The MASH, which is collocated at the Police Station in Aylesbury, triages a high volume of new contacts and referrals on a daily basis and gathers multi-agency information and intelligence to inform timely decisions about how children, young people and their families will receive appropriate support and intervention. The MASH routinely receives and responds to reports about missing children and young people and domestic abuse. This enables swift and easy access to Early Help support services and statutory single assessments by the social work Assessment Teams. The SWAN provides additional support and expertise for children and young people who have suffered, or are at risk of suffering, significant harm as a result of exploitation.

**Errol Albert, Head of Safeguarding Service** (including Help & Protection, Court, Family Assessment & Support and the Children & Teenager Community Help Teams)

The Safeguarding Service provides social work services for children and young people subject to Children in Need and Child Protection Plans, including intervention via the courts to determine safeguarding and long term permanence plans when required. The FAS and CATCH Teams work alongside the Help & Protection and Court Teams providing additional support, resources and expertise for children, young people and their families with the aim of keeping families together and avoiding children becoming looked after.

**Paulette Thompson, Interim Head of Care Management Services** (including Disabled Children, Children in Care and Care Leaver Teams, plus Contact Centres)

The Care Management Service has Children in Care and Care Leaving Teams that are organised into North and South Teams, located in Aylesbury and High Wycombe. Children in Care and Care Leaving Teams are integrated and collocated to provide seamless transitional arrangements as young people get older and become supported by Professional Advisors (PAs) as they move to young adulthood and independence. Likewise the Disabled Children’s Teams are also organised into North and South Teams located in Aylesbury and High Wycombe and work with disabled children and young people in need and their families. The Care Management Service runs the contact centres across the county to facilitate safe and enjoyable contact between children and their birth parents and siblings.

**Nathan Whitley, Head of Care Services** (including Fostering, Adoption, Residential Care, Access to Resources Team and Placement Commissioning)

Care Services undertake recruitment, commissioning and support to identify and deliver first class fostering, adoption and residential placement services. This includes the delivery of in-house services and commissioning arrangements with external providers. The external providers include Independent Fostering Agencies (IFAs) and private and voluntary (P&V) residential providers. The service also supports the independently chaired Fostering and Adoption Panels. The Access to Resources Team works with all the internal social work teams to respond to placement requests and play a key role in the Children’s Care Planning & Resources Panel which oversees all new and changing placement arrangements. There are ambitious plans to increase in-house foster carers by 20% year on year and bring four new in-house children’s residential care homes on stream by 2020.

**Julie Davies, Head of Quality Standards and Performance Services** (including Child Protection Advisors, LADO, Independent Review Officers plus the Family Group Conference, Quality Assurance - Beyond Auditing & Right to Information Teams as well as the Principal Social Worker)

The Quality Standards and Performance Service bring together a number of different teams that provide a ‘critical friend’ role to quality assure the standard of social work practice and maintain compliance with policies and procedures. The CPAs and IROs play a critical role in championing children and young people in need of protection and care and the LADO coordinates multi-agency activity whenever there are allegations about professionals working with children and young people in positions of trust, in a paid or unpaid capacity. The FGC Team promotes family based solutions to strengthen safety planning and care arrangements for children and young people. The PSW leads the Quality Assurance ‘Beyond Auditing’ Team providing a comprehensive programme of ‘deep dive’ audits and reviews with an extensive programme of practice developments and initiatives. The Right to Information Team deals with requests for advocacy, access to records, data security and learning from complaints.

# Job Summary

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| **Post Title** | Supervised Contact Practitioner | **Pay Range** | Range 6 |
| **Service Area** | Children’s Social Care | **Location** | Aylesbury |

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| **Job Purpose** |
| * **To co-ordinate and deliver a range of contact services and support packages to children, young people and their families in the area.** |

