

Personal Assistant Applicant Recruitment Pack

Sefton is a really great place to live and work



Welcome

Hi,

We would like to thank you for your interest in the Personal Assistant role within Sefton Council's Children's Services Team, supporting our Senior Leadership Team.

This is an exciting and rewarding opportunity for someone who thrives on being organised, is approachable and wants to be at the heart of a busy and varied working environment.

You'll play a key role in keeping things running smoothly, bringing structure where it's needed, offering a warm and supportive presence, and approaching every task with professionalism and a positive, can-do attitude. Confidentiality is essential in this role, and we're looking for someone who can be trusted to handle sensitive information with care, discretion, and integrity.

As a person, if you're someone who enjoys helping others, takes pride in delivering high-quality support, and brings energy, adaptability, and a genuine passion for making a difference, we'd be delighted to hear from you.

The Job Description and Person Specification for this role are included within the job pack. If you have any questions about the vacancy, please refer to the job pack for the appropriate contact details.

If, when you've finishing reading this pack, you like what you see, and Sefton's Vision and Values align to yours then we can't wait to hear from you.

Best of luck!

Megan McDonald

Personal Assistant to Executive Director of Children's Services



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About the Borough of Sefton

Sefton is a confident and well-connected Borough, stretching from Bootle in the south to the coastal resort of Southport in the north. Home to more than 275,000 residents, Sefton encompasses a range of vibrant towns and communities, including Bootle, Litherland, Seaforth, Crosby, Formby, Maghull and Southport.

It is a fantastic place to live and work. As the northern-most Borough within the Liverpool City Region, Sefton offers a unique blend of beautiful coastline, countryside, attractive villages, thriving industrial areas and the busy Port of Liverpool.

With 22 miles of stunning coastline, Sefton is a leading coastal destination with a growing visitor economy. It is home to the iconic Antony Gormley *Another Place* installation, expansive beaches and protected sand dunes that support several rare species.

While each town and village has its own distinctive character, it is the people of Sefton who make the Borough truly special, creating diverse, welcoming and energetic communities in which to live, work, invest and visit.

Alongside its miles of golden sands, Sefton offers those who work here access to a world-renowned racecourse, prestigious golf courses, and National Trust nature reserves, ideal places to unwind, explore and enjoy leisure time.

The Borough benefits from excellent transport links, providing easy access to major North West cities including Liverpool and Manchester, and placing the Lake District and North Wales within reach for weekend breaks.

Whether you prefer vibrant town centres, friendly commuter towns, picturesque villages or stunning rural and coastal locations, Sefton offers a place to suit everyone. With house prices and rents typically lower than in neighbouring Liverpool and Manchester, you can enjoy coastal living while still being close to the buzz of city life.



Our Vision and Values

At Sefton Council, our vision is to deliver high-quality services that make a real difference to the lives of our residents, visitors, and communities. Everything we do is guided by a strong set of values that shape how we work and interact:



- **We put people at the heart of what we do** – ensuring our services are responsive, inclusive, and focused on improving lives.
- **We listen, value, and respect each other's views** – fostering a culture of collaboration and mutual respect.
- **We develop a culture of challenge, ownership, innovation, and improvement** – encouraging creativity and continuous development.
- **We are ambassadors for Sefton** – promoting the Borough positively and proudly representing our communities.
- **We are responsive and efficient** – delivering services that are timely, effective, and customer-focused.
- **We are clear about what we can and cannot do** – being transparent and honest in all our communications and actions.

These values underpin our commitment to excellence, inclusivity, and innovation, ensuring that Sefton remains a great place to live, work, and visit.

Our Successes and Key Projects

Sefton Council is proud of its recent achievements and ongoing commitment to delivering high-quality services. Our Adult Social Care services were recently graded Good by the Care Quality Commission (CQC), and our Children's Services also



achieved a Good rating from Ofsted. These successes reflect the dedication and professionalism of our teams and our focus on continuous improvement.

More recently, we are exceptionally proud to have been nominated and subsequently shortlisted by the Local Government Chronicle for the Most Improved Council 2026. These successes reflect the dedication and professionalism of our teams and our focus on continuous improvement and our desire to make a difference across the communities within the Borough of Sefton.

Alongside these achievements, Sefton Council is actively delivering a range of major capital projects that will transform the Borough and stimulate economic growth. These include the Marine Lake Events Centre in Southport, the Strand Shopping Centre redevelopment in Bootle, and exciting developments such as the Cove Resort and Enterprise Arcade in Southport. We are also proud to support cultural and community initiatives like Salt and Tar, Bootle's vibrant events space, which hosts live music, comedy, and family-friendly activities, bringing people together and boosting the local economy.

