

RCC Director

Help shape the future of children's care, regional sufficiency and collaborative commissioning across the East Midlands.

Advertised: 14th July 2026

Closing date: 23rd August 2026



Welcome

The East Midlands is creating one of the country's new [Regional Care Co-operatives \(RCCs\)](#): a major public sector reform programme designed to improve outcomes for children, strengthen regional sufficiency and support collaborative improvement across children's care.

Covering all ten upper-tier local authorities across the East Midlands, the RCC will bring together regional commissioning, sufficiency planning, fostering development, market engagement, data and improvement activity through a powerful new collaborative model.

This is not simply another programme. It is a unique opportunity to establish and lead a new regional infrastructure for children's care: ambitious, practical, evidence-led and deeply rooted in partnership working across local government, health, youth justice, policing and the voluntary sector.

As the founding RCC Director, you will play a pivotal role in bringing partners together around that shared ambition. You will lead the East Midlands RCC from inception, building the relationships, culture and foundations needed to create lasting change across the region. We are seeking an exceptional leader who can inspire collaboration, build trust across complex systems and keep the voices of children, young people and carers at the heart of everything they do. Most important is your belief in what this programme can achieve.

We hope this pack gives you a sense of the opportunity ahead and the difference this role can make. We look forward to hearing from you.

East Midlands Directors of Children's Services



Role Overview

Job Title	RCC Director
Salary & benefits	£100,000-£110,000 a year, 27 days annual leave, plus bank holidays, generous pension scheme, hybrid working arrangements. Secondment arrangements may differ.
Start date	September 2026
Contract type	Fixed-term contract or secondment opportunity until 31 st March 2028, with continuation subject to funding and approval. Any secondment arrangement will be subject to agreement with the successful candidate's current employer.
Basis	Full time (37.5 hours)
Employment location	The role will be based in Leicester, with regular travel across the East Midlands.
Job category	Executive leadership, children's social care and commissioning, sufficiency, market shaping and improvement.
Host organisation	RCC roles will be hosted by SDSA Leicester on behalf of the East Midlands local authorities.
Key responsibilities	Provide strategic leadership for the establishment, mobilisation and long-term development of the East Midlands Regional Care Co-operative (RCC), working with local authorities and partners across the region to strengthen sufficiency, improve outcomes for children and young people and deliver the region's shared vision for children's care.

'The Director will set the tone, culture and ambition of the RCC from its earliest stages and will play a major role in establishing the East Midlands as a leading region for collaborative reform and innovation.'



Regional Collaboration

The East Midlands already has a strong culture of collaboration through its Regional Improvement and Innovation Alliance (RIIA), long-established regional commissioning networks and one established regional fostering hub and strong collaboration between local authority fostering services across the wider region. The RCC will work alongside the established Foster for East Midlands Councils (FFEMC) partnership and support wider collaboration between local authority fostering services across the region by providing a natural strategic framework for continuing collaboration, shared learning and alignment.

The RCC will build on this mature foundation to create a genuinely influential regional platform for change.

East Midlands RIIA

The East Midlands Regional Improvement and Innovation Alliance (RIIA) has become one of the strongest examples of sustained regional collaboration nationally. Its recent Impact Evaluation demonstrated:

- strong regional trust
- mature peer support
- influential leadership networks
- innovation across workforce, SEND, commissioning and social care reform
- tangible impact on improvement capacity across the region

The RCC will work closely alongside the RIIA, benefiting from established Heads of Service networks, commissioning collaboration, peer challenge infrastructure, workforce development and a mature culture of collective problem-solving.

About SDSA

The RCC Core Team will be hosted by SDSA, the East Midlands' long-established business support partner.

SDSA is a not-for-profit organisation with a strong track record of supporting education, children's services and regional collaboration since 2005. It provides programme infrastructure, commissioning support and partnership coordination across the region and already works extensively with the East Midlands Directors of Children's Services (EMDCS) and RIIA.

Hosting the RCC within SDSA provides stability, agility, established resources and systems, regional connectivity and the ability to mobilise quickly. The core office base for this post will be at the SDSA office in Leicester City Centre, with regular in-person collaboration expected, alongside flexible and hybrid working arrangements.



The Opportunity

As RCC Director, you will help lead one of the most significant children's services reform programmes currently being developed nationally.

You will help shape the future of regional collaboration across the East Midlands: building trust across ten local authorities and multiple partners, developing the region's strategic commissioning capability, and helping create better, more stable lives for children in the care system.

As the founding Director, you will provide strategic leadership for the establishment, mobilisation and delivery of the East Midlands RCC and be responsible for translating the agreed vision, governance framework, delivery plan and national requirements into a high-performing and sustainable regional function. You will set the tone, culture and ambition of the partnership from its earliest stages and play a major role in establishing the East Midlands as a leading region for collaborative reform and innovation.

Experience and Background

We are open to candidates from a range of professional backgrounds and recognise that exceptional leaders do not always emerge through conventional career pathways. Successful candidates are likely to be able to demonstrate significant leadership experience within children's services, public services, commissioning, partnership environments or similarly complex systems.

