



Recruitment of Head of the Virtual School, Participation & Progression Service



Andrew Tromans
Penna plc | September 2025

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Welcome to Camden!

Thank you for your interest in the role of **Head of Virtual School, Participation & Progression** here in Camden. This is an exciting and pivotal leadership role, bringing together two highly regarded services to improve the life chances of some of our most vulnerable children and young people.

Camden is a borough with ambition – for our residents, our communities, and especially for our children. Our **We Make Camden** vision is rooted in tackling inequality, driving inclusion, and ensuring that every young person can access the opportunities they deserve.

Our children's services are rated Outstanding by Ofsted, and the Virtual School is already recognised for its strong performance, dedicated team, and collaborative approach.

The recent integration with our Participation & Progression Service offers a unique opportunity to create an even more coherent, impactful offer for children and young people from early years through to post-16 and beyond.

In this role, you will lead a committed and talented team working across two service areas: the **Virtual School**, which champions the educational outcomes of looked-after children, care leavers, and other vulnerable cohorts; and the **Participation & Progression Service**, which delivers youth work, careers advice, and enrichment opportunities across the borough. Together, these services play a vital role in improving attendance, raising aspirations, securing progression into education, employment and training, and ensuring that children have the skills, confidence and support to thrive.

This is both a strategic and operational leadership role. In the short term, you will be reviewing our structures, resetting our strategic vision, and developing relationships with key partners, such as schools, Camden Learning, and colleagues across social care and SEN. Over the longer term, you will be tasked with ensuring that our stakeholders – especially young people themselves – rate our services highly, and that we deliver a sustainable, future-focused model of support.

If you have the vision, leadership and passion to shape this agenda, we look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

**Vikram
Hansrani**
Director of
Education,
Commissioning
& Inclusion



The Opportunity

Head of Virtual School, Participation & Progression

Salary up to £96,983

London Borough of Camden

(Hybrid working, with flexible options available)



Camden is a borough with ambition – for our residents, our communities, and especially for our children and young people. Our children's services are rated **Outstanding** by Ofsted, and our Virtual School has a strong reputation for quality, collaboration, and improving outcomes. We are now seeking a virtual head who will lead our Virtual School with our integrated borough-wide Participation & Progression Service to create a joined-up offer that supports children and young people from early years through to post-16 and beyond.

As our new **Head of Virtual School, Participation & Progression**, you will:

Lead well-regarded, motivated teams covering educational advocacy, careers advice, youth work, and enrichment opportunities.

- Drive strategic improvements in outcomes for looked-after children, care leavers, and other vulnerable groups – in Camden and beyond.
- Strengthen partnerships with schools, social care, and Camden Learning, as well as with post-16 providers, voluntary sector organisations, and out-of-borough schools where our children are placed.
- Shape a sustainable, future-focused model that delivers consistently high-quality Personal Education Plans, improves attendance, raises aspirations, and supports progression into education, employment and training.

This is a role where your leadership will make a direct, visible difference to children's lives.

