

Job Description

Children's Social Worker (Consolidating Professional Practice)

Job functions

- Provide social work help and intervention to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in need so that children maintain a reasonable standard of health and development, receive reasonable parenting, and have a sense of permanence through secure attachment to their parents or carers. Where a child is disabled take action to minimise the effect of their disabilities so they have the opportunity to lead lives as normal a life as possible.
- *Identify where children are unable to live at home, take action to secure permanence for them within a timescale that meets their needs. Where children are looked after address their needs in accordance with their care plan or pathway plan, so that they make progress and have every opportunity to fulfil their potential as adults.*
- *Make sure the child is at the centre of assessment, planning, intervention and review activity, understand their lives views and wishes (appropriate to their age and understanding) so that there is a narrative and understanding of the child and family's history that informs actions taken to achieve positive change for the child.*
- Act as a lead professional coordinating the work of professionals so that positive sustainable change is achieved for the child, or appropriate decisions are made about stepping up the intervention.
- Wherever possible work with parents / carers to strengthen protective factors and reduce risks to the child's welfare, seeking to establish rapport and trust as a basis for parents changing their behaviour so that the child receives safe reasonable parenting, or alternative arrangements are made for bringing up the child.
- Work with foster carers, special guardians, prospective adopters and other people who are looking after someone else's children, so that children's needs are met and that they are able to live as normal a life as possible, understand their journey to their placement, are making good progress in terms of their health, development and education, and are prepared for their transition to adult life.

Key duties

- Receive and share information about children and their families in accordance with agreed policies, protocols and procedures, and adhere to the Data Protection Act principles
- Carry out assessment, planning, review and other case management activity in accordance with legal, regulatory and professional practice standards. This includes statutory guidance and regulations relating to assessment and case management, safeguarding children, disabled children, looked after children, young carers, fostering, adoption and private fostering.
- Make professional judgements about children's needs, parenting capacity the child's wider family, the impact of community or environmental factors on the child's welfare, and the balance of risk and protective factors in the child's life. Use these judgements as a basis for actions to meet assessed needs taking account of the best use of resources and budgets allocated.

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- Make recommendations on the appropriate level of intervention in a family's life, including initiating child protection processes, and about what help is required for the child under Part 3 of the Children Act 1989. Co-ordinate and directly deliver help with other professionals, and review the impact of help that has been provided in terms of the child's well-being and life chances.
- Prepare and present as required evidence and reports to Panels and Courts to secure decisions that enable the child to have a safe and secure childhood.
- Keep children, their families and other professionals informed about the involvement of children's social care and progress of cases.
- Carry out actions under Part 5 of the Children Act 1989 concerning the protection of children, including co-ordinating and contributing to child protection investigations, strategy meetings / discussions, child protection case conferences, making applications to the court and working with the police to ensure immediate protection needs are addressed.
- Take account of individual people's heritage and needs when assessing, planning, delivering or reviewing services for that individual. This means taking account of an individual's race, ethnicity, language, religion, sexual orientation, culture, and disability.
- Apply principles of anti-discriminatory practice in identifying and redressing the negative impact of racism, homophobia, discrimination based on gender, ethnicity, disability, class, culture, language or religion.
- Maintain case records and related information systems to the required standards.
- Use supervision and structured feedback on work performance constructively to support continuing professional development and take action where required to improve the quality and effectiveness of personal practice.
- *Take an effective role in team and service meetings in order to improve the quality and effectiveness of help provided to children and families.*
- Work with managers and other professional leaders to identify continuing professional development priorities, engage in learning activities including coaching, shadowing, and training in order to improve work performance.
- *Manage a caseload recognising when support is needed using reflective practice opportunities.*
- Make recommendations and decisions in line with the scheme of delegation.
- Contribute to reducing risks to the health, safety and well-being of staff working in the service by acting in accordance with agreed procedures.
- Act in accordance with policies, procedures and guidance relating to information sharing, the use of ICT, and resource management.
- Act in accordance with the standards of conduct, performance and ethics set by the regulator for social workers.
- Carry out any other duties that are consistent with the role.

