



Sandwell
Metropolitan Borough Council

Service Director – Education & Skills Candidate Pack



www.sandwell.gov.uk

MEET OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

SALLY GILES



Dear Candidate,

Thank you for your interest in joining Sandwell Council as one of our new Service Directors within the Children and Education Directorate.

These are two significant leadership opportunities that sit at the heart of our ambition for children, young people and families. Whether your expertise lies in Education and Skills or Commissioning and Partnerships, you will join a dedicated leadership team committed to improving outcomes, reducing inequalities and ensuring every child in Sandwell has the opportunity to thrive.

At Sandwell, we are proud of our communities and ambitious about our future. We are determined to provide outstanding services that make a genuine difference to children's lives, whilst building strong partnerships across schools, health, social care, the voluntary sector and our wider communities. These roles offer the opportunity to influence strategy, lead transformation and help shape services that have a lasting impact across the borough.

The Service Director Education and Skills will provide strategic leadership across education, school improvement, early years, admissions, inclusion, post-16 learning, skills and employment. The successful candidate will play a critical role in raising standards, promoting aspiration and ensuring that children and young people have access to high-quality education and learning opportunities throughout their lives.

The Service Director Commissioning and Partnerships will lead strategic commissioning, partnerships, performance, intelligence and governance across Children and Education Services. This role provides an exciting opportunity to shape preventative services, strengthen partnership working, champion the voice of children and families and ensure our services are informed by evidence, insight and a relentless focus on outcomes.

Across both roles, we are seeking leaders who can work collaboratively, inspire confidence, drive innovation and lead through change. We need people who are commercially aware, politically astute and passionate about public service, with the ability to work across organisational boundaries to deliver meaningful improvements for children, young people and families.

As Executive Director, I believe our greatest strength is our people. Successful leaders in Sandwell are those who build strong relationships, empower others, challenge constructively and remain focused on what matters most improving outcomes for children and young people. We want leaders who are ambitious for our children, young people and families, committed to partnership working and motivated by the opportunity to make a lasting difference.

If you share our ambition and have the vision, resilience and leadership capability to help shape the future of Children and Education Services in Sandwell, I invite you to arrange a conversation with our recruitment partners at Tile Hill.

Thank you for considering a career with Sandwell Council. I look forward to learning more about the experience, skills and passion you could bring to our team.



More about Sandwell

Sandwell is a proud and diverse borough that is home to vibrant communities, a rich industrial heritage and ambitious plans for the future. Serving more than 340,000 residents across six towns, we are committed to improving outcomes for local people and creating a borough where everyone has the opportunity to thrive.

Our Council Plan sets out a clear vision for Sandwell through to 2027, providing a shared framework for residents, partners, elected members and colleagues. The plan outlines our ambitions for the borough and the priorities that will help us deliver lasting improvements for communities, ensuring that Sandwell is a place where people can live well, access opportunity and feel proud of where they live.

As an organisation, we are on a significant journey of transformation and improvement. We are focused on delivering high-quality services, strengthening our partnerships and ensuring that everything we do is centred on improving the lives of our residents. This commitment to continuous improvement is underpinned by strong leadership, a clear vision and a culture that encourages innovation, accountability and collaboration. This has recently been recognised on the national stage, as we were named 'Most Improved Council' at the prestigious Local Government Chronicle (LGC) Awards. The award recognised the significant organisational change and service improvements delivered across the authority in recent years. The achievement reflects tangible improvements across key services such as Children's Services that were judged as 'Good' by Ofsted through the Council's partnership with Sandwell Children's Trust.



While proud of these achievements, Sandwell remains ambitious. Our focus is firmly on sustaining momentum, driving further improvements and realising our aspiration to become an outstanding council that consistently delivers excellent outcomes for residents.

