

London Borough of Lambeth

JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title: Social Worker
Department: Children's Social Care
Division: Children's Services
Grade: PO1, PO2, PO3
Responsible to: Team Manager
Responsible for: N/A

Main purpose of post

- This Job Description is a guide to the level and range of responsibilities the post holder, as a Social Worker registered with Social Work England, will be expected to undertake.
- To provide a quality social work service to children, young people and their families/carers to ensure an environment which safeguards and promotes their welfare, and enables children wherever possible to remain within their family and community.
- To implement positive change in complex cases in children, families and carers lives by using systemic social work methods, models and tools, with the aims of helping them to be as independent as possible.
- To also manage and minimise risks of abuse and neglect as well as meeting care needs while exercising a high quality of professional judgement.
- To lead and oversee professional judgements in the context of the relevant legal and policy frameworks.
- To undertake high quality comprehensive/complex and proportionate assessments of children and families using the assessment framework, to plan how identified needs will be met, to support them with putting those plans in to action, and review those plans and reassess needs following Lambeth's Practice Standards.
- Establish and develop collaborative robust working with partner agencies; and promote, model and be accountable for effective inter-agency working arrangements to ensure children are protected from risk of significant harm and their care needs are met.
- To carry out safeguarding enquiries, support the work of others involved in these enquiries, and to support children, families and carers with care and support needs to develop and put in to action plans appropriate to their wishes and circumstances.
- Act in the role of the lead professional and be accountable in complex, statutory cases that require a qualified children's social worker, including child in need, child protection, care proceedings and looked after children cases.

Our Core Values

- We believe children are best cared for in their birth families and where this isn't possible we take timely and appropriate action so children have safety, permanence and stability.
- We work openly and collaboratively with parents and families so they understand why we are involved.
- We treat everyone with dignity and respect.
- We are committed to the ongoing development of our professional social care staff by establishing transparent career pathways so staff know what they need to do to progress and aligning progression with performance outcomes. Our Career Progression Framework is closely linked to the Social Work Professional Capabilities Framework and introduces clear levels of performance and achievement in social work that are directly linked to levels of pay. This can also be used to help identify strengths and areas for development.

- You will have regular supervision for effective practice, reflection and career development and have the opportunity to participate in programmes of training and associated work experience for social work progression. You will develop an awareness of your own areas for development, and establish a network of internal and external colleagues from whom to seek advice and expertise. When you and your manager feel you are ready to progress you will have the opportunity to demonstrate how your skills and capabilities meet the Social Work Professional Capabilities Framework at the next level which will then be assessed by the Career progression panel. The panel meets every quarter.

Key Unit Accountabilities

1. To manage and monitor on a high need complex and challenging caseload of children, families and carers with a degree of autonomy; developing and implementing casework while informing and making recommendations to management of any of irregularities/serious issues. This will include carrying out effective work in cases with the following characteristics:
 - a. multi-agency input
 - b. complex family or organisational dynamics
 - c. work with complex emotions and reactions
 - d. manage professional differences
 - e. multiple problems or disadvantages
 - f. multiple and significant risk factors
 - g. the need to take into account the public interest
2. To undertake and devise in-depth and robust assessments, care planning and reviewing activity and formulate recommendations for support plans. This will include:
 - a. Able to have multiple ideas and taken on board the positions of others in order to deliver interventions.
 - b. Contributing to work across networks, communities and agencies
 - c. Influencing change in the lives of children, families and carers through relationship-based work
 - d. Practice that is demonstrably evidence-informed
 - e. Work that evidences sound decision-making, that is done with an appropriate level of independence and autonomy
 - f. Co-ordinating work across networks, communities and agencies
 - g. Taking the initiative, to form constructive alliances and to act as a change agent
 - h. Applying skills appropriately around management of self and professional identity
 - i. Working with appropriate independence, which will involve collaborating on equal terms with members of other professions
3. To prepare applications and reports for court and to represent the Council at court in relation to this and make recommendations and judgements to consider legal action, where appropriate.
4. To explore and maintain high level knowledge of legislation and regulations and departmental procedures relating to working with children, families and carers.
5. To attend, prepare for and make constructive use of supervision, appraisal and case reflection meetings with line manager.