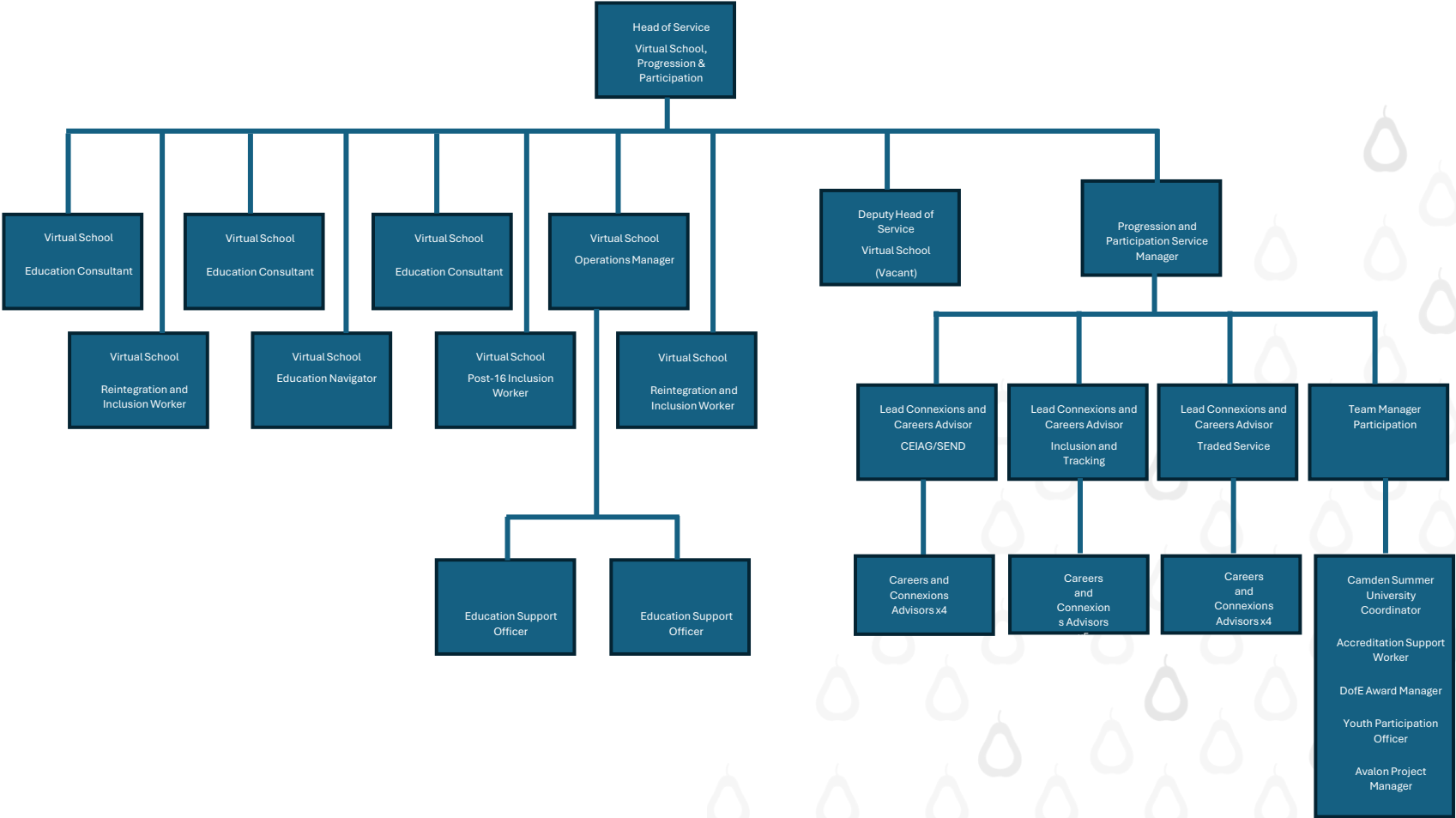
Whether you are an experienced Virtual School Head looking for a fresh, high-performing environment, or a Deputy ready to take the next step, you'll find the professional challenge, supportive culture, and strategic scope to make your mark.

If you have the vision, leadership, and commitment to equity and inclusion that this role demands, we would be delighted to hear from you. For a confidential discussion, please contact Andrew Tromans on 07805 226 301 or at andrew.tromans@penna.com.

Closing date: Sunday 5 October

We're making radical social change a reality, so that nobody gets left behind.


Organisational Chart



Further Reading



[We Make Camden](#)



Ofsted
raising standards
improving lives

Inspection of Camden local authority children's services

Inspection dates: 3 to 7 March 2025

Lead inspector: Claire Beckingham, His Majesty's Inspector

Judgement	Grade
The impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families	Outstanding
The experiences and progress of children who need help and protection	Outstanding
The experiences and progress of children in care	Outstanding
The experiences and progress of care leavers	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness	Outstanding

[Children's Services Inspection – March 2025](#)

Role Specification

About Camden

Camden is building a place where everyone can thrive. We are making our borough the best place to live, work, study and visit. Because we're not just home to UK's fast-growing economy, we're home to the most important conversations happening today. We're making radical social change a reality, so that nobody gets left behind and everybody belongs. Here's where you can help decide a better future for us all.

Camden is extending the role of the Head of the Virtual School to incorporate leadership of the Participation and Progression Service thus increasing the skills mix and specialist capacity across both areas of professional practice in respect of children and young people's education, aspiration, careers, skills and enrichment.

The Virtual School Team is responsible for advocating in the best interests of children and young people to whom the

local authority owes a corporate parenting duty; to ensure their futures are secured by good care and excellent educational, lifelong learning and enrichment opportunities. The extended role of the Virtual School includes a strategic responsibility towards Children in Need and children on Child Protection Plans, as well as towards children previously looked after by the local authority and those in kinship care arrangement; to overcome barriers to poor educational outcomes and promote practice across the partnership that supports pupil engagement in education.

