



LONDON BOROUGH OF MERTON
CHILDREN, SCHOOLS & FAMILIES DEPARTMENT
JOB DESCRIPTION

POST TITLE: Consultant Social Worker

Grade: ME14

Division: Children's Social Care and Youth Justice

Section: Children's Social Care Service areas

Responsible to: Team Manager/Service Manager / Principal Social Worker

Responsible for: Up to 5 Team & Family Support Workers; Social Work Students; Newly Qualified Social Workers; Personal Advisors

Post number:

Date: July 2021

Organisational Context:

The responsibility of the Children's Social Care and Youth Justice Division is to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children, young people and their families in the London Borough of Merton. We use relationship-based practice to create impact and bring about sustainable change for children, young people and their families where need is identified. We are determined to continuously improve our services by working in partnership to ensure that our work is high quality and effective.

Children's Social Care uses the BASW Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF) to determine the skills, knowledge and experience that Social Workers should demonstrate in all our social worker roles. <https://www.basw.co.uk/professional-development/professional-capabilities-framework-pcf/the-pcf>

Main Purpose of the Role:

This is a generic Job Description and Person Specification. Specific operational responsibilities vary across the service areas within Children's Social Care

The overall purpose of the role includes:

To demonstrate all the skills, knowledge and experience of an Advanced Social Worker within the BASW Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF):

<https://www.basw.co.uk/professional-development/professional-capabilities-framework-pcf/the-pcf/advanced-social-worker>

To act as an agent of change working directly alongside children, young people, their families and carers, maintaining a focus on the best interests of the child

To maintain an overview of the work of the team; manage a caseload; co-work and provide expert support and consultation to colleagues in the delivery of skilled and knowledgeable statutory social work interventions for children, families or carers with significant complexities who are provided with services because they are:

- children in need,
- children in need of protection,
- children in care
- prospective and approved foster carers and special guardians

To contribute to the delivery of high quality social work services to children, families and carers to ensure the welfare of children is safeguarded and they are protected in accordance with the legal and statutory obligations of London Borough of Merton.

To act as a Practice Educator and Practice Assessor and supervise, mentor and coach social workers, social work students and ASYE social workers as required.

To contribute to the management of the team in meeting service objectives, key performance targets and statutory requirements of social work legislation by acting as expert practice consultants to team members, to other social workers, student and ASYE social workers, practitioners and external professionals.

To coach and mentor social work students, ASYE social workers, social work staff and practitioners within the team to ensure that their work meets professional standards of proficiency and contributes to the achievement of safeguarding and positive outcomes for children, families and carers.

To take an active role in the Consultant Social Worker operational group and contribute to the overall development of practice and the service in order to meet service objectives, key performance targets and statutory requirements of children's social care legislation and guidance.

To offer expert advice, guidance and consultancy across the Division, wider Council and local partnership.

To deputise for your line manager as necessary and appropriate.

Main Duties and Responsibilities

This section lists key duties and responsibilities for the role. It's not intended to be exhaustive and you will have personal objectives linked to the Service and Divisional

Plans and Strategies that will be discussed and agreed with your line manager as part of your Personal Development Plan and annual appraisal.

