



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

**POST TITLE:** Practice Development Lead

**Grade:** ME14

**DIVISION/SECTION:** Children's Social Care and Youth Justice

**Location:** Civic Centre

**Responsible to:** Team Manager, Workforce and Practice Development  
/Principal Social Worker

**Responsible for:**

**Post number:**

**Date:** 22/11/19 Updated May 2022

## **MAIN PURPOSE**

1. Across Children's Social Care and Youth Justice, the Practice Development Lead will collaboratively strengthen and develop all areas of social work skills, knowledge and practice embedding our relationship-based social work practice principles and a range of systemic, signs of safety and solution focussed approaches and tools.
2. The post holder will work with Team/Service Managers and Heads of Service to strengthen and develop, knowledge, practice and skills development and service delivery with a focus on strengthening outcomes for young people and promoting theirs and the parents voice and views to developing plans and strategies for intervention.
3. To work with the Team Manager for Workforce and Practice Development and Principal Social Worker to support service wide implementation of social work tools and approaches and fully embed the relationship-based social work practice model.
4. To work alongside practitioners, Independent Reviewers and managers by providing coaching and support, which will enhance the skills and approaches needed for effective relationship-based social work practice.

5. To identify and capture end to end case exemplars for learning which demonstrate aspects of exemplary relationship-based practice, working with the practitioners and managers in the Insights and Learning Service and across the Division.
6. To contribute to and support the planning and implementation for:
  - ASYE programme for NQSWs and Practice Assessors.
  - Delivery of internal relationship-based practice, systemic social work approaches; solution focussed and signs of safety training and learning opportunities as directed, including co-delivery of core training.
  - Delivery of workshops and training on relationship-based social work, tools and approaches to practitioners and managers.
  - To have previous management or supervisory experience.
  - Ensuring Merton is meeting the required accountabilities and key deliverables.
7. To work with the Principal Social Worker and Team Manager of Workforce and Practice Development team regarding ongoing evaluation and planning of the relationship-based social work practice model, tools and approaches including quality assurance.
8. To work closely with the Principal Social Worker and colleagues across the Directorate to ensure the ongoing implementation of relationship-based social work practice, tools and approaches. This will include contributing to the development and implementation of local policies and service improvement strategies and supporting their implementation within the service.
9. To contribute to workforce development, training and professional development in line with the BASW Professional Capabilities Framework. Practice Development Leads will be proactive, hands-on, raise practice standards in social work and act as a champion for professional development to ensure outcomes for children and young people are evidenced and strengthened.
10. To provide consultation and direct mentoring, coaching and professional support across Children's Social Care and Youth Justice in order to implement relationship-based social work and embed the practice model. This will include to support and promote the embedding of group supervision across Children's Social Care and Youth Justice.

## **MAIN DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

1. Across Children's Social Care and Youth Justice, to collaboratively plan and lead on the embedding of, development for relationship-based social work and the practice model. To strengthen, support and develop areas of skills and knowledge in teams and service delivery and ensure it is evidenced and reflected within practice, young people's records and plans. This will be inclusive of training activity with individual students, practitioners, professionals and teams alongside facilitating and delivering workshops and training groups.
2. Whilst able to analyse the strengths of practice, you will also identify and consider areas that require further development and training across Children's Social Care and Youth Justice and support the plans to achieve this. This will involve co-production and collaboratively working with the Principal Social Worker and Insights Team when considering the learning from monthly audits and Practice Weeks.

3. To lead, plan and underpin the development and improvement of practice by role modelling good practice, providing opportunities for reflective case discussion and individual coaching/ training sessions. Acting as the 'expert', to provide and promote consultation, facilitate bespoke learning events and provide presentations to wider audiences as required across all service areas.
4. To use and demonstrate knowledge from research, surveys, professional standards and literature reviews, Research in practice and adult learning principles to improve the performance and practice of staff. To lead and plan workshops across Children's Social Care and Youth Justice and provide qualitative feedback on these events alongside analysis on what difference it has made.
5. To share and cascade current information and research about relationship-based social work and the approaches and tools used within Merton that supports assessment, intervention and review processes. This includes promoting the use of tools and frameworks that support and are inclusive of direct work with children and families. To contribute to the training strategy and policy development in partnership with internal and external stakeholders.
6. Undertake at all times to take into account and ensure the views of children, young people and their carers and to facilitate their participation in practice, by developing or strengthening user engagement initiatives to underpin development of stronger feedback initiatives and processes.
7. To provide and deliver effective and consistent individual and group consultation sessions across Children's Social Care and Youth Justice that influences and impacts positively on practice and increases skill, confidence and knowledge for all professionals to improve delivery for children and families which demonstrates positive outcomes and their voice.
8. To facilitate, lead and support workshops such as induction and learning events in collaboration with Social Care and Youth Justice. To identify areas of strength in practice and support/ advice on individual or team action/ service plans to address areas of development. This will include facilitating, empowering and support managers with group supervision forums or appreciate inquiries. It will also include practice quality assurance activities such as observation visits with students and social workers and audit of cases and feedback to Social Workers.
9. To promote communication and share learning opportunities by liaising with other key partners and providing opportunities of shared learning or workshops. This would include representing Merton at internal and external meetings and events relating to the objectives of the post as directed by the Team Manager for Workforce and Practice Development/Principal Social Worker.
10. To work collaboratively with CAMHs in Social Care and the use of Systemic approaches to support integration with relationship-based social work practice and signs of safety tools across Children's Social Care and Youth Justice which strengthens development of organisational learning culture in line with building relationships, deepening practice, and maintaining a stance of curiosity to improve outcomes for children and their families.
11. To strengthen and contribute to quality assurance initiatives reporting on key themes and supporting training needs. To undertake where required audit review of cases using an appreciative inquiry and reflective approach. Across Children's Social Care and Youth