The Progression & Participation Team provides Boroughwide Youth Work programmes and Careers Advice and Guidance services designed to promote engagement and achievement in education and training and accredited informal education, including Camden Summer University, the Duke of Edinburgh Scheme and The Avalon Project.

The Careers and Connexions Service comprises 16 fully qualified Careers Advisers working both within the community and within schools.

About the role

You will:

- Lead a team of staff across 2 service areas focusing on supporting young people to achieve in education, employment and training, supporting progression and attainment by securing high quality Education for children and young people between the ages of 0 to 25, including Careers Education Information Advice and Guidance and accredited out of school learning opportunities.
- Provide effective strategic and operational leadership and management to staff in the Virtual School and in the Progression & Participation Team to secure effective multi-agency working and

Role Specification

performance to the highest standards of professional practice.

- Make safeguarding the welfare of children and young people your highest priority in all areas of your work and dealings with the public and with other organisations and professionals in line with your statutory and non-statutory responsibilities.
- Lead the Virtual School to achieve the best outcomes for Looked After Children and Care Leavers.
- Lead the Participation and Progression Teams to deliver high quality youth work led targeted and universal services to raise aspiration and achieve qualifications towards better outcomes for vulnerable young people.
- Develop and maintain strong partnerships with a range of education professionals and Camden schools to identify how

social workers, carers and schools can best support Children Looked After to improve their outcomes and pursue high aspirations for their achievement.

- Develop and maintain effective partnerships within statutory services, schools, the voluntary sector, post 16 education providers and communities to ensure excellent support to all children and young people.
- Lead strategies in partnership across the relevant Council service areas to meet the statutory requirements of the council in relation to children and young people's achievement, engagement and participation.
- Develop young people's services and projects to support the most vulnerable young people in Camden and wherever Camden children are placed to maximise their opportunities and extend their aspirations.

- Work in partnership with all statutory and voluntary agencies and other stakeholders engaged in community safety and crime reduction as well as other managers and strategic leaders within the Children and Learning Directorate, partners across the Council, as well as Camden Learning.
- Work with social workers and carers, to develop an effective model of advocacy to enable those working closely with children and young people looked after by the local authority to positively challenge schools and educational establishments to provide them with highly aspirational support.
- Develop and deliver training to social workers, carers and Independent Reviewing Officers to improve their knowledge and understanding of the education

Role Specification

system and enable them to have effective conversations with schools about the progress of children and young people.

- Work closely with the Heads of Primary and Secondary School Improvement to review the roles of consultants within the school improvement service and further develop the use of data to analyse outcomes and shape interventions used to improve achievement for CLA.
- Work closely with schools, social workers, carers and others to deliver an effective Personal Education Planning system, ensuring SMART targets are set for schools and colleges to achieve for children and young people.
- Provide leadership and consultative support in relation to complex cases to troubleshoot difficulties and resolve any areas of disagreement between agencies in

respect of the education and welfare of children and young people, developing strategies to identify and target problems at the earliest opportunity.

- Develop and maintain strategies to support CLA and their carers in managing transitions at all stages in the education process.
- Develop and maintain strategies to improve the percentage of care leavers engaged in Education, Employment and Training up to the age of 21 years.
- Develop and maintain strategies to improve the percentage of care leavers in Higher Education.
- Manage assigned budgets, ensuring adherence to targets, effective use of funds and compliance with financial regulations.
- Collate and analyse data in relation to Key Performance Indicators across all areas of practice and service delivery.

- Oversee contract management and commissioning arrangements.
- Be an ambassador for the Virtual School locally and nationally, ensuring key stakeholders are kept informed of achievements and developments, through regular communications, updates, completion of a self-evaluation and production of interim and final reports under Camden's Corporate Parenting Strategy.
- Keep the Director of Education, Commissioning and Inclusion informed, aware and advised of national and local policy, demographic and financial changes.
- Ensure adherence and alignment with key corporate strategies including, the Corporate Parenting Strategy, the Education Strategy, the Youth Mission, the Camden Plan and the Relational Practice Framework

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- Actively contribute to developments around national and local reform upholding the status and positioning of Camden Council as an Outstanding Council.

Work Environment:

Work will entail visits to professionals, organisations and agencies in and out of Camden. You will have the ability to work remotely in this role.

People Management Responsibilities:

You will develop high performing, resilient and empowered teams that can adapt to national and local drivers and are able to respond to changes triggered by the needs of children, young people, their carers, schools, partner agencies and corporate requirements.

