

Job Title:	Business Unit Head
Reports to (job title):	Regional Director
Line Manager to:	

Job purpose

As Associate Director of Operations for Essex Children's and Family Services (internally known as Business Unit Head) you will be a key senior leader responsible for the strategic and operational delivery of high-quality, safe and effective services for children, young people and families across Essex.

You will provide visible, values-driven leadership across a large and complex service footprint, ensuring the successful delivery of a £50m annual contract through strong financial stewardship, robust governance, operational excellence, and effective partnership working.

Services are delivered in close partnership with Barnardo's, requiring collaborative working, aligned leadership behaviours, and a commitment to multi-agency ways of working that achieve the best possible outcomes for children and families.

You will lead and influence a workforce of approximately 800 colleagues, with accountability for service performance, commissioner relationships, financial sustainability, innovation and service improvement. Your leadership will ensure commissioners experience a high-quality, responsive service, delivered within a framework of strong governance, safeguarding, and continuous improvement.

Location & Working Pattern:

Hybrid working, with expected weekly presence in Essex office locations and mandatory monthly in-person meetings.

Flexibility available (including a 9-day fortnight) once established in role.

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Key responsibilities

Commercial & Financial Leadership:

- Providing strategic and operational oversight of a £50m contract, comprising 12 separate budget lines, ensuring excellent financial management and full compliance with contractual obligations.
- Managing a highly complex commissioning environment, working with multiple commissioners with differing priorities and outcomes frameworks.
- Developing, monitoring and delivering recovery plans where financial or performance targets are not being met.
- Ensuring robust financial forecasting, budgetary control and utilisation of resources across a large, multifaceted service.
- Analysing financial and operational reports to identify risks, forecast trends and support service managers in delivering remedial actions.
- Ensuring all commercial terms, KPIs and performance requirements are delivered consistently across the contract.

Quality, Safeguarding & Governance:

- Ensuring all services operate within the required standards of clinical, corporate and children's safeguarding governance.
- Leading compliance with multi-agency safeguarding frameworks, ensuring strong partnership engagement with local authority children's services, ICS partners, social care, and wider safeguarding networks.
- Promoting a culture of high-quality practice, continuous improvement and learning across all service lines.
- Overseeing serious incident reviews, root cause analysis and the embedding of learning across teams.
- Ensuring that service user experience, co-production and dignity remain central to service delivery.

People Leadership:

- Providing visible, exemplary leadership to a diverse workforce of circa 800 colleagues, through direct reports including Quadrant Managers and senior clinical and operational leaders.
- Creating a positive, inclusive and values-driven culture aligned to “We Care, We Think, We Do.”
- Leading workforce planning, talent management, succession planning and development of future leaders.
- Ensuring effective performance management, coaching and development of teams to maximise capability and potential.
- Supporting colleague engagement and wellbeing across geographically dispersed teams.
- Modelling integrity, openness, and a collaborative leadership style that builds trust across the whole workforce.

Stakeholder & System Leadership:

- Building and sustaining strong, influential relationships with multiple commissioning bodies, system partners, local authorities, safeguarding boards and voluntary-sector partners (including Barnardo's).
- Ensuring HCRG Care Group plays a key role within the local health and social care system, contributing to shared priorities and improved outcomes for children and families.
- Navigating complex stakeholder environments, balancing competing priorities and aligning partners toward common goals.
- Representing the organisation at system-level meetings, steering groups, partnership forums and governance structures.

Operational Excellence & Service Delivery:

- Providing day-to-day operational leadership across a large, complex portfolio of children's and family services.
- Ensuring all services meet mandated KPIs, quality standards, regulatory requirements and contract deliverables.
- Driving service improvement, innovation and transformation to enhance access, experience and outcomes.
- Ensuring operational models, pathways and processes are designed to meet the needs of local children, young people and families.
- Overseeing the equitable distribution and effective utilisation of resources across Essex.
- Leading operational incident management, risk assessment and mitigation processes.

Growth, Transformation & Innovation:

- Identifying and driving opportunities for service development, transformation and innovation in partnership with Barnardo's and key stakeholders.
- Contributing to business planning, retendering, and strategic bids through intelligence gathering and insight into children's services.
- Leading change programmes that improve quality, efficiency, and user experience.
- Ensuring improvement projects are delivered with measurable outcomes and embedded learning.

Personal Specification

Essential:

- Significant strategic leadership experience within children's services, family wellbeing, social care, community health or transferrable experience from acute or adult settings.
- Demonstrated experience of working with multiple commissioners and complex stakeholder groups.
- Proven ability to manage multiple budgets, ideally within a large-scale, multi-line financial structure.
- Experience leading large and diverse multidisciplinary teams, ideally 200–800 staff.
- Strong financial acumen, including forecasting, analysis and designing performance recovery plans.
- Knowledge of multi-agency safeguarding frameworks and statutory responsibilities relating to children and families.
- Strong operational leadership skills with ability to deliver sustained performance improvements.
- Ability to navigate complex environments with competing priorities.
- Exceptional communication, negotiation and influencing skills.
- Ability to work autonomously, exercise sound judgement and model values-based leadership.