1. Communicating and engaging with children, young people and their families, with colleagues and with communities.

- Work directly with children, young people and families using and role modelling Merton's Relationship-based practice model and a range of solution focused, Signs of Safety and systemic social work tools and approaches.
- Build and maintain strong and effective relationships with children, young people, families and carers to offer containment and create the conditions for change to occur. Support social workers, social work students and practitioners to improve or repair their relationships with children, families and carers.
- Using authoritative practice (professional judgement), identify and implement a range of approaches which enable engagement with children, young people, families and carers. Support social workers, social work students and practitioners to develop and improve the range and effectiveness of their engagement skills with children, families and carers.
- Where the role requires, to act as Lead Professional for named children, young people and families, being the key contact with the family and liaising with others in the family and professional network to provide a joined-up response.
- To chair a range of meetings relating to own work and that of others, as appropriate to the role, (complex case discussions, case mapping, review meetings, planning meetings, appreciative inquiries and multi-agency meetings). Support social workers, social work students and practitioners to develop and improve their chairing of meetings and navigation of complex and challenging discussions.
- To prepare, provide and explain written reports and plans to children, families, carers and professionals in a range of different settings including home visits; family network meetings; court hearings; Panels and multi-agency meetings. Support social workers, social work students and practitioners to develop and improve the quality of their written work and explanations to children, families, carers and professionals.
- To ensure strong and effective relationships between practitioners, social workers, teams and services with the Principal Social Worker and Learning & Insights Service to develop best practice within the team and service.
- Demonstrate and role model in-depth understanding and responses to equality and diversity considerations, anti-discriminatory practice and people's behavioural, physical, social and welfare needs.

2. Assessment, Planning and Review

- Use and role model Merton's Relationship-based Practice Model principles, disciplines and tools to frame assessment, planning, interventions and reviews of children, families and carers. Support social workers, social work students and practitioners to develop and improve their knowledge, skills and experience in using Merton's practice model, tools and approaches.

- Using authoritative practice (professional judgement), lead and role model multi-agency statutory assessments and co-production, implementation and review of plans which identify and address strengths, needs and risks.
- Provide expert consultation, guidance, support and oversight to practitioners, colleagues, ASYEs and social work students.
- Where required, to hold statutory social work case responsibility for the assessment, intervention, planning and reviewing of children, families and carers requiring social work interventions under child in need, child protection and children in care arrangements.

3. Effective Practice

- To hold or achieve within 12 months of appointment, the Practice Educator award in order to enable skill development and support delivery of the listed responsibilities.
- To act as a Practice Educator and Practice Assessor and supervise, mentor and coach social work students and ASYE social workers as required.
- To work alongside children, young people, parents and families experiencing or at risk of experiencing social, emotional, health or behavioural issues to bring about sustainable change.
- Using authoritative practice (professional judgement), deliver skilled and effective social work interventions which effect change. Support social workers, social work students and practitioner's development and delivery of skilful and effective interventions.
- To undertake direct observation of practice, with effective feedback to offer quality assurance.
- To obtain user feedback and involvement to contribute to the quality assurance of interventions and outcomes for children, families and carers and improvements in service delivery.
- Work within the service guidelines, statutory guidance and legal frameworks.
- Using authoritative practice (professional judgement), respond to needs identified with the family by identifying and delivering evidence-based interventions as required. Support social workers, social work students and practitioners in their understanding and use of evidence-based interventions.
- To work with families with complex problems as lead professional as the role requires.
- To deliver effective group supervision, individual supervision, appraisal and mentoring of colleagues.
- To offer expert consultation and guidance to all team members, actively supporting colleagues with children, families and carers presenting complex and challenging needs and risks.
- Using authoritative practice (professional judgement), devise and deliver presentations, workshops and other learning events to share and develop practice and learning.

4. Reporting and Accurate Recording

- To maintain up to date records and data using electronic devices and systems and provide reports for a range of audiences, role modelling efficient and timely

recording and reporting practices and assisting practitioners, social work students, and social workers with effective time management strategies

- Provide expert oversight and approval of reports and plans completed by practitioners, social work students and social workers as agreed by your line manager
- Provide regular data analysis with trends and forecasts to support the effective management of the team and service delivery
- To initiate, participate in and oversee successful completion of learning and insight processes within team.

5. Information, Advice and Signposting

- To provide information and signposting for children, young people, families and carers to relevant universal, early help and specialist services in the local area and beyond where appropriate.
- To provide information, advice and suggestions to practitioners, students and colleagues about suitable resources available for children, families and carers.
- Have an in-depth knowledge and understanding of information and advice available to children, young people and families, encouraging colleagues and partners to engage.

