



Job description			
Job title	Service Manager - Statutory SEND Services and Transport		
Grade	PMG 2		
Directorate	Children's Services		
Service/team	Inclusion Service		
Accountable to	Head of Inclusion		
Responsible for	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statutory SEND Team (including EHCP assessment, reviews and disagreement resolution). • SEND provision commissioning, including special schools, inclusion bases, and post 16 commissioning. • Mainstream top-up funding administration and coordination of High Needs Block resource management. • Preparation for Adulthood (PfA) and SEND employment pathways, including supported internships. • Children's and adults' transport, in relation to education and social care. • Independent travel training. 		
JE Reference	B1361	Date Reviewed	March 2026

Purpose of the Job

The *Service Manager (Statutory SEND Services and Transport)* provides strategic and operational oversight across a range of inter-related services that support children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities aged 0–25. The role has responsibility for the Statutory SEND Team, which discharges all duties relating to Education, Health and Care Plans (including assessment, review and dispute resolution), alongside SEND sufficiency planning and commissioning to ensure appropriate provision across specialist settings, inclusion bases and post-16. The postholder also oversees transport services and the independent travel training offer, primarily supporting access to school and college, with some provision for children's and adults' social care. In addition, the role provides oversight of Preparation for Adulthood



and SEND employment pathways, supporting young people to achieve successful transitions into adulthood.

The role places children, young people and families at the centre of all decision-making. The postholder will champion high-quality, person-centred practice, ensuring statutory processes are carried out lawfully, efficiently and compassionately, and that families experience a clear, consistent and supportive SEND journey.

Duties and Responsibilities

This is not a comprehensive list of all the tasks, which may be required of the post holder. It is illustrative of the general nature and level of responsibility of the work to be undertaken.

1. Strategic Leadership and Service Development

- Provide strategic leadership for all statutory SEND functions, ensuring services are aligned with the SEND and Inclusion Strategy, wider corporate objectives and national policy.
- Strategic leadership of the SEND statutory assessment and review service (including EHC needs assessments, annual reviews, and all related disagreement resolution).
- Develop and implement long-term service plans that improve efficiency, effectiveness, and outcomes for children and young people with SEND aged 0–25.
- Lead specialist provision sufficiency and commissioning (special schools, inclusion bases, and 16–25 education pathways).
- Lead service transformation and modernisation initiatives, ensuring continuous improvement and innovation.
- Assess local need and service performance to shape commissioning intentions, resource allocation, and future service design.
- Lead delivery of children’s and adult’s transport linked to education and social care.
- Deputise for the Head of Inclusion, as well as supporting leadership across the whole service.

2. Operational Oversight and Performance Management

- Oversee the effective delivery of operational support functions that underpin statutory SEND processes, ensuring timely, high-quality administration and case coordination.
- Establish and monitor robust performance frameworks, KPIs, and quality assurance systems across all statutory SEND services.
- Use data, analytics and intelligence to drive improvements, mitigate risk, and ensure services remain responsive and efficient.
- Ensure consistent and compliant processes relating to top-up funding, High Needs Block allocations, and commissioning activity.



3. Commissioning, Sufficiency and Market Management

- Maintain a sufficiency strategy informed by local needs, demand projections and outcomes data.
- Lead specialist commissioning activity for SEND and post-16/post-19 pathways, including sufficiency planning and market development.
- Build strong relationships with schools, FE providers, specialist colleges, training and employment providers to expand and strengthen local SEND pathways.
- Oversee contract management, provider performance, and quality assurance to ensure high-quality, value-for-money provision.
- Ensure evidence-based recommendations inform strategic decisions around the High Needs Block and future investment.
- Work closely with the Council's Commissioning Service while retaining strategic leadership and budget oversight for transport, ensuring provision is efficient, sustainable, legally compliant and aligned with local sufficiency needs.

