

Job Description and Person Specification

Social Worker

A Lambeth to be proud of



Job Title: Social Worker

Department: Children's Services

Division: Children's Social Care

Grade: PO2, PO3

Reports to: Team Manager

Context

We believe children are best cared for in their birth families and where this is not 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.

Job Purpose

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's cases.

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 evidence 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.

Responsibilities

At PO2 grade (post-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.

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

It is essential that in you can meet the following requirements for the role and be able to give evidence or examples of your proven experience in each of the short-listing criteria marked Application (A).			Shortlisting Criteria
You should expect that all areas listed below will be assessed as part of the interview and assessment process should you be shortlisted.			
If you are applying under the Disability Confident 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.			
For link/career graded post, please mark knowledge, experience, and behaviours clearly for each grade.			
Key Knowledge	K1	Thorough and up to date knowledge of proposed and actual legislation, statutory regulations and Government guidance and standards relevant to children.	✓A
	K2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">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)	
Relevant Experience	E1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">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">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)	
	E3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">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 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
Qualification	Q1	Recognised Social Work qualification (i.e., CQSW, Dip SW, BA Hons Social Work or other relevant degree in Social Work). (PO2, PO3)	✓A
	Q2	Current Social Work England registration. (PO2, PO3)	

Core Values and Behaviours		<p>Equity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to the views of others and ask for their opinions making sure that everyone in my team inputs into the things that matter. • Ensure fairness and justice is at the heart of my decision making and support to my team and others. • Take time to build trust, building the respect of our stakeholders and ensuring as a team we take accountability for doing what we agree to do. • Develop others and ensure we work as one team for Lambeth, encouraging everyone to play their part • Take positive action to ensure everyone in my team has opportunities to learn and grow at work • Encourage everyone to be themselves at work and value who they are • I am inclusive and actively celebrate diversity, recognising everyone in my team as individuals. 	
		<p>Kindness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treat each member of my team with respect and dignity just as I would want for myself. • Encourage each member of my team to do their very best work and am available to them to provide support and guidance. • Personalise my support to each team members and look out for them, lending a hand wherever I can • Encourage everyone to try and learn from mistakes and use integrity to take action with my team to put things right together • Work with empathy seeking to understand each and every member of team, their unique perspective and circumstances and ensure everyone is heard • Take the time to communicate, being honest, open and genuine and taking the time to get to know team members as individuals. • Show compassion and patience recognising that everyone in the team has unique experience and celebrating the great work they do for Lambeth. • Look after the health and wellbeing of my team members and encourage open and regular discussions about the issues that impact on them, working together to find solutions. 	
		<p>Accountability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I encourage and support my team to do the right thing even when it's tough and we communicate our decisions in a timely way • I ensure my team and employees take individual and collective accountability for performance and delivery, making sure that they have clear plans and performance objectives. 	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I ensure my team plan ahead, getting the basics right and take swift action when problems arise • I encourage my team to be risk aware and ensuring that our decisions and actions are informed and understood and communicated to others. • I provide regular, timely and constructive feedback to my team members on their performance and behaviours and act quickly when performance is not on track. • I share my learning, knowledge and skills with others thorough coaching and mentoring and encourage others to do the same. • I ensure that my team and I put residents, communities, customers and their needs at the centre of everything we do. • I encourage my team to learn and grow and ask questions to find the information they need to do their jobs 	
		<p>Ambition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Am proud of our borough and my team and encourage everyone in the team to aim for the highest possible standards of excellence in everything we do. • Encourage my team to be flexible and try new things when it's appropriate to do so and tell me what could be improved. • Promote a one team for Lambeth approach reaching out to our stakeholders to face our challenges together • Encourage and support my team to be courageous for our residents and communities and stop at nothing to ensure they have the best possible outcomes • I make time for the team to Innovate and look for creative ways to do things better, being curious about possibilities. • Positively challenge and encourage the team to collaborate and look for solutions together across service and team boundaries. • Make time for my team to grow and develop taking advantage of opportunities to learn from each other and others. We plan our learning and career growth. 	