6. Multi-Agency and Partnership Working

- Actively build strong and effective relationships and networks with other professional groups and services in the locality, taking appropriate action to resolve issues or concerns.
- Provide professional consultation and challenge for professionals and partners, to ensure effective collaboration and achievement of positive outcomes in all key areas of children, families and carers lives.
- To support professionals and partners to understand and deliver relationship-based practice and effective interventions which secure sustained change for children, families and carers.
- To offer service representation and presentations at meetings where required.
- Undertake appropriate referrals to partner agencies.
- Negotiate and influence cooperation and engagement of relevant partners or services, assisting and empowering practitioners, social work students and social workers to navigate partnership challenges.

7. Managing Risk and Safeguarding

- Using authoritative practice (professional judgement), identify and effectively manage risk and safeguarding concerns in own work and that of team members and supervisees, escalating or seeking advice where required.
- Provide expert social work oversight/supervision of risk and safeguarding issues
- To undertake other tasks allocated by managers, in keeping with the responsibilities of the grade and your development
- Work in accordance with and promote to others, the Council's statutory responsibilities, policies and service procedures and comply with equality and diversity policies, procedures and legislation.
- Maintain customer and staff confidentiality in accordance with the Data Protection Act and Merton Council's guidance, including responding to any known data breaches.

- Engage in individual and group supervision with managers and practice leads, performance appraisal and consultation as required.
- Provide effective individual and group supervision, including performance agreements.
- Have regard to best value principles and budget monitoring within your area of responsibility.
- Participating and co-ordinating, training and development opportunities, in order to improve knowledge, skills and effectiveness of self and colleagues.
- To transport children and young people where required by job role.
- To work in the homes of children, families and carers and in a variety of other settings.
- Ensure that reasonable care is taken at all times for the health, safety and welfare of yourself and other persons, and to comply with the policies and procedures relating to health and safety within the department.

8. Leadership

- To provide leadership and development on agreed practice issues including outstanding practice standards in relationship-based practice, assessment, safeguarding and care planning for children, their families and carers, ensuring those standards comply with statutory guidance and legislation, procedures, agreed targets and timescales and exceed best practice standards.
- To initiate and participate in developing, monitoring and reviewing systems within the team and contribute to training, work on professionals standards, review and inspection of casework and services and contribute to planning or project work for the development of the service, when necessary providing direct support to children, families and carers.
- To initiate, organise, and deliver training, workshops, presentations and reflective group supervisions to teams; service areas and designated groups of CSC & YJ staff and the professional network
- To lead and actively contribute to pilots and projects to improve practice and/or trial new initiatives
- To provide expert consultation and leadership in good practice, acting as a champion for relationship-based practice, to contribute to ensuring the key standards are met in service provision and services are delivered, monitored and reviewed in accordance with relevant statutory and legislative requirements and departmental policies.
- To work alongside social workers and teams on developing best practice as professional lead and/or co-worker, where additional professional guidance and or mentoring is required to enable the allocated worker to effectively deliver social work interventions which secure change, including the most complex and high profile children, families and carers.
- To provide induction, professional development, monitoring and formal supervision of non-social work qualified staff and student/trainee social workers as required by the needs of the service; and group supervision, informal supervision, coaching and mentoring of social workers in situations of high complexity ensuring a high standard of social work intervention and outcomes for children.

- Where required, and under the direction of your line manager, to allocate work, provide advice and direction and review assessments, plans and reports of social workers, student social workers and ASYE social workers.
- Where required, and under direction of your line manager, to supervise, mentor and coach support workers, social workers, student social workers and ASYE social workers.
- To lead and actively contribute to specific programmes to train, recruit, develop and retain ASYE social workers, social work students, social workers, and support workers.

