

**Executive Director – Children and Learning**  
**Giving every child the best start in life**

**Role profile and Person Specification**

**Overview**

Camden is an amazing place to grow up, to learn and to live. It is unique and diverse, offering all the assets of a global city – such as world-renowned museums, universities, parks and open spaces – that we believe can help to give our young people the very best childhood and route into adult life. Our schools are exceptional, with the majority rated ‘good’ or ‘outstanding’, which, alongside our investment in early years support in our children’s centres, provides fantastic opportunities for future generations.

But we are facing immense challenges.

To reflect the systemic change needed to “move the dial” on inequality, disproportionality, and injustice – to hold the space for complex issues so that professionals and leaders can come together to design, test and iterate new services and approaches. The birth rate in Camden has fallen to the lowest in the UK, with fewer children being born in our borough. Deepening inequalities are causing people to leave our borough and the cost-of-living crisis is forcing too many local families to live one pay cheque to the next, or meaning children are growing up in overcrowded homes.

Everything we do is focused on giving every child the best start in the life. As a senior leader in Camden we expect you to take our high standards and use them to engage with partners and anchors and institutions to further our ambitions for Camden’s children and young people. We want you to challenge the organisation and our community to think creatively and expansively about how we use all our financial, regulatory and civic levers to make Camden the best place to grow up.

We listen carefully to the voices experiences, ambitions and ideas of children and young people and ensure they feel seen and heard. We make sure they have access to all the services they need and are supported to develop the skills and relationships they need for later life. We continue to invest in an enhanced universal service offer for the first 1001 days. And we are building an education system that is fit for all the challenges facing our borough.

Safeguarding children and keeping them safe from harm will always be the utmost priority for the Council and partners. Sometimes we need to step in and look after children at risk, and when this happens, we do everything in our power to care for them well, ensuring they have a safe place to call home and access to the healthcare and education they need. You will provide support and leadership for social work professionals including listening to what they need to recruit, retain and develop staff to deliver our services to the highest standard

Likewise giving children and young people the best education opportunities is vital to reducing inequalities and supporting children to thrive. The pandemic has widened inequalities in accessing education and the opportunities that the school environment provides – including safety, social connection and access to food. We want every child in Camden to grow up and develop their own unique set of skills, passions and ambitions. When children leave school, they must be able to pursue their dreams in our borough. You will help us challenge silos and ensure that the safety, flourishing and success of children and young people is the responsibility of the whole organisation – to ensure that there is no departmentalism that affects a systemic view of safety and risk

### **What we need from you**

Everything we do in Camden is about supporting our communities and our people and we are looking for an Executive Director who shares our vision to make Camden the best place to grow up. You will have responsibility for all our children's services departments, youth services and education. You will work creatively and compassionately, listening to the voices, ambitions and ideas of our children and young people – and putting them and their families at the heart of everything we do.

A genuine collaborator, you will nurture our spirit of activism and continue our journey to create truly relational services through your leadership of Camden's outstanding children's workforce.

You will have a strong track record in leading excellent services. You need to have a very good understanding of how local authorities work and experience of influencing at a senior level across the wider political spectrum. Current or previous experience at Exec Director, Director or Deputy/Assistant Director level is essential.

But most importantly you will be excited by the opportunity to join a children's services function where children's services are rated 'Outstanding' by Ofsted and our youth justice services are rated 'Outstanding' by HMIP. You will recognise the strong base you will be working from and have ambitions to continue our whole system approach. With an ability to shape the future of service provision for children and young people at a local and national level.

We need a leader who is real and present, leading at their best whatever the circumstances, and who has a breadth of purpose beyond their own ends. We need a leader who is willing and able to be vulnerable, curious and open. Who can create spaces for listening, having difficult conversations and building deep trust. We need someone who can share power – both within and across the organisation, but most importantly with our families and communities. You will help us build on our relational approach in children's services and challenge the whole Council to become relational in our work with residents – taking the our social work learning into the wider organisation without

diluting the specific role of social workers and teams working directly with children and young people.

We want to maintain and build on our rebellious spirit and continue our relational journey, developing our Camden model of social work and activism alongside the people we serve. Living by our mission that ‘to love is to act’. And this is despite the challenging context within which we work and the potential for change in governing models over the coming years. We need a leader who has the creativity and ability to be optimistic and create credible futures for Camden despite constraints. We need a leader who can influence beyond Camden’s borders locally and nationally too.