What matters most is your ability to work across systems, build relationships, inspire confidence and help turn regional ambition into practical improvement for children and families.

Key Candidate Attributes

- A strong belief in the potential of collaborative public service reform
- The ability to inspire confidence and build trusted relationships quickly
- Strategic thinking combined with practical delivery focus
- Calm and resilient leadership in complex environments
- Credibility with senior leaders and partners
- Political and organisational awareness without excessive bureaucracy
- Energy, optimism and a solutions-focused mindset
- Ability to bring people together around shared purpose
- Comfort operating in ambiguity and helping shape emerging systems
- Commitment to improving outcomes for children, young people and families



Role Responsibilities

▶ Strategic Leadership

- Provide visible and credible leadership for the East Midlands RCC, translating the regional vision, delivery plan and DfE requirements into a sustainable, high-performing regional function.
- Lead the RCC from mobilisation into delivery, establishing the operating model, governance, culture, systems and ways of working needed for long-term success.
- Deliver implementation against agreed milestones, ensuring clear accountability, benefits realisation and effective management of risks and dependencies.

▶ Governance and System Leadership

- Establish and maintain robust governance, assurance and decision-making arrangements that support effective regional collaboration while respecting local authority sovereignty.
- Provide transparent reporting on delivery, finance, performance, benefits and risk, ensuring timely escalation and informed decision-making.
- Work with legal, finance, procurement, HR and governance colleagues to develop the frameworks, agreements and operating arrangements required for a sustainable RCC.

▶ Commissioning and Sufficiency

- Lead the development and delivery of regional sufficiency, market-shaping and commissioning strategies that improve outcomes, stability and value for money.
- Establish the RCC as a trusted regional platform for market intelligence, provider engagement, strategic commissioning and collaborative procurement.
- Drive data-informed commissioning approaches, with an initial focus on low-incidence, high-cost and complex placements where regional action can have greatest impact.
- Promote ethical commissioning, transparency, social value and sustainable market development across the region.

▶ Data and Finance

- Establish the regional data, analytics and performance capability needed to support forecasting, commissioning, financial planning and statutory reporting.
- Ensure effective information governance and data-sharing arrangements across participating authorities and partners.
- Oversee the RCC budget and benefits realisation framework, ensuring resources are deployed effectively and progress towards improved outcomes and financial sustainability is evidenced.



Role Responsibilities continued

▶ Partnerships and Engagement

- Build and maintain strong relationships across local authorities, health, police, youth justice, education, providers, DfE and regional and national partners.
- Embed multi-agency collaboration in forecasting, sufficiency planning and commissioning, particularly for children with complex or specialist needs.
- Lead meaningful engagement with providers, practitioners, children, young people, families and foster carers to inform RCC design, delivery and continuous improvement.

▶ People and Culture

- Recruit, develop and lead a high-performing RCC core team, including commissioning, data and programme management capacity.
- Model a culture of collaboration, transparency, delivery discipline, professional curiosity and constructive challenge.
- Empower staff and workstream leads to deliver within agreed governance, financial and performance frameworks.
- Ensure equality, diversity, inclusion and anti-racism are embedded in RCC practice, commissioning and decision-making.

▶ Risk and Improvement

- Ensure the RCC operates within relevant legislation, statutory guidance, governance and regulatory requirements, maintaining effective oversight of risk and compliance.
- Use evidence, evaluation and learning to continuously improve the RCC model, contribute to national learning and support long-term sustainability beyond the initial funded phase.

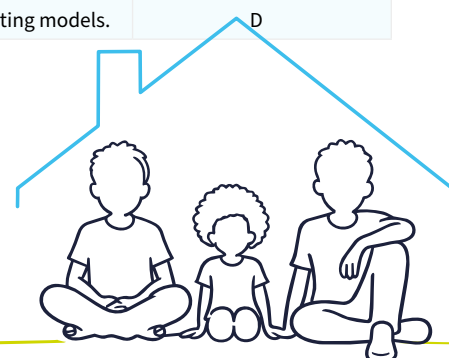
▶ Additional Requirements

- Ability to travel regularly across the East Midlands and attend regional and national meetings as required.
- Appointment will be subject to standard pre-employment checks and any DBS or safer recruitment requirements determined by the host employer and nature of the role.
- The postholder will be expected to comply with the policies, procedures and governance requirements of the host organisation, SDSA Leicester, and the agreed RCC operating framework.
- Flexibility to work outside normal office hours on occasion to meet governance, stakeholder and delivery requirements.



