



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

**POST TITLE:** Principal Social Worker

**Grade:** MGB

**DEPARTMENT:** Children's Social Care & Youth Justice

**Section:** Insight & Learning

**Responsible to:** Assistant Director /Head of Insight & Learning

**Responsible for:** Social Work Academy; Practice Development Leads; Consultant Social Worker; apprentice and student Social Workers, newly qualified Social Workers, Child and Team Support  
Children and Young Peoples Participation both on strategic and operational level

**Post number:**

**Date: July 2021**

**Role Context and Purpose of the Principal Social Worker role**

As Principal Social Worker for Children's Social Care and Youth Justice, you will:

- Act as a role model, embedding our culture, values and practice model across the service, ensuring that children and young people are at the heart of all we do
- Lead on the development and maintenance of practice standards across the service, liaising closely with the corporate learning and development team in all areas of development to ensure that we continue to drive practice forward, to deliver an outstanding service for children, young people and their families. To manage and be fully responsible for all aspects of learning and development related to CSF social care and the learning and development budget.
- Be an active member of the Children's Social Care & Youth Justice senior leadership team.

- Act as the strategic lead for consultation and workforce planning, ensuring that our plans recruit, retain and develop a competent workforce which flourishes in a learning culture.
- Matrix manage the Social Work Academy, the recruitment of social work students, apprentices and newly qualified social workers ensuring they are provided with high quality educator and assessor support.
- Provide expert services and advice supporting operational delivery and strategic planning.
- Play a key role in working with our partners, within the organisation and externally, to ensure we are at the forefront of best practice
- All MGB Managers are expected to be available some evenings and weekends to participate in the out of hours senior manager duty rota as required for which no additional payment will be made.
- To provide senior manager operational cover for Service Manager colleagues and deputise for the Head of Service as necessary and appropriate.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

1. Act as a role model, embedding our culture and value base across the service, ensuring that children and young people are at the heart of all we do.
2. To support the Assistant Director Children's Social Care & Youth Justice in taking a professional lead across the organisation and partnerships, having responsibility for supporting and advising on the quality of social work practice.
3. Responsible for line-management of Practice Development Leads; Consultant Social Worker, Child and Team Support and the matrix management of the Social Work Academy.
4. To draw on professional experience in influencing strategic decision-making across the organisation, using knowledge and skills to inform the wider functions of the organisation, beyond social work and social care boundaries
5. Identify and respond to new initiatives and changes in legislation and government policy, maintaining a high level of professional expertise and utilising professional networks to maintain a sound awareness of relevant law, policy and regional and national developments; ensuring it informs local policy and practice
6. To be responsible for producing and sharing across the workforce a six-monthly self-evaluation of the quality of practice, decision-making and outcomes for children and young people.

7. To be responsible for leading production and sharing across the workforce of the Children's Social Care & Youth Justice Improvement Plan
7. To be responsible for leading and managing the deployment of the Consultant Social Workers / Practice Development Leads as required to improve identified areas of practice.
8. To be responsible for ensuring that relevant advice and guidance in the Directorate, Council and from external agencies and organisations is effectively implemented. To ensure that the Division's policies, procedures and practice guidance remain consistent with best practice, the Council's practice expectations and practice model
9. To actively promote local and national research and evaluation to influence and develop social work evidence informed practice, liaising and developing professional networks locally, regionally and nationally to identify and influence practice improvements
10. To help ensure that organisational change and integration takes account of professional social work issues, promoting and taking part in developing the body of social work knowledge and research within and outside of the organisation, working in partnership to ensure that developments reflect the needs of front line practice
11. To help promote organisational development, championing the rationale for change and supporting cultural development. To help drive effective partnership and collaborative working both internally and externally, to further improve outcomes for children in need or at risk
12. To provide a robust and supportive challenge to standards of operational practice, to ensure high quality practice, sensitive to the needs of children and families at risk that includes informing them of their rights
13. Lead and contribute to strategies and actions which support us to embed a professional and accountable culture which ensures children and young people are at the heart of all we do.
14. Collaborate with your colleagues to ensure we are proactively working to maintain resilience in practice.
15. Ensure our strengths based approach to working with children and families grows and makes a real and sustainable difference.

