JOB DESCRIPTION
OPERATIONS MANAGER (RESIDENTIAL SERVICES)

Job title: Operations Manager / Responsible Individual - Children's Residential Services
Reports to: Group Operations Director, with reporting to the Family Care Board
Direct reports: Registered Managers and designated peripatetic residential staff
Portfolio: Five children's homes: three supporting children with learning disabilities (LD) and two supporting children with emotional and behavioural difficulties (EBD). A sixth home is planned in Leominster.
Location: Across Oldham, Manchester, Formby, Telford and Shrewsbury, extending to Leominster. Work between services and the Family Care offices, with home working for administrative duties.
Hours: 39 hours per week, with flexibility to meet service needs and participation in the senior on-call rota.
Travel: Regular travel between homes and overnight stays are required.

Purpose of the role
Lead Family Care Group's residential services so children experience safe, stable, and nurturing homes, receive care suited to their needs, and make progress in their lives. Provide clear leadership, supervision and challenge to Registered Managers, ensuring consistent standards across the portfolio.

Act as the nominated Responsible Individual for designated homes, providing effective oversight of safeguarding, quality, regulatory compliance and operational performance. Work with the Group Operations Director to deliver financially sustainable services and support the successful opening and development of new homes.

Leadership and management

- Line manage, supervise and appraise Registered Managers, setting clear objectives and providing practical support, coaching and constructive challenge.
- Chair regular Registered Manager meetings, share effective practice and ensure agreed actions are completed.
- Build a culture in which children's needs come first, staff understand expectations and concerns are raised and addressed promptly.
- Identify management development needs, support succession planning and build leadership capacity across the services.
- Lead designated peripatetic staff, ensuring effective deployment, supervision and development.
- Work closely with colleagues in education, fostering, therapy and central services to deliver coordinated support and embed Family Care's practice model and AGILE values.

Safeguarding and Responsible Individual oversight

- Fulfil the responsibilities of the Responsible Individual for designated homes and maintain effective oversight of the conduct of each service.
- Ensure services operate in accordance with applicable children's homes legislation, regulations, Quality Standards, safeguarding guidance and Family Care policies.
- Provide senior oversight of safeguarding concerns, allegations, serious incidents, complaints and whistleblowing, ensuring timely action, appropriate referrals and escalation.
- Ensure required notifications and reports are completed by the responsible person within the relevant timescales, and monitor their quality and follow-up.

- Maintain effective working relationships with Ofsted, local authority safeguarding teams, commissioners and other relevant agencies.
- Identify patterns and emerging risks across homes, ensure lessons are shared and track the impact of changes.
- Escalate significant risks or failures to the Group Operations Director promptly, with clear recommendations and action plans.

Quality of care and children's outcomes

- Maintain a visible presence in each home through planned visits and proportionate unannounced checks, speaking with children and staff and reviewing the quality of care.
- Ensure children's wishes, feelings and experiences influence their care and the development of services, including accessible communication for children with learning disabilities.
- Oversee effective placement matching, care planning and risk management, ensuring that each home can meet the needs of children admitted.
- Monitor placement stability, education, health, relationships, participation and preparation for adulthood, with progress assessed against each child's needs and starting point.
- Ensure practice is therapeutic, trauma-informed and adapted to the needs of children across both LD and SEMH provision.
- Promote positive relationships, appropriate behaviour support and learning from incidents, including the use of restrictive interventions.
- Ensure children understand how to raise concerns and that complaints are heard, investigated and responded to appropriately.

Quality assurance and improvement

- Maintain a consistent quality assurance framework across homes, using visits, audits, feedback and performance information to identify strengths and areas for improvement.
- Review independent Regulation 44 reports and Registered Managers' Regulation 45 reviews, ensuring findings inform specific, timely and measurable actions.
- Support inspection preparation and responses to inspection findings, maintaining services that meet expectations throughout the year.
- Monitor improvement plans and evaluate whether completed actions have improved children's experiences and service quality.
- Ensure Statements of Purpose and service information accurately reflect the provision and are kept under review.
- Ensure care records, incident reporting and management information are accurate, timely, secure and used effectively.

People and workforce

- Oversee staffing structures, rotas and workforce plans so that homes have sufficient staff with the skills and experience to meet children's needs.
- Work with HR and recruitment colleagues to attract, select and retain suitable staff, maintaining safer recruitment standards.
- Monitor induction, supervision, appraisal and mandatory and specialist training, ensuring learning is reflected in practice.

- Address performance, conduct, attendance and capability concerns promptly and fairly, in accordance with policy and advice from HR.
- Lead or support investigations, disciplinary hearings, grievances and complaints as required, maintaining appropriate independence.
- Promote staff wellbeing, professional boundaries and a respectful workplace, monitoring turnover, absence and agency dependence

Financial and operational performance

- Manage residential service budgets within delegated authority, reviewing income, staffing, agency use and other operating costs with finance colleagues.
- Agree and deliver realistic service plans and monitor performance against agreed budgets, occupancy plans and quality objectives.
- Maintain appropriate occupancy through safe placement matching and constructive commissioner relationships; ensure commercial decisions remain consistent with children's welfare and the home's capacity.
- Authorise staffing expenditure, overtime and agency use within agreed limits, challenging avoidable costs while protecting safe care.
- Ensure properties, vehicles, equipment and other resources are safe, suitable and maintained, working with property and central services colleagues.
- Monitor health and safety, fire safety and business continuity arrangements, ensuring identified shortfalls are addressed.
- Ensure operational systems for care recording, rotas and reporting are used consistently and effectively.