Autonomy:

The Consultant Social Worker role will:

- Be expected to share their experience, knowledge and skills with practitioners, social work students, social workers and colleagues to provide consultation, advice and guidance.
 - Be expected to role model thoughtful, high quality and effective skills, approaches, interventions and behaviours to develop and improve the practice of others and outcomes for children, families and carers.
 - Be expected to use their experience, knowledge and skills in every engagement with children, young people and families to determine the level and type of intervention required.
 - Offer face to face, telephone and written support and information as appropriate to role.
 - Be responsible for keeping own and ensuring others maintain accurate and timely records of work with children, young people and families and writing relevant reports for a range of audiences, including senior management.
 - Be responsible for expert social work oversight, supervision and support for staff and social work interventions with children, families and carers.
 - Make effective and proportionate use of available budgets to meet the needs of children, families and carers, complying with the Council's financial and fair access policies and procedures.
 - Use authoritative practice (professional judgement) to recognise and make decisions which provide an appropriate response to safeguarding and risk issues arising in own work and the work of supervisees/ others in the team.
 - Use authoritative practice (professional judgement) to escalate to a manager decisions or issues that fall outside their delegated responsibilities.
 - Be required to organise own workload and that of supervisees / team members
 - Use authoritative practice (professional judgement) to identify and resolve problems, informing managers where appropriate.
 - Deputise for the Team Manager as agreed and consistent with the Division's Scheme of Delegation
- Carry out any other duties which fall within the broad spirit, scope and purpose of this job description and which are commensurate with the grade of the post.

- All qualified Social Workers are required to adhere to the appropriate professional standards, including those framed by the BASW Professional Capabilities Framework and the Social Work England professional standards for registered social workers

All qualified social workers are required to adhere to the appropriate professional standards, including those framed by the BASW Professional Capabilities Framework and the Social Work England professional standards for social workers

The duties and responsibilities outlined in this job description (for all grades) are indicative of the role(s); however they are not exhaustive and may be subject to change. In addition, you will be required to undertake other reasonable duties as directed by your manager.

In the event of a public emergency, you may be required to temporarily undertake an alternative role to ensure the Council is able to fulfil its statutory duties to children and families.



LONDON BOROUGH OF MERTON
CHILDREN, SCHOOLS AND FAMILIES DEPARTMENT
PERSON SPECIFICATION

POST TITLE: Consultant Social Worker
Grade: ME14
Date: July 2021

1. Qualifications & Knowledge

- a. Social Work Qualification (Masters in Social Work or Social Work BA/BSc, Diploma in Social Work, CQSW)
- b. Registered as a social worker with Social Work England (SWE) and compliant with the regulators professional standards.
- c. Holds a Practice Educator Professional Stage 1 qualification and continues to meet the PEP standards:
<https://www.basw.co.uk/system/files/resources/peps-for-social-work.pdf>
- d. Holds or is willing to secure within 12 months a Practice Educator Professional Stage 2 qualification and meets the PEP standards
<https://www.basw.co.uk/system/files/resources/peps-for-social-work.pdf>

- e. Holds a Post Qualifying award in social work or systemic social work practice with Children, Young people, Families and Carers (specialist post qualifying award in social work)
- f. Evidence of continuing professional development relevant to supporting the learning and development of others, improving practice and the duties of this role
- g. Evidence of mentoring and supervision
- h. In depth knowledge of relationship-based practice and principles
- i. In depth knowledge of a range of social work tools, approaches and evidence-based interventions including Signs of Safety and systemic social work
- j. In depth knowledge of relevant legislation, regulations and guidance as appropriate to role.
- k. Demonstrable knowledge of legislation and statutory guidance for children's services.
- l. Working knowledge of safeguarding procedures.
- m. Knowledge of roles and responsibilities of key children's agencies and statutory partners.
- n. Expert knowledge of the social and emotional factors that affect a child's capacity to learn and develop.
- o. Wide knowledge of disability, sexuality, gender and ethnicity issues; the impact of inequality and discrimination on children, families and carers and the principles of anti-discriminatory practice.

For Resources Service roles: knowledge of legislation, regulations and national minimum standards relating to fostering, special guardians and care arrangements for children in care.

Meets the regulatory experience requirements for approval of assessments and assessment of prospective carers and permanent placement of children.