These projects form part of our strategic investment programme to attract private sector-led development and create vibrant spaces for residents and visitors. We work closely with local communities to ensure these projects reflect their needs and foster a sense of ownership and pride.

For more information on these projects and to stay updated on progress, visit the Sefton Council website at www.sefton.gov.uk

An Inclusive Workplace

We are committed to fostering an inclusive Council that reflects the diverse communities we serve. Our workforce brings a wide range of experiences and perspectives, and we value an environment where everyone feels respected, supported, and able to reach their full potential.

Sefton is proud to be the first local authority in the Liverpool City Region to achieve **Navajo** accreditation, recognising our commitment to LGBTQ+ inclusion. We are also a Disability Confident employer and continue to build a workforce that represents our communities.

We support several staff networks, including groups for Black and Ethnically Diverse colleagues, LGBTQ+ staff, women, disabled employees, and a Christian Workplace Group.



As an Equal Opportunities Employer, we base recruitment solely on skills, experience, and



suitability for the role. All applicants are treated fairly, and we have also recognised 'care experienced' as a protected characteristic within Sefton.

For more information, please refer to our [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy](#)

Liverpool City Region Fair Employment Charter



Sefton Council is proud to support the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Fair Employment Charter, an initiative that promotes fair, healthy, inclusive, and just workplaces across the region. The Charter celebrates good employers and encourages the highest standards in employment practice, including fair pay, secure work, opportunities for progression, strong employee voice, and a commitment to staff wellbeing. By aligning with the Charter, we demonstrate our dedication to providing a fair day's pay for a fair day's work and to fostering an equitable and supportive working environment for all colleagues.

What We Can Offer You

- A supportive and collaborative working environment.
- An agile approach to working.
- Opportunities for professional development and career progression.
- A role where your work makes a real difference across the organisation.
- Flexible working arrangements supporting work-life balance.
- A strong commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion.

You will benefit from a comprehensive local government employment package which includes the following:

- Competitive salary in line with NJC Local Government Pay Scales.
- Membership of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS), providing a secure, defined benefit pension with employer contributions.

Annual Leave and Work-Life Balance

- Generous annual leave entitlement, 28 days annual leave rising to 33 days with 5 years continuous service.
- Additional public (bank) holidays.
- Flexible working options to support a healthy work-life balance, subject to service needs.
- Option to purchase additional annual leave.
- Sefton operate a 'Shut Down' period over the Christmas period which staff contribute four fifths of a week's pay over a 12-month period.

Learning, Development and Career Progression



- A comprehensive induction programme.
- Access to a wide range of training, apprenticeships, learning, and development opportunities.
- Support for professional development and role related qualifications.
- Opportunities to develop your career within a large and diverse local authority.

Health, Wellbeing and Support

- Enhanced sick pay scheme.
- Employee wellbeing initiatives and access to occupational health support.
- Policies that promote physical and mental wellbeing in the workplace.

Family-Friendly and Inclusive Policies

Our family-friendly policies and flexible working arrangements help staff maintain a healthy work-life balance.

- Family friendly policies, including enhanced maternity, paternity, adoption, neonatal care and special leave to support with time off work to deal with issues when life events happen.
- A strong organisational commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion.
- Reasonable adjustments and support to enable disabled employees to thrive.

Foster Friendly Employer Commitment

Sefton Council is proud to be a *Foster Friendly* organisation as recognised by The Fostering Network. We actively support employees who are foster carers or who are applying to foster by offering flexible working arrangements, paid time off for fostering-related meetings and training, and a workplace culture that recognises the vital role foster carers play in our communities.

This commitment helps ensure carers can balance fostering responsibilities alongside career, and reflects our dedication to supporting children, families, and those who care for them.

Additional Benefits

- Access to salary sacrifice and employee benefit schemes (where applicable).
- Opportunities to contribute to meaningful work that supports local communities.



- A supportive, values led organisational culture.
- Free parking at office bases (dependent upon the work location).

About the Role

This is a pivotal role within Children's Services, providing high-quality administrative and executive support to the Children's Services Senior Leadership Team across Social Care and Education. As a trusted Personal Assistant, you will play a vital role in ensuring senior leaders are effectively supported, well-briefed and able to focus on delivering high-quality services and positive outcomes for children, young people and families.

You will act as a key point of contact for a wide range of internal and external stakeholders, including senior leaders, elected members, schools, partner organisations and regulatory bodies. Managing a varied and fast-paced workload, you will demonstrate professionalism, discretion and the ability to build effective working relationships at all levels.