**Role profile: Common Accountabilities *(relevant for all Camden roles at this level)***

- Advise the Council and its Members as required on corporate performance and on the development of long-term strategies to achieve the Council’s priorities.
- As part of the Camden Management Team contribute to the corporate management and leadership of the organisation including leading corporate wide initiatives.
- Ensuring a strong vision for the areas of responsibility which ensure innovative and forward thinking approaches to the delivery of outcomes whilst ensuring that strategies are well evidenced and evaluated.
- Embed a culture in which services are designed around and with residents and service users based on their needs. This will include a system of continuous learning, assessment and improvement ensuring maximum value of the Camden pound.
- Lead the Directorate and contribute to the leadership of the organisation, ensuring a high calibre, motivated and effective and empowered workforce. Ensure the embedding of a digitally focused, agile way of working with staff embodying The Way We Work and We Make Camden.
- Lead by example in championing and furthering equity and inclusion within the workplace and in the delivery of our services.
- As part of the Camden Management Team ensure that the work of the Council generally and the designated directorate specifically is high quality and achieves its objectives, by effective performance and risk management.
- Contributes to the development of medium-term financial strategies and lead their implementation in the designated directorate.
- Represent the Council promoting its image and reputation on a national and London wide stage, helping to influence national and regional policies and strategies.

**Role profile: Role specific accountabilities**

- To provide strategic leadership so that the purpose of the directorate and the best possible outcomes for children, young people and their families are achieved.
- The post-holder will be the Statutory Director of Children’s Services.
- Be a champion for children, young people, families and carers.
- Provide personal leadership to the Council and the organisation for ensuring children are safe/safeguarded.
- Ensure that the directorate continues strategies for intervening early and preventing problems escalating.

- Works across services, across organisational boundaries and alongside residents to help overcome disadvantage and achieve the best start in life and help people to live independently, and healthily.
- Leads research and evidence collection and evaluation to inform innovation, future strategies and innovation.
- Provide strategic leadership to ensure that our services, across the organisation and children's trust partners, are focused on enabling Camden's children and young people to be safe, happy and fulfil their full potential, promoting achievement and aspiration for all.
- Work with colleagues to ensure we tackle educational disadvantage, ensuring nobody is left behind.
- Provide clear leadership to the on-going development of Camden Learning as a Company Director, working closely with the Chair of the Board and CEO.
- Ensure strategic leadership of our future vision for equity and excellence as set out in our Education Strategy. Creating a strong placed based, ambitious inclusive, and collaborative and federated system.
- Ensure an effective system of SEN, early years and lifelong learning is in place, and a system which is integrated with family and employment support across the directorate and Council.
- Ensure that strategies for keeping children safe embody a whole family, whole system approach, developing effective and enduring partnership working.

#### Person specification: skills and experience

##### **A successful candidate will demonstrate:**

- Ability to demonstrate successful achievement in context of leadership at Chief Officer level in a large, diverse organisation, either within local government or within a social care and/or learning context
- Evidence of successfully managing the development and delivery of large-scale change and operations.
- Experience of working effectively within a political environment providing balanced advice and guidance on strategic and operational issues.
- Evidence of managing sophisticated transformational change successfully in order to improve outcomes.
- Evidence of successful strategic and operational resource management including evidence of the resolution of conflicting priorities within tight financial constraints.
- Able to demonstrate success in forging partnerships with a wide range of internal and external bodies such as government, voluntary and community sector, other public sector bodies, businesses, inspectorates and other stakeholders.

#### Person specification: attributes and capabilities

**A successful candidate will demonstrate the following attributes and capabilities:**

**Being real and present:**

- Conscious individuals at their best (whatever is happening)
- Have a breadth of purpose beyond their own ends
- Vulnerable, curious and open

**In partnership with all:**

- Creating spaces for listening with full attention
- Having the difficult conversations
- Building deep trust and believing in others
- Sharing power – creating more leaders

**Guided by purpose:**

- Imaginative solutions
- In partnership with the community

**Strategic thinking:**

- Takes a long-term view
- Ambitious and innovative
- Visionary

**Citizen focused:**

- Demonstrates empathy and understanding for citizens and their needs
- Puts citizens at the forefront of thought / decision-making
- Is concerned / focused on quality

**Judgement and decision-making;**

- Acts on facts
- Is prepared and able to take tough decisions
- Risk awareness and ability to manage / mitigate risk

**Person specification: the basics**

**A successful candidate will be able to demonstrate the following:**

**Education;**

- Appropriate professional qualification

**Financial management;**

- Strong financial management skills

**Equality & Diversity;**

- A track record of promoting diversity and inclusion in the workplace and in the delivery of services

**Health and Safety;**

- Ability to promote health and safety at all times

**Data / information management;**

- Strong track record in information management, information sharing and datahandling in accordance with Data Protection legislation and best practice