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| **Job details** | |
| **Job title** | Free School Meals Team Leader |
| **Job Reference** | 20841 |
| **Grade and Salary** | 4 – £28,598 per annum, pro rata if part-time  This role includes performance related pay progression |
| **Service and Team** | School Admissions Team – Education and Learning  Children and Young People’s Service |
| **Location** | Endeavour House, 8 Russell Road, Ipswich. IP1 2BX *-* Hybrid |
| **Hours per week** | 37 hrs per week |
| **Status** | **Permanent** |
| This role may offer the following flexible working options | * *Working compressed hours (eg a nine-day fortnight)* * *Use of flexitime / time off in lieu* * *Hybrid working options, including some home working* * *Working from different Council buildings*   Please speak with the contact on the advert to discuss your preferences and learn more about the options that can be offered. |

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| **About us** |

As a modern and effective council, we understand the importance of being flexible and well-connected in the ways we work. We focus our ambitions on doing what’s right for people, our partners and our communities - both now and for the future.

That’s why, as one of the largest employers in Suffolk, we believe in empowering everyone. Through career variety and collaborative working, accessible career paths and professional development.

The support and care we offer encourages and enables you to be the best you can be. To make a meaningful impact on the world around you. To achieve a unique sense of pride in what you do, why you do it and where. **Reimagine the possibilities.**

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| **Organisational Context** |

The responsibility of the Children and Young People’s Directorate (CYP) is to ensure the safety, well-being and learning of children and young people. To do so we need to “make every intervention count” to create impact and bring about sustainable change for children, young people and their families where need is identified. We are determined to continuously improve our services by working in partnership to ensure that our work is high quality and effective.

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| **Main purpose of the job** |

To support the success of projects or the business as a whole with intelligence, infrastructure, planning, resources or information.

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| **Typical responsibilities of a role at this level** |

**Communicating and engaging with colleagues and with communities**

* Provide information to colleagues and partners as required by role.
* Build new sustainable relationships internally and externally and maintain existing relationships with a wide range of stakeholders.

**Effective Planning, Support and Practice**

* Work within the service guidelines, statutory guidance and legal frameworks.
* Collating resources and information to effectively support service delivery.
* To train and update CYPS staff to maximise efficient and effective record keeping and online public information.
* Provide guidance and support to colleagues about use of electronic databases and content management systems to support operational delivery.
* Understand the impact of national policy or guidelines in your specific area of work and support any changes required by this.

**Reporting and Accurate Recording**

* To record and maintain quality data to the requirements of SCC, Government and other external partners.
* Complete the necessary statutory and non-statutory reports are produced on time for internal and external requirements.
* Research, manipulate and analyse data and information to draw conclusions and generate reports and information in support of specific areas for use by internal and external colleagues.
* Provide regular updates and briefings on current developments within identified knowledge or activity sectors and identify emerging trends / issues.
* To contribute to successful completion of Quality Assurance processes within team.
* Contribute to the collection, recording and maintenance of accurate data to shape service planning and reporting and resolve any problems within recording and reporting systems.

**Information, Advice and Signposting**

* Where required by role, to organise, present and publish online information for consumption by children, young people and families, colleagues and partners and signpost to relevant services where appropriate.
* To pro-actively use IT and electronic directories and sources of information and signpost colleagues to appropriate sources of data and information.
* To advise CYPS staff to use relevant ICT skills, content management systems and accurate electronic record keeping.
* Where required by role, assist with the development and maintenance of websites.

**Multi Agency and Partnership Working**

* Liaise with partner organisations to ensure effective completion of tasks
* Actively build relationships and networks with partners, professional groups and services.

**Managing Risk and Safeguarding**

* To identify risk and safeguarding concerns and escalate immediately where appropriate.
* To undertake other tasks allocated by manager or senior colleagues, in keeping with the responsibilities of the grade:
  + Work in accordance with the Council’s statutory responsibilities, policies and service procedures and comply with equality and diversity policies, procedures and legislation.
  + Maintaining customer confidentiality in accordance with the Data Protection Act and SCC guidance.
  + Having regard to best value principles as part of daily practice.
  + Participating in training and development opportunities, in order to improve personal knowledge, skills and effectiveness.
  + Participate in performance appraisal and consultation with team managers as required.

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| **Autonomy** |

The technician will:

* Be responsible for keeping accurate and timely records and writing relevant reports using electronic or other systems as directed.
* Have access to a line manager for decisions that fall outside their delegated responsibilities.
* To be able to organise own workload and use initiative within boundaries of the role.
* Identify problems and escalate to senior colleagues.

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| **About the team** |

The School Admissions and Free School Meals Team ensures the local authority meets its statutory duties regarding admissions and free school meals. This includes consulting on and determining admissions arrangements, as well as ensuring compliance across all Suffolk schools.

We are a passionate and dedicated team focused on making sure every child has access to the educational opportunities and support they need. We are responsible for allocating school places fairly, consistently, and efficiently for community and voluntary controlled schools.

The other core responsibility is delivering the **Free School Meals Service**, providing vital assistance to disadvantaged and low-income families.

Our team works closely with parents, schools, and partner organisations, offering expert guidance and support. We are committed to high standards of service, accurate advice, and continuous improvement—making a real difference in the lives of children and families across our community.