6. To undertake responsibility for complex projects or areas of work in agreement with line manager.
7. To organise and plan your own and colleagues (where applicable) work activities taking into account competing demands and priorities and to keep the manager apprised of any difficulties.
8. To recognise and act on actions on safeguarding concerns relating to children, families, carers and professionals with care and support needs, and contribute to the response to such concerns.
9. To identify where needs cannot be met due to unavailability of resources or because of inadequate financial provision, and to make recommendations to management on how to move forward.
10. To identify, manage and analyse complex information, producing comprehensive, analytic, high quality reports required for the monitoring of performance and quality.
11. To contribute to the investigation and resolution of complaints, Member's Enquiries or Local Government Ombudsman enquiries, and play a part as needed in identifying and acting on the lessons learned from these.
12. To prepare and present complex information in a range of settings: to meetings of colleagues, reviews and panels, as well as legal proceedings.
13. To model and implement flexibility in undertaking the duties and responsibilities of this job, and participate as required in groups and task teams, some of which may involve working across disciplines, or with colleagues from across the Council and partner organisations.
14. Meet the requirements and comply with the Professional Capabilities Framework, Social Worker level, and of registration with Social Work England in respect of professional standards, conduct and continuous professional development. Lambeth offer a range of learning and development opportunities and activities to support Social Workers maintain and develop their career. The evidence of demonstrating professional capabilities will form part of the performance management process.
15. To carry out the duties and responsibilities of the post with full regard to the Council's Equal Opportunities Policy and any other council policies and good practice and guidelines, and for all work to be carried out in line with the Public Sector Equality Duty.
16. To undertake other duties within the post's scope of responsibilities that might be reasonably requested from time to time.
17. To model good practice, setting expectations for others. To take responsibility and accountability for the practice of others e.g. mentoring newly qualified social workers the work of more junior staff. Such as an AYSE assessor /Practice Educator
18. Developing in depth specialist knowledge and skills in an area such as practice education, research methods or an area of practice and act as a champion contributing to the development of services, policies, practice and research.
19. Work with a degree of independence, whilst recognising when and how to seek advice from a range of sources. Use supervision to identify strategies to build professional resilience and balance the potential for bias in decision-making.
20. Due to the nature of the work with vulnerable children, families and carers some work beyond normal office hours is required from time to time.
21. To work flexibly in undertaking the duties and responsibilities of this job, and participate as required in multi-disciplinary cross-department and cross-organisational groups and task teams.

22. To take responsibility, relevant to the post, for ensuring that Council statutes and government legislation is upheld. This includes, amongst others; Management Compliance Charter, Environmental Policy, Data Protection Act, Race Equality Action Plan, Quality Assurance Plan, Health & Safety, Sustainable Construction and Recycling.
23. To take responsibility, appropriate to the post for tackling racism and promoting good race, ethnic and community relations.

Duties and Responsibilities

At PO1 grade (NQSW)

- To undertake a range of children and families and safeguarding assessments.
- To undertake assessments in accordance with central government and local guidelines and where appropriate prepare, present and implement plans for work with children and their families based on such assessments.
- To support children and their families so that children will be maintained in a safe environment within the family network
- To initiate where necessary Care Proceedings, attend Court and represent the Local Authority.
- To support children who are looked after by this authority. Formulate, prepare and implement appropriate care plans in line with CL.A. procedures.
- To prepare and present a range of reports including reports for Court, Child Care Reviews, C.P. Conferences and planning meetings.
- Manage workload, seeking support and suggesting solutions for workload difficulties.
- Commission a range services designed to minimise risks and improve the wellbeing of service users and their carers
- To have knowledge of services relevant to individuals, families, carers, groups and communities (not just those offered by the council) and how to access other relevant services.
- To be accountable for your practice and involve individuals, families, carers, groups and communities in decision making, offering them choices, options and linking them to support groups and networks
- To help individuals, families, carers, groups and communities represent their views in all meetings affecting them and work effectively with others to improve services offered to them
- To work with children and their families to ensure where appropriate a re-unification, where short term separation has been necessary.
- Negotiate and establish boundaries to underpin partnership work with service users, carers and their networks, using transparency and honesty.
- Raise and address issues of poor practice, internally via organisation procedures, and then independently if required.
- To have particular regard to all safeguarding issues and to ensure that they are raised appropriately through professional and managerial channels.
- Ensure practice is underpinned by evidence, policy, procedures and code of conduct to promote individuals' rights to determine their own solutions, promoting problem-solving skills, whilst recognising how and when self-determination may be constrained by legislation.
- Recognise discriminatory practices and develop a range of approaches to appropriately challenge service users, colleagues and senior managers.
- Draw on a range of evidence sources to inform decision making. Ensure hypotheses and options are reviewed to inform judgement and decision making.

- Ensure that you evidence that you routinely consult with service users and accurately capture their wishes and feelings.
- Critically reflect on and manage the power of your role in your relationship with others.
- Enable and support people to consider and pursue a range of options that may enhance economic status (through access to education, work, housing, health services and welfare benefits) and wellbeing.

At PO2 grade Social Worker you will be expected to practice effectively, exercising higher quality judgements, in situations of increasing complexity, risk, uncertainty and challenge. Through a growing understanding you will anticipate, but not pre-judge the issues that may develop. You will have greater confidence and independence (whilst accessing support when needed), and use your initiative to broaden your repertoire of responses; you will have expertise in one or more areas of practice, be familiar with local resource networks and be recognised by peers as a source of reliable knowledge and advice.