2. Skills/Competencies

- a. Demonstrable high level of consultative, interpersonal, communication and negotiation skills including the ability to deal with complex issues in a sensitive and appropriate manner and challenge where necessary.
- b. Ability to demonstrate awareness/understanding of equal opportunities and other people's behaviour, physical, social and welfare needs
- c. An understanding of relationship management and the capacity to establish and maintain effective communication and working relationships.
- d. Able to develop effective interagency working processes.
- e. Able to summarise, analyse and evaluate complex information.
- f. Experience of formulating and implementing effective social work interventions.
- g. Able to write concise high quality reports and have excellent verbal communication and presentation skills. Excellent written and verbal communication skills including ability to use word and excel to produce reports carry out correspondence and keep accurate records.

- h. Able to chair meetings effectively and represent Children's Services in a professional, responsible and effective manner.
- i. Able to create a rapport and build relationships with children and parents/careers.
- j. Able to persuade and negotiate at different levels and across different agencies, services and groups.
- k. Ability to quality assure the work of others, provide advice, consultation, coaching and mentoring to social workers.
- l. Ability to prioritise and consider the cost-effective and best use of available resources.
- m. Able to challenge others in a constructive manner and to make informed, evidenced based decisions.
- n. Proficient in information technology.
- o. Knowledge and understanding of using appropriate assessment tools and research.
- p. Excellent organisational ability.
- q. The ability to travel effectively to various locations at short notice.
- r. Be able to represent the department effectively in the public arena.
- s. Ability to negotiate effectively with other agencies.
- t. Ability to organise self
- u. Ability to prioritise work.
- v. Confidence to work on own initiative.
- w. Able to work under pressure.
- x. Awareness of the professional and Ethical context of the work and the Organisation
- y. Able to make risk assessments to protect self
- z. Able to demonstrate a clear understanding of and commitment to Health & Safety and a willingness to undertake training to enable implementation of procedures. Able to apply it effectively with both clients and staff.

Experience

- a. Significant experience of complex statutory social work with children, young people, families and carers and of effective challenge and conflict resolution.
- b. Experience of workload management across a diverse team, including prioritisation of casework.
- c. Experience of coaching, mentoring and developing the skills and knowledge of others
- d. Commitment to use of relationship-based practice principles and solution focused, systemic social work and Signs of Safety tools and approaches in practice.

Special Requirements/other considerations

- 1. To work in a variety of locations and homes as required by the role

2. A DBS check will be undertaken for the successful candidate and either checked annually if you subscribe to the DBS update service or renewed every 3 years.
3. Advanced organisational skills and the ability to prioritise work of self and others and meet deadlines.
4. Willingness to undertake training as required to update knowledge and skills.
5. Evidence of successfully working alone as well as part of a team.
6. Ability to undertake out of hours working if required.
7. This organisation positively encourages the use of technology to communicate and engage, but in this role you will need to operate across the Borough, London and beyond, so you must either hold a full and current driving licence and have access to personal transport or meet the mobility requirements of the role through other reasonable and suitable means.

Appendix: Service and Team Context:

Corporate Parenting Service:

Children in Care Teams

Statutory social work with children and young people who are, or it is planned they become, looked after by London Borough of Merton and children in care proceedings.

Specific Experience / Knowledge / Skills:

- Needs and issues for children in care
- Permanency Planning and Life Story Work
- Reunification of children in care to their family network
- Court; parenting/risk/viability assessment and care planning
- Effective management of placement stability
- Pathway Planning and Preparing for Adulthood

Preparing for Adulthood Teams

Statutory leaving care work with care experienced young adults who have or who are preparing to leave the care of London Borough of Merton.

Specific Experience / Knowledge / Skills:

- Needs and issues for care experienced young adults
- Life Story Work
- Reunification/reconnection of care experienced young people to their family network
- Effective management of accommodation stability

- Pathway Planning and Preparing for Adulthood
- Needs, duties and immigration issues for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children

Resources Teams

Recruitment, assessment, approval and support of foster carers and special guardians. Identification and commissioning from external providers of carers and homes for children in care and some care experienced adults.