Relationships:

The postholder will be expected to work in close cooperation with and influence colleagues across schools, colleges, the local authority, national

organisations and neighbouring local authorities, without close supervision, be able to make the correct decision and command credibility.

The postholder will provide high quality advice, information and reports to key stakeholders and strategic partnerships to inform decisions, initiate actions and provide regulatory functions. They will also represent Camden at regional and national conferences to learn from examples of good practice across the country.

Excellent communication skills are required to communicate with a variety of different audiences both formally and informally, to influence colleagues and ensure that all services prioritise the achievement of LAC. Effective consultation with and the involvement of key stakeholders, particularly children and young people.

The postholder will need to proactively ensure they remain up to date with Relational and Evidence Based Practice

to inform improved outcomes for children and young people across all the cohorts.

There will regularly be the need to deal tactfully with sensitive issues, whilst maintaining confidentiality and always observing data protection and associated guidelines. The post holder will also need to be mindful of Camden's duties and objectives in relation to equalities, diversity and inclusion and understand the implications of these in all dealings with children and young people and their supporting networks.

The postholder will need to have or develop knowledge and skills to operate within Camden's Relational Practice Framework. Camden's approach is systemic thinking using methods of mentalisation, anti-racism, participation and restorative practice, based on relationships of reciprocity, recognition and respect.

Role Specification

Innovation (decision making and creativity):

This opportunity is an innovative application of resources and requires an individual with a high level of creativity to develop and pilot new ways of working in line with Camden's aspirations.

The job requires organising your own priorities to meet the needs of all the cohorts of children and young people across to areas of service, work and populations. A high level of multi-tasking, problem solving and using initiative will be required. The post holder will be required to operate in close cooperation with colleagues across the Directorate, the Council and Community of schools, colleges, skills and careers providers and employers.

The post holder will be expected to use their discretion to make effective professional decisions that will impact on their own priorities and service delivery.

Any competing priorities that cannot be resolved will be shared with the Director of Education, Commissioning and Inclusion.

The post holder will be expert point of reference on the designated specialist areas and will be expected to make recommendations on policy and practice designed to bring about changes and as such is likely to have a significant influence on internal and external stakeholders and clients.

Resource management

- Employees managed: 5 – 8 direct line reports
- Budget: £ 2.7 million gross budget which includes £629K government grants and £425K fees and charges.
- Performance standards – the Virtual School and the Progression and Planning Service have professional standards associated with improving education, employment, skills and

participation opportunities and outcomes and the post holder will have responsibility for maintaining professional standards across key elements of these services.

- Responsible for implementation and management of protocols and procedures in accordance with agreed strategies and frameworks and ensuring compliance with all relevant legislation relating to statutory functions, including data protection and information sharing.
- The post holder will be required to find solutions to problems identified in their area of work and use their professional expertise to work with partners and resolve issues that may require sophisticated analytical skills along with engaging key partners using excellent interpersonal skills to resource change.

Next Steps & How to Apply

This guidance contains important information to help with your application:

Please apply by submitting a CV and Supporting Statement (no more than four sides of A4 in length per document aligned to the person specification). Please also include your contact details.

Please ensure your full employment history is outlined in your CV; where there are essential criteria, competencies and/or qualifications please make clear how you meet these. We may wish to verify this information during the recruitment process.

Please provide the details of two referees. Note that we will only approach referees for candidates proceeding to final selection and only with your permission. Please clearly indicate whether we can approach each referee before the selection date.

Please share with us in your Supporting Statement the values and behaviours that you bring to your leadership, and how you will transfer your skills and experience into this role.

Please complete the Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form when you upload your details via our website.

Please upload your application by the closing date – no applications will be accepted once the long listing process has begun.

Following long-listing, you will be contacted directly by a Penna consultant to update you on the status of your application.

Asking for adjustments: we're committed to making our recruitment practices barrier-free and as accessible as possible for everyone. This includes making adjustments or changes for disabled people, neurodiverse people or people with long-term health conditions. If you would like us to consider doing anything differently during the application, interview, or assessment process, including providing information in an alternative format, please contact us.

To apply for this role, please visit the following link to upload your CV and Cover Letter: <https://penna.com/jobs>

Key Dates

Applications deadline Sunday 5 October

Technical Interviews w/c 13 October

Final Interviews Tuesday 21 October

For questions or a confidential discussion, please contact:



Andrew Tromans
on 07805 226301 or
andrew.tromans@penna.com

Penna Executive Search

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**Any questions?
Please don't hesitate to contact us**



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