Person Specification

Qualifications and professional credibility	Essential (E) Desirable (D)
Degree level qualification or equivalent senior leadership experience.	E
Relevant postgraduate or professional qualification.	D
Evidence of continuing professional development in system leadership, commissioning, commercial practice, transformation or children's services.	D
Senior leadership experience	
Substantial senior leadership experience in local government, children's services, public-sector commissioning, a partner agency or a comparable complex partnership environment.	E
Proven ability to lead complex change across organisational boundaries, and to establish or develop new functions, services, programmes or operating models at pace.	E
Ability to deliver results through influence, collaboration and partnership working.	E
Experience at Director, Assistant Director, Chief Officer or equivalent level.	D
Experience of regional, sub-regional or multi-authority children's services collaboration.	D
Children's services and care system knowledge	
Strong understanding of children's social care, looked after children, placement sufficiency, corporate parenting, safeguarding, fostering, residential care and/or specialist provision.	E
Knowledge of the national policy, legislative, regulatory and inspection context for children's services.	E
Understanding of the key drivers of placement demand, complexity, instability, distance from home and cost pressures.	E
Direct experience of children's social care commissioning, sufficiency planning, fostering partnerships, fostering services or residential provision.	D
Knowledge of SEND, health, youth justice, exploitation or secure / secure-like pathways as they relate to children in care.	D
Commissioning, commercial and market shaping	
Significant experience of commissioning, procurement, contract management, market engagement or commercial strategy in a complex public service environment.	E
Ability to apply a strong commercial mindset while remaining values-led and focused on improving outcomes for children and young people	E
Understanding of provider markets, cost drivers, quality assurance, value for money and ethical commissioning.	E
Experience of designing or implementing frameworks, dynamic purchasing systems, block / soft-block contracts, pooled budgets or joint commissioning arrangements	D
Experience of provider negotiation and market shaping in high-cost or low-incidence provision.	D
Governance, finance and risk	
Experience of operating within robust governance, assurance, financial management and risk management frameworks	E
Ability to manage significant budgets, oversee resources, monitor benefits and provide transparent reporting to senior boards.	E
Strong grasp of public-sector accountability, democratic decision-making and local authority sovereignty.	E
Experience of developing constitutions, operating frameworks, schemes of delegation, inter-authority agreements or hosted-service arrangements.	D
Experience of working with legal, finance, HR and procurement colleagues to establish new governance or operating models.	D



Person Specification continued

Data, performance and improvement	Essential (E) Desirable (D)
Ability to use data, performance information and business intelligence to drive decision-making, forecasting, commissioning and continuous improvement.	E
Experience of setting KPIs, tracking benefits and using evidence to assess progress and impact.	E
Understanding of information governance and the importance of accurate, comparable and timely data across partners.	E
Experience of establishing shared datasets, dashboards, cost benchmarking tools or data-sharing agreements across organisations.	D
Experience of reporting to DfE, regulators or national programme governance.	D
Partnership and political acumen	
Credibility to work effectively with Directors of Children's Services, Chief Executives, elected members, senior partners and national officials.	E
High levels of political awareness, diplomacy and judgement.	E
Ability to build and maintain trust across multiple local authorities and partners with different priorities, starting points and risk appetites.	E
Confidence working with senior leaders across local government, health, police, youth justice, education and provider markets.	E
Experience of working within regional ADCS, RIIA, combined authority, ICB or equivalent partnership structures.	D
Understanding of the East Midlands children's services landscape and current regional priorities.	D
Leadership skills and personal impact	
Visible, confident and collaborative leader with the ability to set direction, create pace and maintain confidence through uncertainty.	E
Excellent communication, negotiation, influencing and facilitation skills.	E
Ability to balance strategic thinking with delivery grip, detail, follow-through and accountability.	E
Strong problem-solving skills and resilience under pressure.	E
Experience of chairing complex boards, leading high-stakes negotiations or representing a partnership at national level.	D
Experience of developing and mentoring high-performing specialist teams.	D
Values and Behaviours	
Personal commitment to improving outcomes for children and young people	E
Commitment to co-production and ensuring the voices of children, young people, families, foster carers and practitioners are central to service design.	E
Commitment to equality, diversity, inclusion, anti-racism, social value, transparency and ethical use of public resources.	E
Ability to model integrity, openness, professional curiosity and constructive challenge.	E



Application process

Please apply by submitting the following three documents to jobs@sdsa.net:

- 1. CV** - including an explanation of any gaps in employment.
- 2. Supporting statement** - a maximum of two sides of A4 demonstrating how your knowledge, skills and experience meet the requirements set out in the recruitment pack.
- 3. Application form** - a short form which captures your contact details, references and equal opportunities information. The form is available to download [here](#).

Interview process

Applicants who are shortlisted will be invited to take part in a selection process which will likely comprise of a formal interview, presentation and stakeholder panel. We will provide further information and guidance about the process in advance.

Interviews will be held at the SDSA Office in Leicester City Centre.

Questions

We welcome formal enquiries about the role. If you would like to discuss the opportunity in more detail or have any questions, please email jobs@sdsa.net outlining the nature of your query. We will then ensure that the most appropriate member of our team gets in touch with you.



Email applications to:
jobs@sdsa.net



Closing date for applications:
Sunday 23rd August at 10pm



Successful applicants contacted:
By Friday 28th August



Interviews held:
Thursday 10th September



All applications will be acknowledged:
Via email, within 48 hours of receipt.