This role requires someone who thrives in a dynamic environment, can anticipate needs, and takes a proactive and highly organised approach to managing competing priorities. You will be confident working independently whilst contributing to the effective operation of the wider Children's Services Senior Leadership Team.

Key Responsibilities

- Comprehensive diary and inbox management, including scheduling and coordinating meetings and events.
- Prioritising tasks effectively and managing competing demands in a busy environment.
- Preparing documentation, correspondence and meeting papers to a high standard.
- Demonstrating exceptional attention to detail and organisational skills.
- Handling sensitive and confidential information with the utmost discretion.
- Building and maintaining positive relationships with a wide range of stakeholders.
- Using Microsoft Office applications proficiently, including Outlook, Teams, Word, PowerPoint and Excel.

This role is ideally suited to a highly organised, proactive and professional individual who is passionate about providing outstanding executive support and contributing to the effective leadership and delivery of Children's Services.

Please see **Appendix A (page 10)** for a full copy of the Job Description and Person Specification.



Top Tips on How to Apply

Submitting a strong application gives you the best chance of progressing to the next stage of the recruitment process. The following guidance applies to all roles and will help you prepare a clear, compelling application:

1. Read the Job Description and Person Specification Thoroughly

- Make sure you understand the key duties, expectations, and essential criteria.
- Use the person specification as your guide when writing your application.

2. Provide Clear Evidence of Your Skills and Experience

- Show *how* you meet the criteria using specific, real examples.
- Consider using the **STAR method** (Situation, Task, Action, Result) to structure your responses.

3. Tailor Your Application

- Avoid generic statements. Focus on experience that directly relates to the role you are applying for.
- Demonstrate how your strengths align with the organisation's values and priorities.

4. Highlight Your Achievements

- Include examples of work you are proud of or significant contributions you have made in previous roles.
- Emphasise impact – improvements, efficiencies, positive outcomes, or innovations.

5. Be Clear About Qualifications and Training

- List all relevant qualifications and professional training, including dates and awarding bodies.
- If you are working towards a qualification, include expected completion dates.

6. Showcase Transferable Skills

- Skills such as communication, teamwork, problem-solving, digital literacy, and organisation are valuable across all roles.



- Provide examples that demonstrate these effectively.

7. Check Your Application Carefully

- Review your responses for clarity, spelling, and completeness.
- Ensure all sections of the application form have been filled in fully.

8. Submit Your Application Before the Deadline

- Note the closing date and allow plenty of time to prepare your application.
- Late submissions usually cannot be considered.

9. Prepare for Potential Next Steps

- If shortlisted, you may be invited to an interview, assessment task, or presentation.
- Be ready to discuss your experience, approach to work, and examples of how you meet the role's requirements.

Application and Selection Information

The closing date for this vacancy is **Sunday 2nd August 2026** (or earlier in the event of high volume of applications being received).

Provisional interview dates are **Thursday, 6th August 2026**.

We are an Equal Opportunities Employer; all candidates will receive equal treatment. Our decision to appoint will be based upon whether an individual's skills, experience, qualifications, and abilities make them the most suitable candidate for the role.

All disabled and care experienced applicants will be offered an interview where they meet all essential criteria on the person specification.

Please ensure that you meet all the essential criteria outlined in the person specification before submitting your application. Only applicants who demonstrate that they meet all essential criteria will be considered and invited to interview.



Appendix A – Job Description and Person Specification

Post:**Directorate:** Children's Services**Location:** Magdalen House, Bootle, L20 3NJ**Division:** Children's Services**Post:** Personal Assistant**Grade:** G**Reporting to:** Senior Leadership Team, Children's Services**Purpose of the Role**

To provide high-quality, confidential support to the Executive Director, Assistant Directors and Heads of Service within Children's Services.

The post holder will also provide cover for other Personal Assistants across the Council, on occasions, as required.

MAIN DUTIES

1. Provide proactive executive support to senior officers, acting as the primary point of contact and ensuring the efficient use of their time.
2. Produce, collate and distribute documents, agendas, minutes, correspondence, reports, spreadsheets and presentations in line with corporate standards and agreed timescales.
3. Maintain secure and effective data recording and filing systems to support this activity ensuring appropriate access to key documents.
4. Undertake a range of administrative tasks including progress chasing, document preparation and agenda/report compilation as required.
5. To undertake basic research as required and compile summary briefings.
6. To manage and co-ordinate projects as required including events and briefings.
7. Filter incoming information and prioritise issues to support senior officers effectively.



