



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

POST TITLE: Independent Reviewing Officer, Child Protection Conference and Contextual Safeguarding Chair

Grade: ME16

DEPARTMENT: Children's, Schools & Families (CSF)

Section: Adolescent and Safeguarding Service, Insights & Reviewing

Responsible to: Service Manager, Insights & Reviewing

Responsible for: 1 Admin Assistant

Post number:

Date: August 2021

Overall Purpose of the Job

1. Chairing independently initial and review child protection conferences, children looked after reviews, Child Sexual Exploitation Conferences and disruption meetings.
2. Provision of professional consultancy, guidance and expert professional advice to managers and practitioners.
3. Monitoring, developing and promoting consistently high practice standards in the implementation and interpretation of child protection; looked after children and child in need, statutory policy, guidance and procedures.
4. Ensuring that all child protection/contextual safeguarding initial and review conferences and looked after reviews are within the statutory time limits and conform to statutory guidelines.

5. Responsible for ensuring the continuous improvement in standards of practice in relation to child protection, child in need and looked after children.
6. In line with the IRO Handbook and through the local dispute resolution process, ensure that children's plans are timely, of the highest quality and in the best interests of children and young people. (This includes, when required, entering into the Dispute Resolution Process (DRP) and resolving and/or escalating concerns about the quality of services provided to children and young people to the highest level including the Children's Director, the Chief Executive of the Local Authority and to CAFCASS in line with the chapter 6 of the IRO Handbook).

Main Duties and Responsibilities

- To be accountable for decision making in looked after reviews and child protection conferences and other multi agency forums.
- To convene and record review outcomes, and enter other monitored information in the electronic system within timescales
- To monitor the performance of the local authority in relation to the child's case and the authority's statutory role in this regard.
- To work constructively with senior managers, offering a critical perspective and appropriate challenge and playing a key role in problem resolution.
- To work with complaints officers, and advocates, where necessary, for the resolution of a problem for a child or family where the local authority or other services are not meeting their needs.
- To undertake duties in accordance with the IRO Handbook and the IRO Good Practice Protocol for Public Law Work (CAFCASS)
- To promote and model practice that is respectful of children and parents and takes full account of their views, rights and responsibilities.
- To identify record and escalate concerns in relation to planning and achieving outcomes for children looked after to the required level through the local dispute resolution process.
- To liaise with operational staff and managers to ensure proactive implementation of decisions from looked after children's reviews and child protection conferences.
- To be responsible for recommending action regarding the safety of children looked after who are placed with parents, placed outside the borough and being placed for adoption.

- To represent the department at local and national practice and relevant policy based initiatives.
- To contribute, at the request of the team manager or the service manager, to internal and inter agency planning groups and meetings with regard to planning and development of services for children.
- To support the monitoring, development and maintenance of local quality assurance systems.
- To undertake audits and evaluation of looked after children and child protection work, contributing to routine, thematic and multi-agency audits as required
- To closely monitor the integrity of the electronic system and Performance related data and ensure data related to allocated work is up to-date and accurate.
- To undertake all related administrative tasks involved in providing and monitoring the decisions and practices related to looked after children's planning to ensure that targets are met.
- To lead and contribute to team/service development initiatives.
- To report to the Service Manager any shortfalls in performance or service delivery and to actively seek to rectify such shortfalls.
- To actively seek out opportunities for collaborative working with other agencies in the interests of improved planning and service delivery for children.
- Social Work staff are required to adhere to the appropriate professional standards, including those framed by the Knowledge and Skills Statement (child and family social work) 2014, the PCF, and the Social Worker for England professional standards for social workers

Budgetary Responsibilities

- To be aware of both Departmental and Divisional resource availability while applying the principles of best value to decision making in relation to children looked after reviews and child protection conferences and other planning for children.
- To maintain a professional knowledge of the division's/directorate's/council's financial position.
- To alert the Service Manager to any predicted budgetary pressures arising from specific plans for children or to any potential cost savings.

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.



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PERSON SPECIFICATION

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Grade: ME16

Date: August 2021

Qualifications Required

- 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 the Health and Care Professions Council Standards (HCPC).
- c. The IRO should have at least five years post qualifying experience [regulation46]. The IRO should be an authoritative professional with at least equivalent status to an experienced children's social work team manager

Knowledge

- d. Sound knowledge and understanding of current legislation, guidance and research in relation to all aspects of work with children and their families, particularly in relation to child protection and looked after children.
- e. Sound understanding of the Independent Reviewing Officer Handbook, the Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 2: Care Planning, Placement and Case Review and the CAFCASS Protocol in relation to court proceedings and requirements.
- f. Sound knowledge of current policy and practice issues in respect of children's services.

- g. Significant understanding of issues faced by families from minority ethnic communities, or other minority groups.
- h. Sound knowledge of child development and the impact of abuse and neglect on children.
- i. Knowledge and understanding of Data Protection legislation and confidentiality

Skills, Abilities and Experience

- j. Able to chair complex multi-agency child care meetings, specifically Child Protection, Contextual Safeguarding Conferences, Looked After Children Reviews and Strategy meeting.
- k. Able to communicate effectively with children and young people and their parents/carers and respond appropriately to their needs and wishes.
- l. Ability to provide constructive challenge to individuals at all levels and the organisation and influence practice and policy improvements.
- m. Proven ability to work with a range of professional agency partners and establish effective working relationships.
- n. Significant practice experience in children's social work including looked after children and child protection.
- o. Experience of supervising and managing children's social work practice, including child protection and looked after children.
- p. Experience of providing consultation and advice to social services and other agencies' staff, on issues of care planning for looked after children and safeguarding issues.
- q. Proven ability to work independently using own initiative with consistent motivation, organisation and capacity to prioritise work.
- r. Ability to lead, participate, deliver outcomes in service development initiatives
- s. Excellent level of oral and written communication skills.