16. Act as the strategic lead on workforce consultation, ensuring that we listen and invest in our workforce, developing approaches which contribute to this and reporting into the Assistant Director and Heads of Service with the findings and solutions.
17. Lead on the development and maintenance of practice standards across the service, ensuring that we continue to drive practice forward, to deliver an outstanding service for children, young people and their families.
18. Work in conjunction with the Reviewing & Insights Service to ensure that the mantra of making exceptional practice the norm is achieved.
19. Lead on the review and delivery of programmes and workshops which enhance practice across the service at all levels.
20. Promote the core principles of evidence based practice, ensuring that practice uses evidence and research effectively, and ensuring that your work is evidenced and recorded.
21. Act as the strategic lead for consultation and workforce planning, ensuring that our plans recruit, retain and develop a competent workforce who flourishes in a learning culture.
22. Act as the strategic and operational lead for all social work recruitment incentives and programmes which ensure we have effective workforce plans that support a range of prequalifying programmes.
23. Provide matrix management of the Social Work Academy leading on the strategic vision for the recruitment and retention of our social work students, apprentices and Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) Social Workers, ensuring that we continue to grow competent and confident practitioners.
24. Lead operationally in the delivery of the ASYE portfolio and quality assurance of ASYE standards both with the Social Work Academy, wider organisation and externally.
25. Lead strategically and operationally on the review and delivery of progression strategies which ensure we have a competent and confident social work offer and robust succession plans to help our permanent staff progress.
26. Act as the strategic and operational lead for practice education both within the Social Work Academy and across the Division ensuring that we supply high quality effective placements by working closely with workforce advisors and higher education providers.

27. Lead on the strategic vision for the recruitment and retention of our social work and management offer working both internally with your colleagues and externally with our regional counterparts.
28. Provide expert services and advice supporting operational delivery and strategic planning.
29. Work in partnership with the Reviewing & Insights Service to ensure the findings from audit shape and influence practice. You will lead on the clinical aspects of audit by providing expert advice and guidance through the coaching and mentoring of practitioners and managers and the deployment of Consultant Social Workers (Practice Development). You will ensure that meaningful engagement and accountability is achieved across the service and themes and outcomes from audit are shared and influence planning at all levels.
30. Work in partnership with the data performance team to ensure that data, quality assurance and workforce development are triangulated in a meaningful way and are used to influence the strategic and operation practice across the service.
31. Take responsibility for research and development across the service, ensuring that legislation, policy and best practice is understood and implemented.
32. Work directly with individual practitioners or groups of practitioners to provide specialist clinical advice and development opportunities which promote learning and raises practice standards.
33. Represent the Service at the multi-agency safeguarding forums, taking an active role in shaping the direction of travel to complement the work undertaken by the service.
34. To facilitate or participate in the development and delivery of training programmes and with others to help ensure that a workforce development strategy is in place within the organisation to ensure that staff are equipped to deliver quality outcomes for people who use services, families and carers
35. Represent London Borough of Merton in the regional, Pan-London and national PSW networks linking with the office of the Chief social worker
36. To ensure compliance with the requirements of the personnel policy, procedures and standards of practice of the Council, ensuring that supervision, appraisal, and training and development of team members occurs.
37. Ensure children and young people's participation both strategically and operation is integrated into everything that they and their services do.

38. Contribute to, and include Young People in the effective recruitment selection.

39. The above list is not exhaustive and other duties may be attached to the post from time to time. Variation may also occur to the duties and responsibilities without changing the general character of the post.

**Other factors:**

A. Undertake duties outside normal working hours as required.

B. Ability to travel independently around the Borough

C. Post holder must be flexible to work outside normal office hours and attend occasional evening meetings, as required



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

**POST TITLE:** Principal Social Worker

**Grade:** MGB

**Date:** July 2021

***Education & Qualifications***

- a. Degree in Social Work / Certified Qualification in Social Work (CQSW) / Certificate in Social Service (CSS) / Diploma in Social Work (DiSWSP) / Home Office letter of recognition
- b. Social Work England registration
- c. Hold a Post Qualifying award in social work or Children, Young people, Families and Carers (specialist post qualifying award in social work)
- d. Hold a Practice Educator or Assessor accreditation
- e. Management qualification or evidence of leadership development training
- f. Evidence of Post Qualification learning and development
- g. This post requires satisfactory clearance of an enhanced Disclosure & Barring Service disclosure

***Experience & Knowledge***

- a. Experience of managing statutory social work teams / services to children, young people and families
- b. Experience of operating collaboratively within a management team