We also welcomed a new cabinet this year with Councillor Ray Nock being appointed as the Leader of the Council, with Councillor Jack Sabharwal appointed to Education and Skills. The administration has set out a clear commitment to working for all residents, strengthening communities and focusing on the issues that matter most to local people. The Council's priorities under the new leadership include creating jobs and economic opportunity, supporting thriving town centres and high streets, helping residents with the cost of living, and ensuring Sandwell continues to be an attractive place to live, work and invest. Together, our political and officer leadership are committed to delivering meaningful change, building on recent successes and creating a borough that is inclusive, ambitious and resilient for future generations.



Children and Education

The Children and Education Directorate is at the forefront of improving life chances for children, young people and families across Sandwell. Working alongside schools, colleges, training providers, employers, communities and regional partners, the Directorate is committed to ensuring that every child has the best possible start in life and that residents of all ages can access the education and opportunities needed to succeed. Serving one of the youngest and most diverse populations in the West Midlands, the Directorate provides strategic leadership across the entire learning journey, from early years through to adulthood. This includes driving educational standards and school improvement, supporting vulnerable children and young people, planning and delivering sufficient high-quality school places, and creating pathways into further education, employment and lifelong learning. Through close collaboration with partners across education, skills and business sectors, the Directorate plays a critical role in raising aspirations, promoting inclusion and ensuring that every resident has the opportunity to realise their potential.

A key priority for Sandwell is raising standards and improving outcomes for all children and young people, particularly those who are disadvantaged or vulnerable. The Directorate works closely with stakeholders to provide support and intervention where needed, helping schools to continually improve educational performance and narrow attainment gaps. This work spans every stage of a learner's journey, from early years provision through to secondary education and post-16 progression.



Education and economic growth are intrinsically linked. Sandwell has invested significantly in ensuring young people and adults can access the skills needed to succeed in a changing labour market. Our Careers Service provides information, advice and guidance to young people, helping them navigate pathways into further education, apprenticeships, employment and training. The service supports young people through key transition points and offers tailored support for those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Ensuring that every child can access high-quality education remains a fundamental priority. The Directorate leads a range of services designed to support children and young people who face additional barriers to learning. Working closely with SEND and Inclusion colleagues, the Education and Skills service contributes to the delivery of Sandwell's wider Local Area Partnership Inclusion Plan, promoting a more inclusive education system and challenging inequality wherever it exists.

As a growing borough, Sandwell must ensure that education provision evolves to meet future demand. The Education and Skills service is responsible for strategic school place planning, admissions and the management of education capital programmes, ensuring that sufficient high-quality places are available for children across the borough. The portfolio also includes working with the Schools Forum, managing elements of the Dedicated Schools Grant and maintaining strong relationships with schools, dioceses, trusts and government departments.



You can find out more about our achievements, plans, and culture, from our CEO, Shokat Lal, in this [video](#)



Our Values and Behaviours

One team

United and working together with a shared purpose of achieving great results

- Actively role model and create trust
- Enable honest and open communication
- Visible and approachable
- Engage in regular communication
- Recognise contributions and success
- Display a coaching leadership style and inspire others
- Encourage best practice and cross team collaboration
- Drive a healthy work-life balance
- Develop and grow future talent

Customer focus

We care about providing the best possible public service

- Manage customer's expectations
- Ensure the service works to the best outcome for the customer
- Create accessible channels for customer communication
- Encourage customers to lead in service provision
- Take a holistic view of services
- Be accessible to residents, service users, customers and employees
- Engage with customers, seek feedback and enable continuous improvement

Inclusive

Treating each other with respect and knowing our diversity is our strength

- Create an inclusive environment to encourage a voice for everyone
- Create opportunities and champions diversity and inclusivity
- Seek feedback from all audiences to facilitate co-production
- Seek to understand our diverse communities
- Actively challenge barriers to inclusion
- Encourage diversity of thought and perspectives to overcome challenges

Our Values and Behaviours

Ambitious

Striving for excellence, always looking to get better and making sure everyone can take pride in our borough

- Promote a growth mindset
- Communicate the organisation's ambitions and desired outcomes
- Lead, manage and communicate change
- Encourage and inspire creativity and innovation within boundaries
- Seek and encourage everyone to be the best in class
- Create channels for giving and receiving feedback
- Tackle under-performance early and challenge unacceptable behaviour with courage
- Grow personal credibility
- Communicate with passion and integrity to maintain and elevate the reputation of the service and the council