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| **What you will be expected to deliver in the role** |

As the Free School Meals Team Leader, you will play a pivotal role within the dynamic School Admissions Team. You will be responsible for delivering exceptional customer service to families, schools, and partner services, supporting both the school admissions and free school meals processes. You will provide accurate advice and guidance via telephone, email, and written correspondence.

**Day to day tasks may include**:

* Oversee and process free school meals applications, communicating outcomes to parents and schools.
* Provide accurate advice and support to schools, parents, and colleagues, handling complex queries and escalating as necessary.
* Support the induction, development, and training of team members to ensure flexibility and responsiveness to business needs.
* Supervise team members, fostering a positive team culture through day-to-day performance management and conducting Personal Development Reviews (appraisals).
* Manage and maintain accurate records and data in line with organisational requirements.
* Calculate and issue accurate invoices to schools.
* Signpost families to additional sources of information and support as appropriate.
* Conduct regular audits (from 2026) to validate ongoing eligibility for free school meals.
* Contribute to the continuous improvement of service delivery and operational procedures.

Although this list provides examples of what you will be doing it’s not intended to be exhaustive, and you will have personal objectives linked to our People Plans and Strategies that will be discussed and agreed with your line manager when you start.

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| **Person Profile – what you will bring to the team** |

**Qualifications and professional memberships**

1. Suitable qualification at Level 4 or equivalent experience or evidence of skills in relevant area of work.
2. Evidence of continuing professional development.

**Values and personal qualities**

1. Demonstrates a passion for making a positive difference for Suffolk.
2. Shares our [WE ASPIRE](https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/jobs-and-careers/working-for-suffolk-county-council/our-weaspire-values/) Values and strives to lead by example in relation to these.
3. A strong commitment to fairness and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI).
4. Strives to continuously improve in everything they do, taking the initiative to learn and develop.
5. Brings creativity into their work through innovation and openness to change.
6. Collaborates well with others and offers assistance and support to colleagues.
7. Ability to use initiative within boundaries of the role.
8. Commitment to understanding what is important to children and families.
9. Commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults.

**Specialist knowledge skills and experience**

1. Good working knowledge of Microsoft packages for business use.
2. Good Excel skills.
3. Accurate keyboard skills for producing reports, correspondence, data entry etc.
4. Ability to maintain accurate records, databases and systems.
5. Ability to identify and flag up problems when working with data and information and escalate appropriately.
6. Understanding of need to work appropriately with confidential and sensitive information.
7. Ability to learn new IT or web-based packages and systems.
8. Ability to handle large and complex data sets and to identify and interpret trends in data and validate.
9. Planning skills for projects or for day-to-day business processes.
10. Excellent telephone manner and ability to communicate effectively.
11. Ability to communicate information effectively with colleagues and across key professionals who work with young people.
12. Ability to make constructive contribution to meetings with a range of stakeholders, settings and contexts.
13. Sensitivity to disability, sexuality, gender and ethnicity issues.
14. Ability to keep accurate and timely records and data and compile reports in a variety of formats, using appropriate IT.
15. Ability to demonstrate active listening skills.
16. Ability to communicate effectively with all levels of staff in the delivery of training and support.
17. Build effective relationships.
18. Good level of literacy.
19. Experience of working with large amount of data.
20. Research skills.
21. Thorough knowledge of the relevant service delivery requirements.
22. Knowledge of relevant legislation, regulations and guidance as appropriate to role.
23. Networking skills.
24. Experience of analysing data and themes to draw conclusions.
25. Experience of operational work within a relevant service area.
26. Experience of working with a range of agencies and communities.
27. Establishing good communication links with parents, carers and families.

**Additional requirements**

*(These are required for this role, but it is not necessary to demonstrate in your application)*

1. Effective organisational skills.
2. Willingness to undertake training as required to update knowledge and skills.
3. Evidence of successfully working alone as well as part of a team.
4. Understanding of confidentiality and awareness of data protection requirements.
5. Proven ability to set and meet personal targets.

If you think you have what it takes to be successful in this role, even if you don’t meet all the criteria, please apply. We’d appreciate the opportunity to consider your application.

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| **Travel requirements** |

On occasions, there may be a requirement for you to travel using reasonable and suitable means available to you.

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| **Our values – WE ASPIRE** |



At Suffolk County Council our WE ASPIRE values set out the behaviours we expect from everyone in the organisation regardless of who they are, what their role or grade is or where they work.

The values have been developed through feedback and input from employees at the council and underpin how we go about our everyday work. They define us and help us to be the best we can be.

Visit our [**careers pages**](https://www.careers.suffolk.gov.uk/) for more information on our WE ASPIRE values.

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| **Our Customer Commitment** |

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In addition to our WE ASPIRE values, we also have a **Customer Commitment** which sets out a number of strong principles that help support high standards of customer service and care that we can all endeavour to consistently demonstrate.

For more information, view our [**Customer Commitment poster.**](https://sccrecruit.blob.core.windows.net/assets/SCC/Other-Docs/17.06.2020_%20CUSTOMER_COMMITMENT_POSTER.pdf)

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| **More information for recruitment applicants** |

We offer a fantastic working environment including diverse and active staff networks,

great flexible working options and many benefits, as well as the opportunity to improve the lives of Suffolk residents.

Visit the [**Suffolk County Council career website**](https://www.careers.suffolk.gov.uk/) to learn more, including information about adjustments to recruitment processes, our interview schemes and other commitments to equality, diversity and inclusion.