Justice, this will include strengthening individual knowledge, skill and understanding within group supervision, peer review or planning, assessment and intervention.

12. To embed and strengthen effective and collaborative working relationships across Children's Social Care and Youth Justice and the wider Council and partner agencies. This will also include development and shared learning with the MSCP.
13. To attend focused groups, team or sub group meetings as required by the Team Manager for Workforce and Practice or Principal Social Worker and be an active member who contributes to development and understanding of our relationship-based social work practice model, approaches and tools.
14. As part of the wider Social Care and Youth Justice group, offer advice or direct consultation, providing direct assistance and a hands-on approach with students, social workers and practitioners to strengthen initial actions, arrangements and plans are in place to safeguard and promote the well-being of children and young people where their voice is at the centre and heard.
15. Across Social Care and Youth Justice, jointly developing strategies, promoting discussion and consultation to identify service or individual training needs. In conjunction with the training and development service: to support, lead or facilitate these sessions. This will also include supporting the implementation and monitoring the council's agreed policies, including the application of the threshold criteria for services and promoting the use of Tri.X.
16. To implement, operate and review systems that ensure quality and standards of professional practice and performance are achieved. In line with the Council's policies and procedures, ensure compliance on the use of information technology, GDPR and Data Protection.
17. To understand and adhere to Social Work England code of practice in all aspects of their work and to understand and be able to apply the Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF) in their own and others' practice.

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**PERSON SPECIFICATION**

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### **Qualifications**

- Social Work Qualification – CQSW/ DipSW/ Degree in Social Work
- To hold or obtain within 18 months of appointment a Practice Educator or Assessor accreditation
- Evidence of post qualification learning and development
- Social Work England registration together with relevant post qualification experience of working within Children’s Services.

### **Experience, Knowledge & Skills**

- In-depth knowledge and understanding of the Professional Capabilities Framework and how this supports the training and development of social workers
- Demonstrable experience and advanced understanding of relationship-based social work, systemic approaches, solution focused interventions and signs of safety. This would reflect and demonstrate an advanced understanding of its application to practice across services including children in care, Youth Justice, child protection conferences and children in care reviews, early help, and safeguarding services.
- Experience of delivering, chairing and facilitating training and workshops and complex meetings related to practice improvement and development involving children in care and safeguarding and child protection processes. Experience of chairing and facilitating Appreciative Inquires.
- Substantial experience of direct work with children and young people and their families within a social care context inclusive of having undertaken complex assessments.
- Extensive experience of working in partnership in complex cases where culture, race, gender, sexuality and disability are key factors in provision.

- Experience of acting in a supervisory capacity with students, social workers and practice teaching/ Mentoring/ Coaching staff or students, to enabling learning.
- Strong working knowledge of the legislative framework within which Social Care operates, inclusive of legislation, regulation and national guidance and procedures specific to this post.
- Thorough understanding of quality assurance frameworks and an ability to integrate and role model this into practice. Through use of your skills of analytical thinking and decision-making, you need to be able to diagnose themes, patterns and trends of information in order to interpret information accurately.
- Seeks to influence internal and external stakeholders. Develop and establish a rapport with partner agencies and key stakeholders. Creates, maintains and seeks to develop collaborative relationships both internally and externally to enhance delivery of objectives. Demonstrates ability to resolve conflicts and is able to navigate and respond positively to challenges.
- Commitment to active self-development and knowledge of leadership approaches. Demonstrates ability to manage workloads effectively and is able to demonstrate effective time management and prioritisation skills that ensures standards of work are maintained and deadlines are met. To formulate both own and support development of others training needs and support plans.
- High level of communication skills both orally and writing to a high standard with an ability to convey complex information in accessible form, including presenting to large internal/external groups. Including generating information for learning in the organisation.
- IT literate and willing to undertake further training as required.
- Satisfactory DBS enhanced disclosure will be a condition of your appointment.

### **Equal Opportunities**

- Knowledge of and commitment to equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory practice and the ability to implement it.
- Commitment to providing and developing services of quality and equality
- Adherence to the Council's policies and procedures in relation to Equalities Framework for Local Government and the Corporate Equalities Scheme.