Specific Experience / Knowledge / Skills:

- Fostering and placement regulations and National Minimum standards
- Needs and issues for children in care and care experienced young adults
- Needs and issues for foster carers and placement providers
- Permanency Planning
- Effective management of placement stability
- Pathway Planning and Preparing for Adulthood

Help, Family Assessment and Youth Justice Service:

Children and Families Hub

This provides the front door for Targeted Early Help and statutory social work support and interventions. The multi-agency safeguarding hub is located within this service. The service is responsible for triaging incoming requests for support in line with Merton's Effective Support guidance.

Specific Experience / Knowledge / Skills:

- Early Help and statutory thresholds for intervention
- In-depth working knowledge of safeguarding policies, procedures and good practice
- Principles of triage, triangulation, consent and proportionate decision-making
- Effective strategies to respond to pace and volume of incoming work
- Partnership issues and containment of professional anxieties

Assessment & Intervention Teams

These teams undertake statutory social work assessments under s17 and child protection investigations under s47 Children Act 1989 and undertake intensive social work interventions for up to 16 weeks.

Specific Experience / Knowledge / Skills:

- Supporting the Team Manager in allocating assessments within the team during duty weeks
- Providing advice and direction to social workers undertaking assessments and child protection investigations
- Early Help and statutory thresholds for intervention
- In-depth working knowledge of safeguarding policies, procedures and good practice
- Effective strategies to respond to pace and volume of incoming work

Child and Family Support & Safeguarding

Children with Disabilities Team

This team provides statutory assessment and interventions under both Children Act and carer's legislation for families and child with complex and enduring disabilities.

Specific Experience / Knowledge / Skills:

- Needs and issues for families and children with complex additional needs
- In-depth working knowledge of legislation and requirements for the assessment and support of carers and children with complex additional needs
- Practice knowledge and experience of a range of alternative communication methods for children who use other means of communicating

Family Support and Safeguarding Teams

Providing intensive social work intervention to effect change for children and families with child in need or child protection plans.

Specific Experience / Knowledge / Skills:

- Providing advice and direction to social workers undertaking assessments and child protection investigations
- Early Help and statutory thresholds for intervention

- In-depth working knowledge of safeguarding policies, procedures and good practice

Specialist Interventions Teams

Providing intensive social work intervention, alongside the frontline social work teams to children and families to reduce the risk of family breakdown, entry to care, exploitation and exposure to contextual harms.

Specific Experience / Knowledge / Skills:

- Needs and issues for adolescents and their families
- Contextual harms, effective risk assessment, safety planning and interventions
- Family breakdown and edge of care prevention and reunification interventions
- In-depth practice experience of delivering solution focused and effective interventions with adolescents and their families
- Supporting the Team Manager with the allocation and tracking of work
- Chairing family network and contextual safeguarding meetings
- Providing out of hours planned interventions and crisis support to children, families, carers and teams
- Delivering and co-ordinating group work
- Participating in and contributing to multi-agency information sharing and risk management forums

Social Work Academy Teams

Providing dedicated practice education and assessment for social work students, apprentices and ASYE social workers to contribute to workforce sufficiency and stability for children requiring social work intervention.

Specific Experience / Knowledge / Skills:

- Significant Practice Educator Professional experience
- In-depth practice knowledge, experience and skills in educating and assessing social worker and social work student in line with the competency and regulatory requirements

Learning & Insight

Providing practice quality assurance, insight and learning from audits, reviews, child, family and carer participation and feedback and complaints. Providing responses to complaints, SAR requests and multi-agency statutory reviews. Co-ordinating and

commissioning learning and development opportunities to meet the identified professional development needs of the service.

Specific Experience / Knowledge / Skills:

- Collaborative and constructive auditing and practice feedback
- Procurement and commissioning of suitable and best values learning and development resources
- In depth knowledge of appreciative inquiry, statutory reviews, SAR and complaints good practice