

The Opportunity

JOB TITLE: Consultant Social Worker

SALARY: M2

REPORTS TO: Team Manager

DEPARTMENT: Children's Services

TEAM: Assessment, Family Safeguarding, Children Looked After

PURPOSE OF THE JOB

To increase the skills of front line Social Worker Teams to rise to the challenges of the Munro Report and also Family Justice Review. This role will hold a caseload of complex cases equating to approximately 60% of a full caseload.

The post holder will have supervisory responsibility for up to two professional assistants/support services staff or other areas of specified responsibility as outlined above. The role does not have managerial or direct budgetary responsibility but may be required to work evenings, weekends and occasional public holidays, in order to meet service requirements in respect of service user needs.

KEY AREAS OF ACCOUNTABILITY
Service Delivery
<ul style="list-style-type: none">To undertake assessments of children in need in accordance with the Assessment Framework and Working Together and to ensure robust and timely care planning for children looked after. To ensure that initial and core assessments are completed to a high standard and within timescales.To demonstrate consistently high standards of practice that put the needs of children at the forefront of all activity.To evidence working in partnership with children and their families.To ensure all children for whom the post holder is responsible have a clear care plan to promote their development, well being and protect them from harm.To operate within a performance framework and to strive to improve personal performance and meet identified development targets.To actively promote anti-discriminatory practice and the celebration of diversity.To carry out other duties as defined by the Director of Children Services
Communication skills and information sharing
<ul style="list-style-type: none">To use the Service's electronic communications system, database, spreadsheets, word processing packages and templates competently and promote the use of IT within the Team. To ensure a high standard of electronic social care recording for all children. To be responsible for accurately loading and updating the Service's database with children and families details/status

etc.

- To ensure the Service's procedures for managing risk of significant harm to children are followed at all times, and to seek appropriate advice and authorisation from managers.
- To conduct care proceedings on behalf of the Service with appropriate guidance and authorisation. To ensure reports and statement for court, case conferences and looked after reviews are prepared to a high standard, in time for deadlines and evidence involvement of children, families (including absent fathers) and carers.
- To represent the Service in magistrates, County and High Courts.
- To instruct solicitors, counsel and expert witnesses, in care proceedings with appropriate authorisation.
- To follow the Service's procedures for the authorisation of care packages, placements, financial expenditure and accommodation of children.

Advocacy

- Be able to represent children, young people, families, carers, groups, individuals and partner agencies to access services
- Challenge injustice, discrimination and lack of access to services
- Challenge poor practice
- Advise children (age appropriate in a child centred way), young people, families, carers, groups and individuals about independent advocacy that can best meet their needs
- Assist children (age appropriate in a child centred way), young people, families, carers, groups, individuals and partner agencies represent their views in all meetings affecting them.

Partnership and Collaborative Working

- To convene and chair multi-agency child protection meetings and planning meetings.
- To make full and appropriate use of the Family Group Conferencing process.
- To play a leading role in improving practice and quality of assessments and care planning within the Team via mentoring assigned social work staff, leading Team meeting discussions and workshops, taking responsibility for updating Team on practice developments and research findings, induction of new staff.
- Co-working cases with social workers as required and accompanying them to court.
- Responsibility for prioritisation of Team allocated work held in the Duty system under the direction of a Team Manager.
- Lead responsibility for liaison with key agency e.g. CMHT, Health Visitors, Schools, TYS, Police, Probation as directed by the Team Manager.

Key tasks and accountabilities are intended to be a guide to the range and level of work expected of the post-holder. This is not an exhaustive list of all tasks that may fall to the post-holder and employees will be expected to carry out such other reasonable duties which may be required from time to time.

Person Specification

Knowledge, Skills and Experience

- Have a knowledge of services relevant to children, young people, families, carers, groups and

partner agencies needs and circumstances offered by HCC and others and how to access other relevant services

- Have a knowledge of legislation, guidance, policy and procedures
- Have an in-dept knowledge of the children, young people, families, carers, groups and partner agencies they are working with
- Keep up to date with learning, training and personal development with all relevant information and changes to services
- Demonstrate professional competence in social work practice by using current knowledge and working within agreed standards of best social work practice and carrying out duties in accordance with the HCPC standards of proficiency.

Specific to Assessment and Family Safeguarding Teams:

- Ability to undertake child protection investigations and assessments of risk/need, for cases which meet agreed threshold.
- Work closely with adult's specialists to develop creative multi-disciplinary care plans for children who are subject to child protection or child in need plans.
- Inform the Team Manager when they consider care/PLO proceedings may need to be initiated.

Specific to Children Looked After Teams:

- Experience of working with looked after children and young people and care leavers to improve their health, emotional resilience, educational achievement and ensure they are protected from substance misuse and sexual exploitation.
- Ability to support stable relationships with carers, plan for appropriate placements, support young people to return to families, if/when appropriate and prepare young people for adulthood and independence
- Keep team manager updated about risks to children and young people.

Specific to Children with Disabilities

- Experience and understanding of disability issues and the supports needed to help children and young people live active lives and achieve their potential
- Ability to separate the needs of disabled children from those of their family and keep the child's needs, wishes and feelings at the centre of the work
- Understanding of the protection needs of disabled children and ability to undertake child protection investigations and develop multi-agency protection plans
- Ability to work closely with health and education colleagues to develop high quality ECH plans that maximise young people's independence.

Additional Requirements

- Public Authorities must ensure that all members of staff in customer facing roles, whatever their nationality or origins, are able to communicate the English language fluently with the general public, verbally and in written format.
- As a requirement of this role the post holder will need to have a full UK Driving Licence. You will be required to travel to visit clients in their homes and at other venues, and to attend meetings at sites other than own work base.

Values and Behaviours
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promote the values and behaviours of Hertfordshire Council County to ensure everyone is working with a common purpose• Makes the best use of the contributions in the culture, ethnic origin, gender, age and abilities of each person• Adhere to the HCPC standards of conduct, performance and ethics: http://www.hcpc-uk.org/aboutregistration/standards/standardsofconductperformanceandethics/
Qualifications
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Relevant approved social work degree/qualification.• A professionally qualified, registered social worker adhering to the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) standards of proficiency conduct performance and ethics and meet the national professional social work capabilities.

Criminal Background Check

Safeguarding children and adults is of utmost importance to Hertfordshire County Council. The Council requires employees to abide by legislation and best practice to enable Hertfordshire to achieve this. This role has been identified as requiring a Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) check or Basic Disclosure. You must therefore ensure that any relevant criminal record check application is completed and returned as requested by the Council, as this is deemed a contractual requirement of employment. In addition, you consent to allow the Council to retain a copy of the disclosure certificate within your personal file.

It is a contractual obligation to disclose any cautions, reprimands or convictions and to update your manager of any changes to your status whilst in employment. Enhanced DBS roles will be reviewed periodically during employment, by means of DBS Dip Sample or three yearly rechecks. Failure to disclose changes to your status may be detrimental to your employment and you may be subject to disciplinary action.

Please note that additional information referring to the check is in the guidance notes to the application form. If you are invited to interview you will receive more information.

Equality and Diversity

Hertfordshire County Council is determined to take action to ensure that our belief in diversity and equality of opportunity is integral to everything we do. It will inform every area of activity; from the way we provide services to the way we employ our staff. It is a central responsibility of all councillors, managers, staff and partners. The council's equality policy 'Putting People First' is available on hertfordshire.gov.uk, on the internal intranet or from your line manager.

Health and Safety

It will be the duty of every employee while at work to take reasonable care for the Health and safety of themselves and of other persons who may be affected by their acts or omissions at work.

