



Brighter
Futures for
Children

brighterfuturesforchildren.org

Social Work Assistant – Adoption &
Permanence Service
Job Description & Person Specification

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Job Information

Post Title	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social Work Assistant – Adoption & Permanence
Reports to:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Team Manager for Adoption & Permanence
Grade and Salary:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RG4m SCP 11 to SCP 22 with gateway at SCP 18
Location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Civic Centre, Reading
Conditions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 37 hours per week, occasional outside of office hours to respond to specific service requirements
Direct reports to the post:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None

Job Purpose

Brighter Futures for Children is improving outcomes for Reading's children, young people and families.

We are an independent, not-for-profit-company, wholly owned by Reading Borough Council. Our responsibility is to deliver quality children's services, early help, education and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) services in the borough.

We have recently created a new Adoption & Permanence Service within our Children's Social Care Service which will bring together a number of our permanency planning services including, but not limited to:

- Permanency Planning for all Children Looked After aged up to 14 years;
- Family finding for children with Care Plans of permanent fostering;
- The assessment of Connected Carers and Special Guardians;
- Supervision of and support to Connected Carers;
- The provision of Special Guardianship Support Services;
- The registration of Private Foster Carers and monitoring and supporting private fostering arrangements;
- Liaison with our RAA and the day-to-day management of our RAA contract;
- The management of the BFfC Permanence Allowance Scheme;
- The provision of support and advice to social workers and managers across the local authority, with regards to achieving and maintaining permanent placements for Children Looked After.

The main focus of the post holder's role will be on the completion of Life Books, Later Life Letters and contact (Letterbox) agreements for children who have been adopted from the care of Brighter Futures for Children, and on setting up and then maintaining an in-house library of books and resources to be used by social workers and carers in preparing children for adoption. Depending on the flow of work within the service, the post holder may also be required to:

- provide a level of support to social workers within our Family Intervention or Children Looked After Teams who are completing Life Books for children who are subject to Special Guardianship Orders or permanent fostering arrangements;

- provide a level of support to social workers employed within the Adoption & Permanence Service around the hosting of support and training groups for prospective and actual Connected Carers and Special Guardians.

Designation of Post within Company Structure

1. Your role

- To gather Life Journey materials; including information, photographs and memorabilia relating to specific children.
- To review case file information in order to gain an accurate understanding of the child's Life Journey to date.
- To liaise with the child's prospective or legal adopters or carers, and with professionals and carers who are or have previously been involved with the child.
- To compile an electronic Life Book for each child using a pre-set format but composing the child's individual narrative, ensuring that a draft Life Book is provided to each child's prospective adoptive parent(s) to see and pass comment on by the date of the child's 2nd Adoption Review (i.e. within 4 months post placement).
- To support children's social workers in compiling any associated Later Life Letters for children using an agreed format but composing each child's individual narrative.
- To liaise with children's birth relatives and prospective and legal adopters around the setting up of any agreed indirect (Letterbox) contact arrangements and to then complete the paperwork required, liaising with the ATV Letterbox Co-ordinator to ensure that any proposed 'Letterbox' arrangements are set up in a timely manner for every child who is adopted from the care of Brighter Futures for Children.
- To update the Mosaic case record when the Life Book and/or Later Life Letter is completed and provided to the child's adopters or carers and when 'Letterbox' arrangements are set up; ensuring that an electronic copy of the child's Life Book and Later Life Letter are uploaded onto the case file.
- Individual Life Books and/or Later Life Letters will need to be completed within agreed timescales and liaison will need to be maintained with children's prospective or legal adopters or carers to keep them apprised on progress.
- To set up and maintain an in-house library of books and resources to be used in preparing children for adoption; then holding responsibility for issuing resources to foster-carers and/or social workers and reclaiming them when children subsequently move into their adoptive placements.
- To, if requested to do so:
 - provide a level of advice and support to social workers within our Family Intervention or Children Looked After Teams who are completing Life Books for children who are subject to Special Guardianship Orders or permanent fostering arrangements;
 - provide a level of support to social workers employed within the Adoption & Permanence Service around the hosting of support and training groups for prospective and actual Connected Carers and Special Guardians.
- To develop and maintain positive working relationships with adopters, carers, service users, other professionals and partner agencies.
- To ensure that any matters in respect of child safeguarding are responded to promptly and effectively and escalated in line with the Brighter Futures for Children safeguarding procedures.
- To ensure that appropriate case recording is completed in a timely manner and to a good

standard, in line with Brighter Futures for Children's associated policies and procedures.

