Head of Children's Homes – STRIDE Growing Futures Partnership

Job Description and Personal Specification

Role:	**Head of Children's Homes - Stride**
Place of work:	**Devon, with regular travel across the county and occasional travel nationally. Hybrid working with substantial presence across Devon services.**
Hours of work:	**37 hours per week**
Salary/Grade:	**CS1**
Reports to:	**Partnership Director**
Employer:	**Stride Growing Futures Partnership**
Responsible for:	**Registered Managers; Contract Performance Lead (where applicable); Future Service Managers within Stride Growing Futures Partnership**
Level of screening:	**Enhanced DBS**

Where you fit in

The Head of Children's Homes - Stride Growing Futures Partnership will provide strategic and operational leadership for all children's residential services delivered through the Stride Growing Futures Partnership contract.

The role will work as a key member of the Stride Growing Futures Partnership Senior Leadership Team, collaboratively leading the development, mobilisation and delivery of services that meet contractual requirements and contribute to Devon County Council's sufficiency strategy.

The postholder will lead and support Registered Managers to achieve excellence in practice, regulatory compliance and service performance, while ensuring safeguarding and welfare of children and young people remains at the forefront of all service delivery.

Job purpose

To provide strategic and operational leadership for all children's residential services delivered through Stride Growing Futures Partnership contract, ensuring excellent outcomes for children and young people through safe, innovative and high-quality care.

To lead mobilisation, development and expansion of residential services within the contract, ensuring that new homes become operational safely, efficiently and in accordance with agreed timescales.

To work collaboratively with commissioners, partner organisations, education providers, health colleagues and wider stakeholders to ensure effective multi-agency support and positive outcomes for children and young people.

Job context

Stride Growing Futures Partnership is a strategic partnership focused on strengthening local provision for children and young people in Devon through residential care, fostering and therapeutic education.

The Head of Children's Homes role is central to residential mobilisation, regulatory readiness, service quality, safeguarding, workforce culture, contract performance and continuous improvement across Stride Growing Futures Partnership homes.

The role will contribute as a senior leader within St Christopher's Fellowship, supporting organisational strategy, growth and continuous improvement.

Main Duties & Accountabilities

1. Leadership, strategy and growth

- Provide strong and effective leadership for all Stride Growing Futures Partnership residential services, developing a culture of excellence, accountability and continuous improvement.
- Actively contribute as a member of the Stride Growing Futures Partnership Senior Leadership Team and support the achievement of contract objectives and strategic outcomes.
- Lead the mobilisation, development and expansion of residential services within the contract, ensuring that new homes become operational safely, efficiently and in accordance with agreed timescales.
- Support the development and implementation of strategic plans that improve outcomes for children and young people whilst achieving contractual and organisational objectives.
- Monitor changes in legislation, policy, regulation and best practice and ensure these are translated into practice across services.
- Promote innovation and service development, ensuring that practice reflects current evidence, children's needs and emerging sector learning.
- Represent Catch22, St Christopher's Fellowship and the Stride Growing Futures Partnership at local, regional and national forums as required.
- Support the Leadership and Management of the home(s) as Responsible Individual n line with the Children's Homes Regulations (2015) and Leadership and Management Standard.

2. Service delivery and contract performance

- Provide overall leadership and oversight of children's residential services delivered through the Stride Growing Futures Partnership contract.
- Ensure all services operate in accordance with Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015, Quality Standards, Children's Social Care National Framework, Children's Wellbeing and Placement Principles, relevant Ofsted requirements and St Christopher's policies and procedures.
- Ensure appropriate systems and processes are in place to provide high-quality care and support and evidence positive outcomes for children and young people.
- Maintain effective oversight of occupancy, referrals, admissions, matching, transitions and placement stability.

- Work closely with Devon County Council to ensure contractual requirements, service specifications and key performance indicators are achieved.
- Lead service improvement activity where required and ensure timely implementation of action plans arising from audits, inspections, complaints or safeguarding reviews.
- Ensure effective partnership working across the wider Stride Growing Futures Partnership including Catch22 and other stakeholders.
- Provide regular performance reports to the Director of Operations UK, St Christopher's Senior Leadership Team, Stride Growing Futures Partnership governance structures and Trustees as required.

3. Safeguarding, quality and practice excellence

- Ensure that safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people remains central to all service delivery.
- Ensure robust safeguarding systems are operating across all services and that concerns are identified, escalated and addressed appropriately.
- Provide leadership in relation to trauma-informed practice, relational care, contextual safeguarding and participation.
- Ensure children are actively involved in shaping services and influencing decisions affecting their lives.
- Maintain effective quality assurance systems, audits and monitoring arrangements to provide assurance regarding standards of care.
- Drive continuous improvement through inspection readiness, learning reviews, performance data and feedback from children and stakeholders.
- Support Registered Managers in achieving and maintaining Ofsted judgements of Good or Outstanding.

