

Kent County Council

Job Description: *Senior Practitioner*

Directorate: Children, Young People and Education

Unit/Section: Specialist Children's Services

Grade: KSI

Responsible to: Team Manager

Purpose of the Job:

Act as a first responder for UAS Children arriving at Dover and/or manage a caseload of newly arrived unaccompanied asylum-seeking children who are Children in Care to the local authority. These will be complex and diverse cases that will involve assessment, planning and implementation to ensure the children are safeguarded and well cared for.

Raise the standard of professional work within the Team by contributing to training initiatives and "in-house" core training courses whilst consolidating a breadth of social work practice.

Post holder should be working in line with the competency standards set out in the Competency Assessment Social Worker Career Grade.

Main duties and responsibilities:

- Undertake initial assessments of newly arrived unaccompanied asylum-seeking children at Dover before placing them in accommodation appropriate for their needs.
- Manage some of the team's most complex cases within the parameters of agreed policies and practices, together with the professional guidance and support from the Team Manager to make sure children are safeguarded and well cared for.
- Act as Duty Senior in absence of the Team Manager to direct and support the team in identifying, planning and delivering its core tasks of safeguarding and supporting unaccompanied asylum-seeking children in the local authority's care.
- Provide a high quality resources of professional social work knowledge and expertise to a team of Social Workers, to include supervision, group meetings, assisted fieldwork, attendance in court, case audits and reviews etc, to assist 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 post qualifying training, to support and further their professional knowledge and development to impact upon the overall quality of practice within teams.
- Undertake staff supervision as directed by the Team Leader according to the needs of the team.
- Act as Practice Assessor to support student placements.

- Complete Merton case law compliant age assessments where concerns have been raised regarding the child's claimed age.
- Write witness statements and give evidence in Court should an age assessment decision be legally challenged.
- Work in partnership with the child, statutory and third sector agencies including Police, Health, the Home Office, solicitors, Refugee Council and Young Lives Foundation to identify, evaluate and review care plans to produce positive outcomes for children.
- Maintain an awareness of changes in child development etc., and related theories, legislation, corporate and directorate policies, local and agency practices, in order to disseminate knowledge and contribute to the delivery of a high standard of service.
- Liaise regularly with peer colleagues throughout the Directorate to ensure social work staff deliver existing and new practices consistently and to a high standard across the Directorate.
- Contribute to the development of new initiatives through attendance on Working Groups, multiagency forums, training courses etc and acting as lead for identified pieces of Directorate initiatives, i.e. planning for permanence and research work, to develop current and new ways of working that meet service requirements.

NOTE: Subject to Business Continuity need, postholders in this role may be required to work at Dover to support newly arrived unaccompanied asylum-seeking children or within an area/team elsewhere in the County.

Footnote: This job description is provided to assist the job holder to know what their 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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Person Specification: *Senior Practitioner*

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

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

	CRITERIA
QUALIFICATIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Degree in Social Work, CQSW/DipSW or equivalent and registration as a social worker with Social Work England • Evidence of relevant professional development
EXPERIENCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Substantial and diverse experience of working with children and families. • Experience of family placement, child care and permanency planning ranging from straight forward to highly complex • Experience of providing consultation, mentoring and developing qualified staff/Social Work Assistants or equivalent. • Experience of systemic practice e.g. signs of safety • Experience of writing Court reports and attending Court to give evidence.
SKILLS AND ABILITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate a high standard of direct work skills with children and their families • Ability to quality assure through supervision, case audit and review to ensure high standards of practice within the team. • Ability to supervise and develop student placements and other social worker staff • Computer literate with good written skills for report and assessment writing • Good interpersonal skills to communicate effectively with clients and colleagues • Interest to lead in training courses • Supervisory, mediation and negotiation skills • Ability to work effectively on own initiative as well as within a team • A Full UK Driving Licence – The Council is committed to making reasonable adjustments so whilst this job requires the jobholder to drive your application will still be considered if you are unable to drive due to a disability.
KNOWLEDGE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High level of working knowledge of The Children's Act 1989, Adoption Act 1976, Adoption Regulations, Placement of Children Regulations, Foster Placement Regulations and Child Care Regulations • Good working knowledge of County Procedures

	<p>relating to Looked After Children, Children in Need and children in the Child Protection System</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good understanding of Quality Protects – Transforming Children’s Services, Working Together • Understand and apply the concepts of child development, attachment, separation, loss, change and resilience • Demonstrate a clear understanding of human rights and choice including mental capacity. • Good understanding of Court Proceedings • Good working knowledge of Assessment Framework
Behaviours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional credibility • Enthusiasm • Innovative/flexibility • Leadership skills • Commitment to Equal Opportunities
PERSONAL QUALITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Willingness to attend regular training opportunities • Emotional Resilience • Professional credibility • Enthusiasm/flexibility • Commitment to equal opportunities
COMPETENCIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competencies are set within the “Kent Social Services Children and Families – Training Framework – Child Care Post Qualification Training Programme April 2000”
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>