Desirable:

- Professional registration (NMC, HCPC, SWE or equivalent).
- Experience within children's social care.
- Experience working in acute settings or transition pathways.
- Experience working alongside or within charitable/voluntary-sector organisations.
- Educated to Master's level or equivalent experience.

Our values

Our values are our moral compass and core to our DNA. They underpin the way we deliver our services and treat those who use our services.

To many organisations values are just words which don't translate into reality of the day to day but our values flow through everything that we do, they define who we are, what we stand for and set the expectations of our colleagues, communities, customers and partners. They have been defined by our colleagues and have been integral to our journey so far and will be integral to our future as well.

We have three values which help us stand out from the crowd, not just because there's only three, but because they are unique to who we are. We care, we think, and we do.

Care	Think	Do
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inspire• Understand• Communicate	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Challenge• Improve• Learn	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Accountability• Involve• Resilience

Confidentiality and Information Security

As our employee you will be required to uphold the confidentiality of all records held by the company, whether patients/service records or corporate information. This duty lasts indefinitely and will continue after you leave the company's employment.

All information which identifies living individuals in whatever form (paper/pictures, electronic data/images or voice) is covered by the 2018 Data Protection Act and should be managed in accordance with this legislation. This and all other information must be held in line with NHS national standards including the Records Management: NHS Code of Practice, NHS Constitution and HSCIC Code of Practice on Confidential Information and should only be accessed or

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disclosed lawfully. Monitoring of compliance will be undertaken by the Company. Failure to adhere to Information Governance policies and procedures may result in disciplinary action and, where applicable, criminal prosecution.

Information governance responsibilities

You are responsible for the following key aspects of Information Governance (not an exhaustive list):

- Completion of annual information governance training
- Reading applicable policies and procedures
- Understanding key responsibilities outlined in the Information Governance acceptable usage policies and procedures including NHS mandated encryption requirements
- Ensuring the security and confidentiality of all records and personal information assets
- Maintaining timely and accurate record keeping and where appropriate, in accordance with professional guidelines
- Only using email accounts authorised by us. These should be used in accordance with the Sending and Transferring Information Securely Procedures and Acceptable Use Policies.
- Reporting information governance incidents and near misses on CIRIS or to the appropriate person e.g. line manager, Head of Information Governance, Information Security Lead
- Adherence to the clear desk/screen policy
- Only using approved equipment for conducting business

Governance

Clinical governance is a framework through which organisations delivering health and care services are accountable to continuously improving the quality of their services and safeguarding high standards of care by creating an environment in which clinical and other forms of care flourishes. Employees must be aware that clinical governance places a duty on all staff to ensure that the level of care services they deliver to patients is safe and high quality, and that they follow/comply with our policies and procedures.

Registered Health Professional

All staff who are a member of a professional body must comply with standards of professional practice/conduct. It is the post holder's responsibility to ensure they are both familiar with and adhere to these requirements.

Risk Management/Health & Safety

The post holder has a responsibility to themselves and others in relation to managing risk, health and safety and will be required to work within the policies and procedures laid down by the company. Staff are required to observe the Hygiene Code and demonstrate good infection control and hand hygiene.

Employees must be aware of the responsibilities placed on them by the Health & Safety at Work Act (1974) to ensure that the agreed safety procedures are carried out to maintain a safe environment for other employees, patients and visitors. It is essential to observe strict fire and security precautions at all times.

All staff must report accidents, incidents and near misses so that the company can learn from them and improve safety.

Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Responsibility

We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and adults at risk of harm and expects all employees to share this commitment.

Medicines Management Responsibility

Nursing or registered healthcare professionals

Undertake all aspects of medicines management related activities in accordance within the company's medicines policies to ensure the safe, legal and appropriate use of medicines.

Skilled non-registered staff

Undertake all aspects of medicines management related activities in accordance with the company's medicines policy where appropriate training has been given and competencies have been achieved.

Policies and Procedures

All colleagues must comply with the Company Policies and Procedures which can be found on the company intranet.

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General

We are committed to serving our community. We aim to make our services exemplary in both clinical and operational aspects. We will show leadership in identifying healthcare needs to which we can respond and in determining the most cost-effective way of doing so.

We recruit competent staff that we support in maintaining and extending their skills in accordance with the needs of the people we serve. We will recognise the commitment from our staff to meeting the needs of our patients.

The company recognises a “non-smoking” policy. Employees are not able to smoke anywhere within the premises or when outside on official business.

Equal Opportunities

It is the company’s intention to be an employer of choice and ensure that no job applicants or employees are unfairly disadvantaged on the grounds of gender, disability, race, ethnic origin, colour, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief, trade union membership or any other factors that are not relevant to their capability or potential. To this end, the company has an Equality and Diversity policy and it is the responsibility of each employee to contribute to its success.

Flexibility Statement

This job description is not exhaustive and may change as the post develops or changes to align with service needs. Any such changes will be discussed directly between the post holder and their line manager.

Job Description

Employee signature

Manager signature
