

# London Borough of Camden

## Director of Children’s Safeguarding and Social Work



An exciting vacancy for an ambitious children’s safeguarding director who wants to be at the forefront of pioneering good practice is being sought by the London Borough of Camden.

The borough is home to some of the most innovative and creative organisations in the country but also has some of its poorest communities and areas of ingrained inequalities. It contains both leafy residential streets and inner city estates with a highly diverse population.

Following the imminent retirement of the current post-holder the council is now looking for a Director of Children’s Safeguarding and Social Work whose brief will include safeguarding children, corporate parenting, care leavers, and leading for the council on domestic abuse.

In the words of Martin Pratt, Executive Director, Supporting People and Deputy Chief Executive: ‘This is a council that is full of passion and energy. We are looking for a director with an appetite for innovation and who wants to be at the forefront of developing good practice,

not simply following the curve. We have a very stable leadership team with strong member support.’

The next director will find firm foundations on which to build. The children’s service is highly respected by its peers and supports other councils through sector-led improvement with the Department for Education’s Partners in Practice programme. Unusually the council has maintained low rates of children in care for the last five years thanks to its strategy of early intervention through its Resilient Families Programme. Some 30% of the



**Martin Pratt, Executive Director, Supporting People and Deputy Chief Executive Camden LBC**

council’s looked-after children are unaccompanied asylum seekers while 49% of the children in the Borough are from black or minority ethnic backgrounds.

Martin adds: ‘We started the strategy early, invested in a clear plan and the investment paid off. We haven’t overspent on children’s services in five years even though we’re not over-resourced by any means. We’ve been able to create a virtuous cycle of putting money back into early intervention.’ There is a strong partnership with schools and the NHS and the whole system is orientated towards early intervention with children and families having access to high quality support before statutory social work involvement.

In 2017 Ofsted reviewed the council and rated its leadership, management and governance as ‘outstanding’ with a ‘good’ for children who need help and protection and ‘good’ for children in care and achieving permanence. The council’s aim is to have ‘outstanding’ across the board. The report added: ‘The director of children’s services and the leadership team have formed

a dynamic, professionally fertile environment for social workers at all levels of experience to engage with children and families.’

**The director will have a pivotal role in leading high quality systemic practice and championing the council’s work as corporate parents**

The service has its challenges such as working with young people who are in danger of being criminally exploited by gangs. There are rising numbers of domestic abuse cases which have become more complex under COVID-19. But Ofsted’s 2017 report commented: ‘Children who go missing and are, or are likely to be, at risk of sexual exploitation, serious youth violence or gang affiliation are protected through highly effective multiagency strategic arrangements. This results in flexible, nimble operational frontline responses. Intelligence is quickly gathered and analysed, and the information is

shared across a broad spectrum of services.’

The director will have a pivotal role in leading high quality systemic practice and championing the council’s work as corporate parents. Martin Pratt says: ‘The person will also be an influential corporate leader. However, she or he will be starting to do this work as we meet the needs of children, families, and communities in a time of pandemic, and as we challenge ourselves to renew our practice in light the stark inequalities which have been thrown into sharp relief by both COVID-19 and the challenge to do better from Black Lives Matter. For us this role is not just about social work, but social justice.’ The council is keen to hear from a diverse field of candidates especially black and minority ethnic social work professionals.

Martin says that Camden’s mission is to be ‘a place where everyone has a chance to succeed, no one is left behind, and everyone has a voice.’ He adds that ‘our Children’s Services reflect this mission and the unique character of the place; ambitious, innovative, and compassionate.’ ■



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Job of the Week



### Director of Children’s Safeguarding & Social Work

Circa £115K

Camden is an amazing place; vibrant, diverse, radical, and ambitious. It is home to some of the most innovative and creative organisations in the country but also has some of the poorest communities and profound inequalities. We are therefore determined that Camden should be “a place where everyone has a chance to succeed, no one is left behind, and everyone has a voice”. Our Children’s Services reflect this mission and the unique character of the place; ambitious, innovative, and compassionate.

As Director of Children’s safeguarding and Social Work you will have a pivotal role in leading high-quality systemic practice and championing our work as corporate parents. You will also be an influential corporate leader.

Through our “Camden Conversations” we place the lived experience of children, young people, and parents at the heart of both service design and our service values; through the Resilient Families programme and strong partnerships we have shifted the centre of gravity of the whole system towards prevention and early intervention, and in the Camden Model of Social Work we have an established and exciting practice framework. For us this role is not just about Social Work, but social justice.

We encourage you to visit our microsite <https://search.green-park.co.uk/iamcamden-dcs/> and speak to our search partners Green Park

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