Commissioning and service development

- Develop effective relationships with placing authorities, commissioners and partner agencies, promoting services that reflect the needs Family Care can meet.
- Lead or contribute to tender submissions and commissioning discussions in conjunction with relevant colleagues.
- Support the development and opening of new homes, including service design, management recruitment, operational readiness and preparation for registration.
- Work with the Group Operations Director and property, HR, finance and therapeutic colleagues to deliver agreed development plans.
- Ensure new services are appropriately staffed, equipped and supported before admissions, with clear arrangements for monitoring progress after opening.
- Identify opportunities to improve or develop provision and present recommendations that address quality, demand, resources and financial viability.

Governance and reporting

- Provide a monthly residential services report covering children's outcomes, safeguarding, quality, workforce, occupancy, finances, risks and development activity.
- Keep the Group Operations Director informed of significant developments
- Maintain an overview of risks across the portfolio and ensure actions have named owners and clear timescales.
- Work within delegated authority, maintain accurate records of key decisions and seek approval where required.

Working arrangements and general responsibilities

- Participate in the agreed senior on-call rota and provide escalation support outside normal working hours when required.
- Travel regularly across the portfolio, including overnight stays, planning visits to maintain effective oversight of all services.
- Provide additional operational support during management absence or service difficulty, with any arrangements agreed with the Group Operations Director.
- Maintain confidentiality, protect personal information and follow data protection, information security and record-keeping requirements.
- Promote equality, inclusion and respect, making reasonable adjustments and challenging discriminatory or inappropriate practice.
- Maintain professional development, declare potential conflicts of interest and undertake other reasonable duties consistent with the seniority and purpose of the role.

This job description sets out the main responsibilities and is not an exhaustive list of duties. It will be reviewed with the post holder as services develop. Material changes to the role or portfolio will be discussed through the appropriate management process.

Person specification

Essential criteria will be assessed through the application, structured interview and relevant selection exercises. Employment history, qualifications and references will be verified through safer recruitment checks. Reasonable adjustments will be considered throughout recruitment and employment.

Qualifications and professional development

Essential

- Level 5 Diploma in Leadership and Management for Residential Childcare, or an equivalent relevant leadership and management qualification.
- Evidence of continuing professional development relevant to children's residential care, safeguarding and senior leadership.

Desirable

- Relevant social work, health, education or therapeutic qualification.
- Further study or training in business management, quality assurance or leadership.

Leadership and residential management experience

Essential

- Successful experience as a Registered Manager of an Ofsted-registered children's home, with evidence of delivering and sustaining good-quality care.
- Previous experience as a Responsible Individual for children's homes, with a clear understanding of the accountability involved.
- Proven experience of managing or overseeing multiple children's homes and supervising and developing Registered Managers.
- Substantial experience in LD and SEMH residential provision.

- Evidence of leading improvement, addressing underperformance and embedding consistent practice across services.

Desirable
- Experience overseeing a mixed portfolio of LD and SEMH homes of similar sizes.
- Experience mobilising new homes and supporting the Ofsted registration process.

Safeguarding and regulatory knowledge

Essential
- Strong working knowledge of children's homes legislation, regulations, Quality Standards and the Ofsted inspection framework.
- Experience leading safeguarding responses and overseeing serious incidents, allegations, complaints and risk management.
- Ability to evaluate Regulation 44 reports, Regulation 45 reviews and other quality information, translating findings into effective action.
- Understanding of safer recruitment, staff suitability, professional boundaries and a culture that enables concerns to be raised.

Care practice and children's outcomes

Essential
- Understanding of trauma, attachment, child development and the impact of adverse experiences on children's lives.
- Knowledge of the needs of children with learning disabilities, including communication, health and behaviour support needs, and of children with emotional and behavioural difficulties.
- Ability to evaluate placement matching, care planning and risk assessments and recognise when a service cannot safely meet a child's needs.
- Evidence of using children's views and progress to improve care and promote inclusion, stability and positive relationships.

Desirable
- Experience working closely with clinical or therapeutic teams to improve residential practice.

Operational and commercial capability

Essential
- Experience managing budgets and controlling staffing and agency costs while maintaining safe, effective care.
- Ability to interpret financial and operational information, identify trends and take proportionate action.
- Experience managing workforce planning, recruitment, performance and employee relations matters with appropriate specialist support.
- Ability to build effective relationships with commissioners, placing authorities and partner agencies.
- Strong written communication and IT skills, including producing clear reports, action plans and management information.

Desirable
- Experience contributing to tenders, fee discussions or service development proposals.

- Experience evaluating business cases and planning new-service mobilisation.

Personal approach and working requirements

Essential

- Child-centred judgement, integrity and willingness to challenge practice or decisions that compromise care.
- Ability to lead calmly under pressure, prioritise competing demands and make clear, balanced decisions.
- Confident interpersonal skills, combining support and coaching with accountability and constructive challenge.
- Ability to work independently across dispersed services and collaborate effectively with central teams and senior leaders.
- Commitment to Family Care's values, equality, inclusion and continuous improvement.
- Ability to meet the role's travel requirements across the Northwest, Shropshire and Herefordshire, including overnight stays. A full UK driving licence and access to a suitable vehicle are required.
- Ability to work flexibly and participate in the agreed senior on-call arrangements.

Appointment requirements

Appointment is subject to satisfactory safer recruitment checks, including verification of identity, right to work, qualifications and employment history; appropriate references; and the relevant enhanced DBS and barred list checks. The post holder must be suitable to act as Responsible Individual for the designated services and cooperate with any relevant Ofsted suitability assessment or process.

Family Care Group is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all employees to share this commitment.