4. Preparation for Adulthood and Employment Pathways

- Oversee SEND employment pathways, including Supported Internships, traineeships and specialist employment programmes.
- Work with partners to expand internship capacity, strengthen job-coaching models and improve post-16/19 destinations.
- Collaborate with NEET prevention teams to ensure young people with SEND — particularly those with EHCPs — access education, employment or training.

5. Financial Management

- Provide strategic oversight of significant budgets (circa £40m), including High Needs Block allocations, High Needs Provision Capital, and transport expenditure.
- Oversee mainstream top-up funding administration, ensuring decisions are equitable, transparent and evidence-based.
- Ensure strong forecasting, monitoring and governance; identify cost-avoidance opportunities and improve value for money.
- Support Dedicated Schools Grant recovery planning, as required.
- Work collaboratively with Social Care, Health and other services to agree joint funding arrangements for complex cases and integrated packages of support, ensuring clear decision-making, appropriate cost-sharing and defensible rationale.

6. Partnership and Stakeholder Engagement



- Promote co-production with families and young people so that lived experience informs service design and review.
- Work closely with schools, FE providers, health partners, social care, parent/carer groups and voluntary sector organisations to strengthen local SEND arrangements.
- Represent the local authority at local, regional and national forums, sharing expertise and shaping sector-wide developments.

7. Governance, Assurance and Risk Management

- Oversee governance, assurance and legal-risk management across statutory SEND functions, ensuring defensible decision-making, compliance with statutory requirements and timely escalation of high-risk cases/issues to the Head of Inclusion.
- Coordinate inspection readiness activities for the SEND functions within their portfolio, ensuring robust evidence, assurance processes and contributions to local area inspection preparation.
- Ensure appropriate governance arrangements, decision-making processes, and audit trails are in place across all services.
- Identify, manage and mitigate risks related to service delivery, commissioning, and financial sustainability.
- Oversight of Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman complaints, tribunals, judicial reviews and complex dispute resolution.

8. Policy, Compliance and Professional Standards

- Maintain up-to-date service policies, procedures and frameworks in accordance with national guidance, including the SEND Code of Practice.
- Ensure services comply with legislative requirements, corporate policies, and safeguarding duties.
- Provide high-quality professional advice and reports to senior leaders, boards and elected members.

9. Leadership and Workforce Development

- Lead, support and develop multi-disciplinary teams to ensure high performance, resilience and strong professional practice.
- Establish a strong culture of collaboration, inclusion, accountability and continuous learning.
- Ensure staff access robust training and CPD (SEND law, person-centred practice, commissioning, PfA, and quality assurance).

10. Corporate Responsibilities

- Deputise for the Head of Inclusion as required.
- Contribute to wider corporate priorities, emergency planning arrangements and cross-council initiatives.



- Promote Knowsley Better Together values and model exemplary leadership behaviours.

11. Corporate Parenting

- As part of your role with the Council, you share a collective responsibility to support and champion children and young people who are cared for by the Council and young people who are care experienced. Children and young people tell us that including this in all job descriptions “is good” because they want all Council employees to understand how important it is to “treat children in care and care experienced young people as they would their own”. We ask that you do this with the same commitment, care and ambition that any parent would, regardless of your job role or service area. Children and young people tell us that they want all Council employees to be “genuine”, helping to create a supportive environment, remaining alert to any worries and concerns, and ensuring that safeguarding is promoted and responded to appropriately.

Knowsley Better Together – Staff Qualities



Health and Safety

- To use equipment as instructed and trained.
- To inform management of any health and safety issues which could place individuals at risk.



Data Protection and Information Security

- Implement and act in accordance with the Information Security Acceptable Use Policy, Data Protection Policy and GDPR.
- Protect the Council's information assets from unauthorised access, disclosure, modification, destruction or interference.
- Report actual or potential security incidents.

As a senior officer, you will be expected to support the Council's emergency preparedness, response, and recovery arrangements; this may include, but is not restricted to, participation in appropriate training and exercises, participation in our emergency duty officer rota, and attending Strategic and/or Tactical and/or Recovery Coordinating Groups with our multi-agency partners.