Person specification

Children's Social Worker (Consolidating practice in employment)

In the person specification statements KSS CFP refers to the Knowledge and Skills Statement for Child & Family Practitioners statements, KSS AP refers to the Knowledge & Skills Statement for Achieving Permanence and PCF refers to the Professional Capabilities Framework statements.

Professionalism, experience and education

- Be a registered Social Worker with the Health Care Professions Council, understand **organisational context** (KSS CFP 10) able to meet the standards of proficiency for social workers, the standards of conduct, performance and ethics, and standards for continuing professional development.
- *Experience of carrying out a social work role in a multi-cultural community, maintaining appropriate and professional boundaries.*
- *Able to establish a network of internal and external colleagues as source of advice and expertise.*
- *Evidenced commitment to **the role of supervision** (KSS CFP 9) and continuous professional development, using supervision and other opportunities to reflect on own practice.*

Communication, relationships & effective direct work (KSS CFP 1 & 2) and emotional resilience

- Communicate clearly and sensitively with children of different ages and abilities and their families, creating rapport which facilitates engagement and motivation. Act respectfully when people are angry, hostile and resistant to change. Show persistence, determination and professional confidence in managing tensions between parents, carers and family members.
- Listen to the views, wishes and feeling of children and families and help parents and carers understand the ways in which their children communicate through their behaviour.
- Identify children and adults who are experiencing difficulties expressing themselves. Promote speech. Language and communication support.
- Able to communicate clearly in writing and orally, with an ability to communicate in English to the standard equivalent to level 7 of the International English Language Testing System, with no element below 6.5 [regulatory requirement].
- Able to understand and maintain personal and professional boundaries and demonstrate professionalism in presentation demeanour, reliability, honesty and respectfulness.
- Seek to develop emotional resilience in the face of the pressures and demands of the job, and recognise your personal limitations and how to seek advice.

Knowledge, analytical skills and judgement

- Understand and apply knowledge of **child development** (KSS CFP 2) taking account of typical age-related development over time. Recognising normative developmental tasks are different for each child taking into account assessed influence of cultural and social factors, different parenting styles and the

impact of loss, uncertainty or change on child development. Explore the extent to which communication difficulties are impacting on behaviour and emotional development.

- Able to observe and talk to children in different environments alone and with parents, carers, friends and peers.
- Able to apply to social work practice relevant research theory and knowledge including knowledge of child development, attachment, loss, trauma, **abuse and neglect of children** (KSS CFP 5), and effective practice to change parenting behaviour, family relationships and promote children's well-being
- Understand and apply knowledge of **adult mental ill health, substance misuse, domestic violence, physical ill health and disability** (KSS CFP 4) on parental capacity and, the impact on children including young carers. Able to identify concerning adult behaviours that may indicate risk or increased risk to children and, act on escalating needs and risks ensuring vulnerable adults are safeguarded and that children are protected.
- Able to carry out **child and family assessment** (KSS CFP 6) addressing needs and risks, informed by direct work with the child and observation of family relationships, emphasising parental capacity and capability to change drawing on evidence based practice, using chronologies, genograms and other evidence based tools that take account of individual, family history and previous support and interventions. Able to recognise and address behaviour that indicates resistance to change, ambivalence, 'disguised compliance' or selective cooperation with services.
- Use assessment to inform **analysis, decision-making, planning and review** (KSS CFP 7) establishing the seriousness of risks and any harm suffered by the child, balanced with family strengths and ways of strengthening protective factors and mitigating risk and, exploring options for meeting the assessed needs of each child in the family and addressing difficulties leading to parenting capacity concerns. Be able to test out multiple hypotheses about what is happening in families and to children using evidence and professional judgement to make timely decisions, recognising that levels of need and risk are dynamic.
- Able to **decide on the best permanence option for a child** (KSS AP 1) prioritising children's need for emotional warmth, stability and sense of belonging as well as identity development, health and education, positive peer relationships in making realistic child centred plans that manage and reduce identified risks, strengthen protective factors and meet the child's needs, that draw in multi-disciplinary input. **Use research to draw evidence-based conclusions about the best permanence option for a child.** Have contingency plans to **eliminate drift for children by reaching the right decision within a timeframe which meets the child's best interests**, recognising that different interventions are sometimes required to secure the impact needed for the child.
- Understand and navigate **the law and the family and youth justice systems** (KSS CFP 8) applying the profession's ethical principles and legislative framework, in particular the Children Act 1989, the Adoption and Children Act 2002, the Leaving Care Act 2000, the Children & Young Person's Act 2008 and statutory regulations relating to assessment and children in need, looked after children and care leavers, and privately fostered children and the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 as it relates to children and young people who offend.
- Able to **negotiate the legal process** (KSS AP 2), **operate within the statutory framework and regulatory process** for achieving permanence, **navigating the pre-proceedings phase, communicate effectively and confidently in court and offer a clear rationale for**