- To ensure that practice is legal and safe at all times, including data handling, confidentiality and compliance with regulatory requirements.
- To work in a manner which is consistent with, and upholds, Brighter Futures for Children's Equal Opportunities policy.
- To take reasonable care of your own health and safety and co-operate with management, so far as is necessary, to enable compliance with the company's health and safety rules and legislative requirements.
- Brighter Futures for Children is a dynamic organisation which recognises the need to respond flexibly to changing demands and circumstances; moreover, the Brighter Futures for Children Adoption & Permanence Service is a new service which will inevitably develop and change over time. While this job description provides a summary of functions and responsibilities of the post, this may need to be adapted or adjusted to meet changing circumstances and demands. Such changes would be commensurate with the grading of the post.

Progression Criteria for Progression through the Gateway

- Undertaking:
 - direct work with CLA and/or their birth family members relating to the gathering of information required to inform the preparation of Life Books and/or Later Life Letters;
- And/or:
 - direct life story work with CLA to support their understanding of their individual experiences.
- To significantly contribute to initiatives that enhance service delivery within the Adoption & Permanence service.
- To assist in the induction of new staff by shadowing, mentoring and advising new staff in the use of BfFC procedures relating to the completion of Life Books and Later Life Letters for children who are subject to permanency arrangements.

2. Relationships – who you will work with

Internal:

- Social workers working within Brighter Futures for Children;
- Colleagues across the council.

External:

- Adopters, foster carers and children.

3. What your performance will be measured against

- Individual professional objectives will be set as part of your continuous professional development and will be reviewed through professional supervision and annual

appraisals (with six monthly review).

4. Your level of autonomy

- Required to work as part of the wider Children’s Services team, as well as using own initiative to deliver objectives.

5. Personal Attributes

- Confident in your professional role;
- Approachable;
- Able to develop positive working relationships;
- Able to respond appropriately to sensitive situations;
- Able to cope with professional challenge;
- Able to work on your own initiative;
- A flexible approach and able to balance conflicting demands;
- Able to meet work related deadlines.

6. Scope of Job (Budgetary/Resource Control/Impact)

- To be aware of budgetary limits;
- To work within parameters agreed with the responsible Team and Service Manager for specific pieces of work.
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Special/Other Requirements/Responsibilities of this Post

Level of DBS check required for this post	Enhanced with a check of the barring list(s)
Does the post require a check against the list of people barred from working with vulnerable adults?	YES
Does the post require a check against the list of people barred from working with children?	YES
What other security/safer recruitment clearances are required for this post? (excluding standard identity/work permit/education qualification checks)	NONE
Is this post “politically restricted”?	NO
Responsibility for Health & Safety:	Level 1
Please specify responsibility for implementing the company’s risk management strategy as it applies to the service, ensuring risks to service delivery and specific projects or initiatives are recognised and that actions are taken and monitored to mitigate risks identified	N/A
Please specify any other Statutory Duties and/or responsibilities of this post not already covered in the “Main Duties & Responsibilities” above	Comply with the HCPC Codes of Practice

Person Specification

Knowledge, Skills, Abilities & Competencies

Essential:

- Good communication and interpersonal skills including good written and spoken English;
- An excellent telephone manner;
- Good computer and keyboard skills;
- An understanding of the importance of confidentiality in working with substitute carers and undertaking permanence work;
- Good organisational skills;
- The ability to manage workload effectively and to prioritise tasks to meet agreed timescales;
- A satisfactory Criminal Records Disclosure (DBS Check).

Preferred:

- A creative approach;
- Knowledge around communicating with children and young people;
- Knowledge of the adoption process as it relates to Children in Care;
- Knowledge of child development and the impact of separation, loss and trauma on children;
- Experience of working with families;
- Knowledge of disability as this relates to children and their families;
- NVQ Level 3, or equivalent, or the willingness to undertake this training;
- Current driving license and daily use of a car.

Experience

Essential:

- Experience of working in a busy office setting.

Note: currently BFfC staff are mainly working from home due to the prevailing covid-19 situation, however it is anticipated that this may change in the future when it is safe for it to do so.

Preferred:

- Experience of working in a Social Care setting;
- Experience of working with substitute carers: foster carers, adopters.

Additional Working Requirements

- A willingness to work outside office hours to respond to specific service requirements.

Hilary Loades

Service Lead – Adoption & Permanence

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