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| **Main Responsibilities and Duties** |
| 1. Following referral, to work collaboratively with the referring social worker and contact co-ordinator to establish the service user’s eligibility for contact and to ensure contacts are implemented in a timely manner. 2. To work in partnership with children and their parents, families, foster carers, social work teams and other relevant agencies to safeguard children and achieve positive outcomes. 3. To liaise with Social Workers for up to date care arrangements, contact arrangements and up to date risk assessments. 4. To undertake formal planning and contact reviews in conjunction with the service user, social worker and carers. 5. To work together with the management to produce a contact plan that will meet the needs of the service user and which takes account of policies, guidelines and procedures. 6. To promote the welfare of children and young people in accordance with the Children’s Act 1989 criteria, and taking account of other relevant legislation as appropriate. 7. To ensure that the views of children and young people are represented at each stage and to encourage children and young people to participate throughout the contact process. 8. Work with management to ensure that the agreed Contact Plan can be provided within the available resources and budget. 9. To supervised contact between child/ren and their parent/family member 10. To take responsibility of quality assuring and the uploading of reports completed by workers within the set timescales and to address issues of quality on a 1:1 basis. 11. To provide ongoing support and advice to service users and parents or carers. 12. To maintain accurate recordings and reports in line with procedures, and use computerised database systems as appropriate. 13. To assist with the development of standards of practice and training and development activities. 14. To take part in peer supervision groups and working sub-groups both within and outside the service. 15. To be aware of the Council’s aims, organisational values and behaviours and their impact on this post. 16. To participate in the Council’s performance management processes. 17. To carry out the duties of the post in accordance with the Council’s diversity policy. 18. To carry out all duties and responsibilities with reasonable care for the health and safety of you and any other persons who may be affected by your acts or omissions at work and to co-operate fully with the County Council in health and safety matters. 19. To take responsibility for personal and professional development, accessing learning and training opportunities appropriate to the role. |



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| **Flexibility** |
| This job summary is not intended to be exhaustive and it is likely that duties may be altered from time to time in the light of changing circumstances, in discussion with the post holder. This job summary is intended to provide a broad outline of the main responsibilities only. The post holder will need to be flexible in developing the role with initial and ongoing discussions with the designated manager. |

# Person Specification

The following criteria will be assessed from information provided on your completed application form, during the shortlisting and assessment process, and from your references.

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| **Qualifications, training and requirements** | **Essential** | **Desirable** |
| • Relevant professional qualification | **** |  |

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| **Knowledge, Skills and Experience** | **Essential** | **Desirable** |
| Substantial relevant experience of working with children, with evidence of work responsibilities appropriate to the role |  |  |
| Knowledge of the legislative and theoretical framework within which we work. |  |  |
| Communicate in writing to a high level (produce reports). |  |  |
| Communicate orally to a high level (present information clearly to service users/colleagues and other agencies). |  |  |
| Make and sustain effective working relationships with service users and colleagues. |  |  |
| Proven ability to work with challenging client groups and situations |  |  |
| Manage workload/time, the ability to prioritise tasks |  |  |
| Relate theory to practice |  |  |
| Assess and evaluate |  |  |
| Plan and review |  |  |
| Have good interpersonal skills |  |  |
| IT skills |  |  |
| Work on own initiative and seek support and guidance as appropriate. |  |  |
| Demonstrate an awareness of the importance of diversity for employees and service users. |  |  |
| To be available to be ‘On Call’ over weekend and after core working hours. |  |  |
| Sustain commitment and enthusiasm. |  |  |



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| **Other Requirements** | **Essential** | **Desirable** |
| We expect your behaviours to reflect the values of the organisation: | **** |  |
| * **Ambitious** about what’s possible * **Accountable** for our actions and decisions * **Caring** in our approach * **Collaborative** in the creation of solutions   Plus, we expect you to model the Children’s Social Care values and focus on:   * Keeping children and young people’s lived experiences at the heart of everything we do * Working collaboratively with and for our children and families, acknowledging their contribution and building on their strengths * Remaining passionate about keeping children safe and well and making a positive difference every day * Making sure that everyone’s voice is heard, including children, families, our staff and partners, so that we work reflectively, openly and with integrity * Assuring the quality of practice and managing our performance to inform service improvement and development |
| Access to / use of a vehicle is an essential requirement. | **** |  |
| Ability to travel to a number of diverse locations across the county within the working day. | **** |  |
| This post is exempt under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. Due to the sensitive nature of the duties the post holder will be expected to undertake a criminal record check as part of the recruitment process. | **** |  |