- c. Experience of financial and budget management
- d. Experience of working with and alongside multi-disciplinary teams
- e. Experience of strategic planning of services
- f. In-depth and advanced knowledge of legislation, guidance and research as it relates to statutory and preventative youth justice and children's social care functions.
- g. In-depth knowledge of the Professional Capabilities Framework and the connection with the Knowledge and Skills Statements.
- h. In depth knowledge about supporting and developing social work students and social workers. Experience of providing the Practice Educator or Assessor role to social work students and newly qualified social workers.
- i. In-depth knowledge and experience of supporting staff development and effectively managing performance and attendance.
- j. In-depth technical and operational knowledge and experience of relationship-based social work practice principles and tools including system social work, signs of safety and solution focused approaches.
- k. In-depth technical and operational knowledge and experience of effective approaches to the identification and mitigation of risk and uncertainty.
- l. In-depth technical and operational knowledge and experience of providing effective reflective group and individual supervision to social workers and managers delivering statutory services using relationship-based social practice principles and system social work approaches
- m. Experience and knowledge of electronic records and data management systems, their effective operation for both effective social work/youth justice practice and performance reporting
- n. Experience of strategic and operational participation of children and young people.

### ***Ability & Skills***

- a. Excellent written and verbal communication skills including ability to use Word and Excel to produce high quality and attractive reports, carry out correspondence and keep accurate records.
- b. Analytical and strategic skills to understand the requirements of legislation and guidance and translate these into a new service suited to local circumstances
- c. Ability to set objectives and targets and monitor their achievement
- d. Ability to manage services and multi-disciplinary teams



- e. Ability to manage and implement change at a service, team, practice and individual level
- f. Ability to establish, monitor and control operational budgets
- g. Ability to develop and motivate individuals, teams and services to deliver high quality interventions and outstanding outcomes
- h. Ability to establish systems of quality assurance and governance to provide accurate and reliable reassurance to senior and political leaders
- i. Ability to communicate articulately and confidently with a range of people – both in writing and orally
- j. Possession of high levels of analytical, literacy and numeracy skills
- k. Ability to develop and utilise an appropriate data and information systems
- l. Flexibility to work outside normal office hours to participate in the senior management out of hours alongside the Head of Service duty rota and attend occasional evening meetings if required
- m. Commitment to implement the Council's equal opportunities policy
- n. Ability to apply relationship-based social work and systemic ideas and principles to the practice and supervision of individuals, groups and services
- o. Ability to negotiate and commission services from outside agencies

### ***Equal Opportunities***

- a. Knowledge, understanding and commitment to implementing the social GRAACCES
- b. Demonstrable commitment to challenging and reflecting on own unconscious and conscious bias and role modelling cultural competence
- c. Demonstrable commitment to challenging structural; societal and institutional discrimination
- d. Ability to demonstrate awareness/understanding of equal opportunities and other people's behaviour, physical, social and welfare needs

### ***Values & Behaviours***

- a. Show initiative, drive and determination to get the job done; and continuously improve what you do.
- b. Determine the right course of action through listening to the needs of our children, families, residents and staff

- c. Be accountable for your actions and the decisions you make
- d. Help others to be productive, independent and make informed decisions
- e. Be ambitious in creating new solutions which bring about substantial benefit for children, young people and their families
- f. Challenge yourself to be the best you can be
- g. Take pride in providing public services to our children, families and residents
- h. Work as a team to support one another to be the best we can be for our children, families and residents
- i. Provide local leadership and work with partners collaboratively to jointly develop and deliver services
- j. Listen to one another and respect one another's point of view
- k. Challenge others respectfully and constructively, working together to resolve issues
- l. Treat everyone with courtesy, fairness and transparency
- m. Seek the best deal when looking for ways to improve value for money and reduce cost.
- n. Look for new ways to generate growth, income and maximise commercial potential
- o. Take managed and considered risks to enable us to achieve the best outcomes.

### ***Leadership Behaviours***

- a. Role model the Merton's Best Council priorities and values of Children's Social Care & Youth Justice
- b. Demonstrate inclusive leadership
- c. Take the lead in driving initiatives
- d. Be proactive in being forward and outward looking, by regularly investing in own and others development.
- e. Drive forward performance by empowering staff to take the lead.
- f. Set high standards, encouraging improvement and innovation.
- g. Support the service to achieve by adopting a coaching style of management

- h. Have regular employee led conversations to develop our people – creating a safe environment for learning, taking time to understand their strengths and motivations, stretching them and coaching them to achieve.
- i. Manage budgets responsibly – planning, monitoring and adapting budgets to respond to changing priorities.
- j. Deliver Service Plans and appraisals
- k. Work within the democratic framework - understand the democratic process and its role in public organisations, anticipating Member needs and responding to their enquiries and feedback.

***Special Requirements/other considerations***

1. Able to work outside standard office hours on a duty rota alongside the Head of Service, to respond to the individual needs of the service, teams, children, families and academic study requirements
2. Able to travel inside and out of the borough for the purposes of the role
3. Able to undertake the role in a variety of services and settings as the needs of the service requires.