8. Manage diaries, including scheduling meetings, booking venues, attending and minuting meetings, arranging travel and ensuring follow-up actions are completed.
9. Manage email correspondence, taking appropriate action on routine matters and drafting responses for more complex issues, including undertaking background research.
10. Respond to general correspondence and enquiries, both verbal and/or in writing, from Elected Members, service users, Directors, Heads of Service, Senior Officers, or external organisations. Act as the first point of contact, filtering and directing incoming enquiries. This requires the post holder to identify urgent/sensitive matters and escalate/signpost as appropriate.
11. Monitor, track and co-ordinate any actions to be taken on decisions from Committee or other meetings.
12. Undertake clerical tasks as required.
13. To prioritise own workload, work to pre-determined deadlines and engage in multiple initiatives simultaneously, with a pursuit of excellence.
14. Provide cover and support across the PA team as required.
15. Meet and greet visitors with due regard to maintaining a customer focus and due regard for the security of staff, the building and the equipment belonging to the service.
16. Demonstrate personal resilience, develop self, provide appropriate and constructive challenge, and listen and value others views with consideration to improving quality.
17. Maintain and develop partnerships within and outside of the Authority. Work corporately as well as collaboratively with a wide range of communities, partners and other agencies, building relationships that foster trust and have collective integrity and responsibility for delivery.

SPECIAL CONDITIONS

- Occasional work outside normal hours may be required.
- A flexitime scheme is currently in operation.

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

This job description is a representative document. Other reasonably similar duties may be allocated from time to time commensurate with the general character of the post and its grading.



All staff have a duty to take care of their own health & safety and that of others who may be affected by your actions at work. Staff must co-operate with employers and co-workers to help everyone meet their legal requirements.

The Authority has an approved equality policy in employment and copies are freely available to all employees. The post holder will be expected to comply, observe and promote the equality policies of the Council.

Since confidential information is involved with the duties of this post, the postholder will be required to exercise discretion at all times and to observe relevant codes of practice and legislation in relation to data protection and personal information.

The appointed person will be expected to work flexibly and the exact nature of the duties described above is subject to periodic review and is liable to change.

The appointed person will be expected to undertake, and participate in training, coaching and development activities, as appropriate to the role.

Note: Where the postholder is disabled, every reasonable effort will be made to support all necessary aids, adaptations or equipment to allow them to carry out all the duties of the job.



PERSON SPECIFICATION

Post: Personal Assistant

Department: Children's Services

Personal Attributes Required	Essential (E) or Desirable (D)	Method of Assessment
<u>Qualifications</u>		
A recognised qualification in secretarial or administrative skills	D	AF/C
Qualification related to ICT	D	AF/C
Qualification related to typing/word processing.	D	AF/C
<u>Experience</u>		
A proven track record or ability of: Supporting a senior management team in a complex organisation	E	AF/I
A proven track record or ability of: Supporting a senior management team in a complex organisation	E	AF/I
A proven track record or ability of: Providing administrative support and performing clerical tasks within a team environment.	E	AF/I
Establishing and managing a successful diary management and tracker systems	E	AF/I
Attending to visitors and responding to enquiries with the correct salutation	E	AF/I
Proficient in the use of applications such as Outlook, Teams, Word, Excel, PowerPoint, SharePoint etc. to produce correspondence, documents, spreadsheets or presentations and to maintain records	E	AF/I
Working collaboratively with a wide range of stakeholders	E	AF/I
Experience of shorthand and typing from dictation and using audio typing equipment.	D	AF/I
An understanding of local government; its structures and the services it provides to its customers	D	AF/I
An understanding of the services provided within the directorate	D	AF/I
<u>Skills & Knowledge</u>		
Ability to maintain a high level of confidentiality, diplomacy and discretion at all times and be comfortable in a high-pressure environment	E	AF/I
Strong interpersonal skills to develop and maintain effective working relationships	E	AF/I



Ability to work independently with strong office management skills	E	AF/I
Excellent organisational skills, able to operate effectively with a high workload and to competing demands	E	AF/I
Good communication skills to exchange information with a range of audiences, where the information can sometimes be complex or of a sensitive nature	E	AF/I
Ability to work using own initiative and as part of a team to achieve outcomes	E	AF/I
Ability to filter information and assess priorities efficiently and effectively	E	AF/I
Ability to compose letters, holding responses and other documents for a wide range of audiences	E	AF/I
Good analytical skills, initiative and creativity	E	AF/I
Basic research skills	E	AF/I
Willingness to provide a wide range of support tasks including reception of visitors, procurement tasks	E	AF/I
Behaviours and Attributes		
A team worker who fosters partnerships, works collaboratively demonstrates and promotes openness, trust and respect	E	AF/I
Organised, methodical and conscientious	E	AF/I
Reliable, determined, efficient and flexible	E	AF
Respects confidentiality	E	AF/I

Assessment Methods

AF: Application Form

I: Interview

C: Certificates

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