

Kent County Council

Job Description and Person Specification

Job Description: *Senior Practitioner – Fostering & Kinship Assessment Teams*

Directorate: Children, Young People and Education
Unit/Section: Specialist Children's Services
Grade: KR11
Responsible to: Team Manager

Level Descriptor

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. Manage complex caseloads and offer expert opinion within the organization and to others. Model good practice setting expectations for others, continuing to develop specialisms and act as champion across the service in their area of expertise.

Purpose of the Job:

Manage a workload of complex kinship and foster carer assessments across the county of Kent and outside of the county (if a child needs to be/has been placed with kinship carers residing outside the Local Authority area), adhering to clearly defined timescales and working in accordance with the Fostering National Minimum Standards 2011, Fostering Regulations, Care Planning and Case Review Regulations 2013, and Special Guardianship Regulations 2005. The role will involve supporting the Team Manager at targeted recruitment and information events, undertaking initial visits/viability assessments to prospective foster carers, special guardians and those looking to apply for Child Arrangements Orders taking a lead in planning and delivering preparation training to carers such as the 'Skills to Foster' and presenting to Fostering Panels and when the courts.

Contribute to raising and maintaining standards of professional social work within a social work team, develop areas of specialist practice, offer expert advice to less experienced staff and act as a Practice Assessor for students/ASYE.

The post holder should be working in line with the relevant standards set out in the Social Care Capabilities Framework (SCCF).

Main duties and responsibilities:

- Manage a caseload of complex cases involving initial visits and viability assessments to fostering applicants and kinship carers (including special guardians and those wishing to apply for Child Arrangement Orders, fostering and kinship assessments)

which includes Special Guardianship Order assessments and Child Arrangement Assessments, where there are high levels of risk and needs and do so to a high standard to ensure resources are utilised effectively.

- Deputise for the Team Manager at Management Meetings , quality assure assessments and act as a Panel Member when required, alongside other clearly defined tasks as and when required.
- Provide a high-quality resource of professional social work knowledge and expertise to a team of social workers to include student supervision, chairing meetings, undertaking second opinion visits, attendance in court, and assisting with case audits and reviews, while assisting the team in ensuring that it carries out its core tasks to a high standard.
- Provide coaching and mentoring support to social workers, including those undertaking social work training and supervision of social work support staff (i.e. social work assistants and coordinators) to support and further their professional knowledge and development to impact upon the overall quality of practice within teams.
- Attend court, to assist the team in ensuring that key professional input and expertise is provided to high profile and sensitive cases.
- Act as a Practice Assessor to support student placements/ASYE.
- Liaise regularly with colleagues throughout the Council to ensure social work staff deliver existing and new practices consistently and to a high standard.
- Contribute to the development of new initiatives through attendance or leadership on working groups, multi-agency forums, training courses etc. and acting as lead for identified service initiatives i.e. planning for permanence and research work, to develop current and new ways of working that meet service requirements.
- Maintain awareness of changes in legislation and related policies and practices and ensure all social work staff are also informed of these changes to enable consistent and timely implementation.

Footnote: This job description is provided to assist the job holder to know what his/her main duties are. It may be amended from time to time without change to the level of responsibility appropriate to the grade of post.

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The following outlines the Minimum and Desirable criteria for this post. Applicants who have a disability and who meet the minimum criteria will be shortlisted.

Applicants should describe in their application how they meet these criteria.

	MINIMUM
QUALIFICATIONS	<p>Degree in Social Work, CQSW, DipSW or equivalent.</p> <p>Registration as a Social Worker with Social Work England.</p> <p>Evidence of relevant continuing professional development.</p>
EXPERIENCE	<p>Substantial experience working in fostering and in Children’s Social Work Teams from straight forward to highly complex case work.</p> <p>Substantial experience undertaking complex and highly analytic assessment work, including well informed risk assessments.</p> <p>Experience of delivering adult training, successfully and confidently managing and responding to the needs and dynamics of groups.</p> <p>Providing consultation, mentoring and developing qualified staff/social work assistants or equivalent.</p> <p>Experience of systemic and trauma informed practice</p>
SKILLS AND ABILITIES	<p>Demonstrate a high standard of direct work skills with children and their families.</p> <p>Ability to quality assure through supervision, case audit and review to ensure high standards of practice.</p> <p>Ability to work within a formal panel and court setting</p> <p>Ability to effectively assess the performance and development needs of social work staff.</p> <p>Communicate skillfully and engage in complex and high-risk situations including effective negotiating.</p> <p>Identify, attain and maintain high levels of practice.</p> <p>Ability to work within and Equal Opportunities, anti-racist and</p>

	<p>non-discriminatory framework.</p> <p>Accurately record information distinguishing conflicting views and perspectives.</p>
KNOWLDEGE	<p>High level working knowledge of The Fostering Regulations, National Minimum Standards, Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations and Special Guardianship Regulations, alongside any other relevant legislation, policies and procedures relating to Looked after Children, Children in Need and Children in the Child Protection System.</p> <p>Understand and apply the concepts of child development, attachment, separation, loss, change and resilience, trauma informed practice .</p> <p>Keep abreast of current research and contexts at all levels, including in depth knowledge of social work research, and applying these in practice.</p>
PERSONAL QUALITIES	<p>Professional credibility and presentation</p> <p>Enthusiasm/initiative/high motivation</p> <p>Innovative/flexibility</p> <p>Leadership and management skills to support others in developing assessment and risk management skills.</p> <p>Commitment to equal opportunities, anti-discriminatory practice and valuing diversity.</p>
ADDITIONAL	<p>Ability to travel across a wide geographical area in a timely and flexible manner at various times of the day. This includes working across the United Kingdom.</p> <p>Ability to undertake work at evenings and weekends to meet the needs of the Kinship Fostering Service to have a consistent recruitment presence across the county and undertake assessment and training of carers outside of office hours (a flexible working arrangement)</p>
KENT VALUES AND CULTURAL ATTRIBUTES	<p>Kent Values:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are brave. We do the right thing, we accept and offer challenge • We are curious to innovate and improve • We are compassionate, understanding and respectful to all • We are strong together by sharing knowledge • We are all responsible for the difference we make

	<p>Our values enable us to build a culture that is:</p> <p>Flexible/agile - willing to take (calculated) risks and want people that are flexible and agile</p> <p>Curious - constantly learning and evolving</p> <p>Compassionate and Inclusive - compassionate, understanding and respectful to all</p> <p>Working Together - building and delivering for the best interests of Kent</p> <p>Empowering - Our people take accountability for their decisions and actions</p> <p>Externally Focused - Residents, families and communities at the heart of decision making</p>
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