Accountable

Deliver what we say we will

- Create a clear vision and strategy
- Consider external and internal factors
- Encourage learning from feedback and complaints
- Promote resilience and adaptability
- Set clear expectations and standards for self and others
- Provide resources for service provision
- Empower others to solve problems and take ownership
- Give support to strengthen team and personal resilience
- Make timely and well-judged decisions



A NEW STORY FOR SANDWELL

Made 50 years ago from six proud towns, Sandwell is a place built on making things happen. It's where industry met innovation, and where strong communities still shape the future.

The Sandwell Story is a campaign and programme of work to celebrate the people, places and partnerships that make this borough a great place to live, work, learn and visit. [Find out more at the Sandwell Story website.](#)

Watch the New
Story for
Sandwell video



PERSON SPECIFICATION

JOB DESCRIPTION



LOCATION



Sandwell is a metropolitan borough in the Black Country, which is made up of six towns - Oldbury, Rowley Regis, Smethwick, Tipton, Wednesbury and West Bromwich.

Located in the West Midlands, Sandwell borders Birmingham city, Dudley borough, Walsall borough and Wolverhampton city.

The borough has excellent access to the national motorway network with five junctions feeding in to the M5 and M6 motorways serving the South West, South East and North West regions of the UK.

Sandwell also benefits from a mainline train station - Sandwell and Dudley and the Midland Metro.



OUR OFFER TO YOU

Join the largest employer in Sandwell, where over 3,500 of our diverse employees thrive in hundreds of unique roles.

To support you to develop your career with us, we offer:

- A competitive pay progression structure and leave allowance
- Hybrid working arrangements and a flexitime system (subject to needs of the role)
- Supportive staff networks including Culture Champions, helping to fulfil our organisational culture aspirations and make us a fully inclusive employer
- A confidential counselling service (BACP approved) and a mediation service is available on managerial referral
- Talent initiatives including apprenticeship programmes at all levels, and the prestigious National Graduate Development Programme.
- Learning and development including management development training, employee wellbeing workshops and job role specific training.
- A professional coaching and mentoring offer
- Employee performance and development processes with regular check-ins and an annual review to help you be your best
- Recognition for your hard work through our 'We our Sandwell' award scheme and colleague appreciation schemes
- Work that makes a real difference to our customers and residents, continually improving our boroughs.
- Access to trade unions



Our aim is to be an outstanding Council and we recognise that part of that is providing the best employee experience possible. At Sandwell we care about our people and commit to keeping our colleagues safe and well at work.

To make sure everyone can be their best and feel like they count, our support offer includes:

- Our employee assistance programme with free, confidential, 24/7 helpline service staffed by professional counsellors
- Access to occupational health services
- Wellbeing champions network
- Supportive carers and parental policies
- Generous maternity, paternity and adoption leave
- Disability passport scheme
- To help you make the most of your money we offer:
- Membership of West Midlands Pension Fund with generous employer contributions
- Staff deals through our employee benefits scheme

HOW TO APPLY

To apply, please submit an up-to-date copy of your CV (four sides of A4 maximum), along with a supporting statement (four sides of A4 maximum) detailing your experience, and achievements and addressing the key criteria for the role set out on this site and using examples to demonstrate how you meet the requirements.

Documents should be uploaded via our [website](#), please include and upload the below information in two documents only. If you experience any issues whilst applying, please contact abbie.hamilton-grant@tile-hill.co.uk

Applications must include:

- Full contact details;
- Names, positions, organisations and contact details for two referees (we will ask your permission before contacting referees);
- Details of your notice period;
- Notification of any dates when you are not available for interview.

For a confidential discussion, please contact our colleagues at Tile Hill, Anita Denton on 07725 554802 (anita.denton@tile-hill.co.uk) or Helen Alwell on 07931 543313 (helen.alwell@tile-hill.co.uk)

Closing date for applications: Midnight on Sunday 6th September