recommendations and establish effective working relationships with lawyers, independent reviewing officers, CAFCASS guardians and relevant others.

Problem solving and intervention

- Able to apply imagination, creativity and curiosity to practice in order to achieve positive changes for children.
- Use judgement and authority to intervene with children, families, communities and promote independence, provide support and prevent harm, neglect and abuse (PCF7) through using evidence informed practice interventions drawing on research, practice knowledge and information from people who have experience of the service.
- *Able to apply problem skills where relevant information is not available or less conclusive in determining the child's needs and level of risk.*
- *Able to develop, deliver and evaluate a range of interventions showing evidence informed practice that draws on research and practice knowledge to secure improved outcomes for children and their families.*
- *Able to recognise that interventions are not achieving timely change for children and try different evidence informed interventions where appropriate or make timely confident professional judgements and sound decisions about how to best safeguard and promote the welfare of the child.*
- **Help children find permanence without unnecessary delay** (KSS AP 3), consistently acting purposefully to identify a permanent home for the child without unnecessary deliberations which cause delay, giving due consideration to the child's preferences providing a clear rationale for when they cannot be acted upon, produce accessible, high quality, well-argued, evidenced and sensitively presented assessments and provide high quality communications.
- **Support children and families in transition** (KSS AP 4) consistently ensuring the reasons for any move is communicated clearly, openly and sensitively with children (taking into account their age and capacity), parents, carers and other relevant others. Support parents and other carers to prepare children for changes in where they are living and arrangements for contact.
- **Support the placement, including managing disruption and breakdown** (KSS AP 5) consistently identifying the most effective types of support using the best evidence, and applying this to the provision of flexible, on-going arrangements, identifying indicators and early warning signs that a permanence home is under strain and be clear and decisive in situations where children are unable to remain at home and, apply any lessons learnt.

Partnership working

- Understand the contexts and organisations you work with (PCF 8) to inform how you lead, co-ordinate, support and challenge the other professionals you work with and evaluate the difference you have made for the child in terms of the child's welfare and life chances.
- Share information appropriately and respectfully and in accordance with agreed information sharing agreements and protocols adhering to Data Protection Principles.
- *Able to work effectively as part of a team and provide leadership with other professionals working with the child, communicating the social work role and framework for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children,*

keeping other professionals informed about the involvement of the service with the family and progress of the case.

- *Be confident in your role and agile in working with parents and carers (including foster carers, special guardians and adopters) adapting to the child's needs and circumstances, maximising their effectiveness in meeting the child's needs, their understanding of the child's progress in terms of health, education and relationships and transition to adult life.*

Case recording

- *Consistently produce accurate, comprehensible, succinct and timely records on a child's case file that are well argued, child focused and jargon free showing the impact of support and interventions on safeguarding and promoting the child's welfare.*
- *Able to produce reports to managers, panels and court that are child focused, needs led and focused on improving outcomes for children and specifically produce high quality case records about the child's permanence process which are well argued and sensitively presented (KSS AP 1).*
- *Able to use electronic case recording systems to record and track work providing an account of the work undertaken and a 'life story' narrative for the child of their journey through the service and reasons for judgements and decisions affecting them.*
- *Able to report and record professional analysis and judgements about a wide range of cases, including contingency plans for safeguarding and promoting the child's welfare.*

Equalities

- *Commitment to provide a service to all children and their families based on their needs that identifies and tackles unfair discrimination.*
- *A commitment to and understanding of the Royal Borough's Equal Opportunities Policy.*

Paragraphs in Italics denotes differences in this person specification from the person specification for social workers in the Assessed & Supported Year in Employment stage of the Social Work Grade.