4. Financial and resource management

- Lead operational delivery within agreed budgets and financial frameworks.
- Monitor financial performance and take corrective action where necessary to ensure services operate sustainably and efficiently.
- Ensure appropriate systems of financial control, procurement and expenditure management are operated across services.
- Work closely with finance colleagues to monitor contract performance, occupancy and forecasted income.
- Identify opportunities to improve efficiency, maximise value for money and support future growth.

5. People leadership

- Lead, motivate and develop managers and staff to create high-performing services and positive workplace cultures.
- Promote a culture of learning, reflection and professional development.
- Ensure effective workforce planning, recruitment, retention and succession planning arrangements are in place.
- Promote wellbeing and employee engagement across all services.
- Ensure performance management arrangements are implemented consistently and effectively.
- Support the development of future leaders within the Stride Growing Futures Partnership contract.
- Provide adequate supervision to the Registered Manager of home(s) in line with the responsibilities of the Responsible Individual.

6. Other responsibilities

- Participate in senior management on-call arrangements as required.
- Promote and implement all St Christopher's policies and procedures and lead by example.
- Uphold and promote equality, diversity, inclusion and anti-discriminatory practice in all aspects of work.
- Maintain a safe working environment and ensure compliance with Health and Safety legislation and organisational policies.

- Undertake any other duties reasonably consistent with the level and responsibilities of the post.

What does good look like for this role?

- Safe, high-quality residential services that evidence positive outcomes for children and young people.
- Strong regulatory grip, with homes operating in line with children's homes regulations, quality standards and Ofsted requirements.
- Visible and values-led leadership across Registered Managers and future service managers.
- Effective mobilisation of new homes, with risks, staffing, registration, property and practice readiness managed proactively.
- Confident contract performance, with clear reporting to Stride Growing Futures Partnership governance structures and senior stakeholders.
- Strong partnership working with Devon County Council, Catch22, St Christopher's Fellowship and wider health, education and community partners.
- A culture of trauma-informed, relational and participatory practice that supports children to thrive.

Organisational Relationships

- The postholder will report to the Partnership Director.
- Direct line management and leadership responsibility for Registered Managers, Contract Performance Lead where applicable, and future Service Managers within the Stride Growing Futures Partnership contract.
- Work closely with Stride Growing Futures Partnership Senior Leadership Team colleagues across homes, fostering, education, safeguarding, quality, finance, people and operations.
- Work collaboratively with Devon County Council commissioners, operational leads, safeguarding partners, health colleagues, education providers and wider stakeholders.
- Represent Catch22, St Christopher's Fellowship and the Stride Growing Futures Partnership at local, regional and national forums as required.
- Provide reporting to the Director of Operations UK, St Christopher's Senior Leadership Team, Stride Growing Futures Partnership governance structures and Trustees as required.

Head of Children's Homes - Stride Growing Futures Partnership: Person Specification

COMPETENCY	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE	ASSESSMENT
EDUCATION / QUALIFICATIONS	**Professional qualification relevant to children's services, social work, residential childcare or leadership.** **Level 5 Diploma in Leadership and Management for Residential Childcare or equvalent.** **Evidence of continuing professional development.**	**Leadership or management qualification.** **Additional training in safeguarding, trauma-informed practice, quality assurance or service improvement.**	**Application / Interview / Certificate**
EXPERIENCE / KNOWLEDGE	**Significant senior management experience in children's residential care including the role of Responsible Individual.**	**Experience in a strategic partnership, local authority contract or multi-agency delivery model.**	**Application / Interview**

	Experience of leading multiple residential homes. Experience of service mobilisation and growth. Strong understanding of Children's Homes Regulations and Quality Standards. Experience of working with commissioners and external stakeholders. Experience of managing significant operational budgets. Demonstrable experience of improving service quality and inspection outcomes. Knowledge of trauma-informed and relational practice. Understanding of contextual safeguarding, participation and preparation for adulthood.	Knowledge of children's social care sufficiency, therapeutic education or integrated care models. Experience of developing or registering new homes.	
SKILLS / ATTRIBUTES	Strong strategic leadership capability. Outstanding relationship management skills. Ability to influence senior stakeholders and commissioners. Financially literate with strong commercial awareness. Strong analytical and problem-solving skills. Excellent written and presentation skills. Ability to lead organisational change and service development. Ability to work effectively in partnership environments. Commitment to achieving positive outcomes for children and young people.	Ability to translate mobilisation plans into operational delivery. Experience of using performance data, QA information and inspection learning to drive improvement.	Application / Interview / Task
OTHER	Commitment to equality, diversity, inclusion and anti-discriminatory practice. Ability to travel across Devon and occasionally nationally. Willingness to participate in senior management on-call arrangements as required. Enhanced DBS clearance.	Full driving licence and access to a vehicle for work purposes where required.	Application / Interview

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