At PO3 grade Social Worker you will be starting to demonstrate the level descriptors in the PCF of the Experienced Social Worker. Experienced social workers are more autonomous in their role. They demonstrate expert and effective practice in complex situations, assessing and managing higher levels of risk, striking a balance between support and control, liaising with a wide range of professionals, including more senior levels. You will start to take responsibility and be accountable for the practice of others, mentoring newly qualified social workers, and supervising the work of less experienced practitioners. You will undertake capacity-building with individuals, families, communities, user groups and voluntary organisations, and contribute your views on service provision to commissioners.

PERSON SPECIFICATION
Social Worker PO1 – PO3

<p>It is essential that in your written supporting statement you give evidence or examples of your proven experience in each of the short-listing criteria marked Application (A)</p> <p>You should expect that all areas listed below will be assessed as part of the interview and assessment process should you be shortlisted.</p> <p>If you are applying under the Disability Confidence scheme, you will need to give evidence or examples of your proven experience in the areas marked with “Ticks” (✓) on the person specification when you complete the application form.</p>		Shortlisting Criteria	
Qualification	Q1	Recognised Social Work qualification (i.e., CQSW, DipSW, BA Hons Social Work or other relevant degree in Social Work).	A ✓
	Q2	Current Social Work England registration.	
Key Knowledge	K1	Thorough and up to date knowledge of proposed and actual legislation, statutory regulations and Government guidance and standards relevant to children. (PO1, PO2, PO3)	A ✓
	K2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of social work theories and values, and how to apply these in practice using evidence (PO1) • Considerable knowledge of social work theories and values, and research and how to apply these in practice using the latest and most relevant evidence (PO2) • Thorough knowledge and understanding of complex social work theories and values, and research and how to apply these in practice using the latest and most relevant evidence. (PO3) 	A ✓
Relevant Experience	E1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of working with children, families and carers in the United Kingdom (PO1) • Proven statutory Social Work experience with children, families and carers in the United Kingdom (PO2) • Extensive post-qualification statutory Social work experience with children, families and carers in the United Kingdom (PO3) 	A ✓
	E2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of direct work with children undertaking assessment of need and risk (PO1) • Proven experience of successfully undertaking direct work with children undertaking assessment of need and risk (PO2) • Extensive experience of successfully undertaking complex direct work with children undertaking assessment of need and risk (PO3) 	A ✓

	E3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of safeguarding & child protection, court work, and working with children in care/care leavers (PO1) • Proven experience of successfully undertaking safeguarding & child protection work, court work or work with children in care/care leavers (PO2) • Extensive experience of successfully undertaking complex safeguarding & child protection work, court work or work with children in care/care leavers (PO3) 	A✓
	E4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of working with partners to improve outcomes for children (PO1) • Experience of working with partners in a multi-agency context and within a duty system (PO2) • Experience of working independently with partners in a complex multi-agency context and within a duty system (PO3) 	A✓
Core Behaviours		<p>Focuses on People</p> <p>Is about considering the people who our work affects, internally and externally. It's about treating people fairly and improving the lives of those we impact. It's about ensuring we have the right processes in place.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approach families with empathy, compassion and creativity using relationships for positive change • To be curious, sensitive, and reflective as well as being authoritative, professional and tenacious in improving life outcomes for children, families and carers • Use a systemic approach to work purposefully, openly and compassionately with the whole family system. 	
		<p>Takes Ownership</p> <p>Is about being proactive and owning our personal objectives. It's about seizing opportunities, driving excellence, engaging with the council's objectives, and furthering our professional development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflective critical thinking and analysis to evaluate and integrate multiple sources of knowledge and evidence to create meaningful assessments and plans • Draw on a range of approaches, used proportionately and regularly reviewed • Have high quality planning and decision making skills • Take appropriate responsibility for your conduct, practice and learning. 	
		<p>Works Collaboratively</p> <p>Is about helping each other, developing relationships, and understanding other people's roles. It's about working together with colleagues, partners, and customers to earn their respect, and get the best results.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build skilful and influential working relationships with other professionals and agencies • Demonstrate understanding and skill in working as a member of a team and organisation 	

	<p>Communicates Effectively</p> <p>Is about how we talk, write and engage with others. It's about using simple, clear, and open language to establish positive relationships with others. It's also about how you listen and make yourself open to conversation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make good and emotionally intelligent use of supervision 	
	<p>Focuses on Results</p> <p>Is about ambition and achievement. It's about orienting ourselves towards the end product and considering the effect of our service. It's about making the right impact, having the right result and changing things for the better.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand legal and statutory responsibilities and execute these in children's, families and carers best interests. 	