



CHILDREN, SCHOOLS & FAMILIES

JOB DESCRIPTION

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JOB NUMBER:

JOB TITLE: Quality Assurance Manager (Permanence and Placements)

SECTION: Children's Safeguards Team

GRADE: ME16

DATE: July 2012

BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

Merton Council's vision is to make Merton a great place to live, work and learn. Underpinning this vision are five strategic objectives which will drive the work of the Council in the coming years: Education Merton – the achievement of standards of excellence in our schools and colleges and inclusive access to learning, the arts and sports. Safe, clean and green Merton – a safe and clean environment in our streets and opens spaces to improve the sustainability and provide a high quality of life for residents. Caring Merton – support for vulnerable children that equals the standards of the best and support for vulnerable adults that meets their needs while maximising their independence. Thriving Merton – regeneration of town centres and neighbourhoods to provide an attractive environment and in which to live, visit and work. Equalities Merton – full and equal access to learning, employment, services and cultural life and the celebration of diversity. Within this context, the Housing and Social Services Department aims to meet these strategic objectives by delivering services of a defined quality and which enjoy its customers' approval and confidence.

JOB PURPOSE

The Fostering & Permanency Manager (QA) primary role is to lead on Quality Assurance for Permanency Planning in relation to Looked After Children across all the relevant services in Children's Social Care. To be responsible for promoting and developing good practice in Permanency Planning and to

establish systems to ensure that monitored milestones are set and adhered to.

To lead on ensuring the LA achieves timely permanence for Looked After Children across the full range of legal options including Adoption, Special Guardianship, Residence Orders, Family and Friends care and permanent/long term foster care.

To lead on close collaboration with the Managers of the Independent Reviewing Officers, Children's Social Workers and the Permanency Teams to develop and maintain relevant Management Information systems, and to lead on the analysis and interpretation of such information, reporting on outcomes to a variety of audiences, including the LSCB, Senior Managers and frontline managers.

To assume lead responsibility for the design and commission of direct audits of work and to undertake the analysis of such all such audits including those carried out by Senior Managers.

To lead on the development and embedding of permanency policies and practice across Children's Services.

To be responsible for the development of user feedback processes and to ensure that outcomes from this process are incorporated into service developments and practice.

To work closely with the QA manager Children's Safeguarding, Standards and Training service, in order to identify and develop the delivery and joint commissioning (with the Training Section and LSCB Training Sub-Group) of training provision.

To Manage the Fostering and Adoption Trainer and take the lead in developing and delivering a high quality training and development programme for staff and carers.

To Manage the newly Integrated Adoption and Fostering Panel and establish systems to support the new integrated decision making process including the direct management of the panel administrator and training and development administration.

Act on behalf of the Council as the lead expert on permanency and placement matters, for example during OFSTED inspections and with the DfE, BAAF and other internal and external agencies.



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REPORTING RELATIONSHIPS

REPORTS TO: Service Manager; Safeguarding Standards and Training

STAFF MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES:

Panel Administrator

Permanency Planning Officer (IRO – QA)

Trainer (Fostering and Adoption)

FINANCIAL

Staffing

Training and Development (Fostering and Adoption/Permanence)

KEY RELATIONSHIPS AND INTERDEPENDENCIES

INTERNAL

In order to conduct your business within the framework of best value, you will be expected to develop and maintain relationships with:

Senior Managers in Children Schools and Families

Other managers and practitioners in Children Schools and Families particularly the Children's Social Care Division.

EXTERNAL

LSCB partner agencies

Service Users

Voluntary Agency's

RESPONSIBILITIES

General

- To understand and promote valuing diversity in the provision of service delivery and management of staff.
- Use computers and other items of information technology in the normal performance of the duties of the post.
- To be aware of and understand the Council's Equal Opportunities Policy and ensure that at all times the duties of the post are carried out in accordance with the policy.
- To ensure that the Corporate and Departmental Health and Safety Policies are implemented at all times and to raise any concerns regarding their operation, or any other health and safety matter with the appropriate senior line manager.
- To ensure that within the scope of the job purpose, the Council's aims in relation to customer service are achieved.
- Undertake such other duties as may be required by, or on behalf of the Director, provided they fall within the range and scope of the duties of the post as set out in the proceeding paragraphs and are commensurate with the grade of the post.

Specific: **QA management of Permanency Policy and Practice**

1. To identify, in conjunction with senior managers, areas of shortfall and excellence in service delivery and professional practice, and to take the lead in identifying necessary changes to policy and practice.
2. To lead on establishing and operating ongoing forums for the involvement of service users, including carers and minority ethnic groups, in feedback and audit processes. This will involve some unaccompanied home visits to get feedback from service users.
3. To lead on the collation and reporting on management and qualitative information for the DfE and other Central Government agencies.

4. To lead on and establish systems to support direct audit processes and to have lead responsibility for the analysis of aggregated and individual data with recommendations for service development.
5. To contribute to the work of the Children and Young Person's Strategic Partnership by ensuring that relevant management information is collected and collated and that policies and practice reflect identified QA information and initiatives.
6. To have the lead responsibility for organising and managing focus groups and working parties to identify, drive and implement specific changes to policy and practice
7. To have lead responsibility for the production of the annual report on Permanency Activity within Children's Social Care focussing on trends and outcomes for children and young people and their carers.
8. To undertake any other quality initiatives identified as necessary by Senior Managers.
9. To manage and supervise the Independent Reviewing Officer (Permanence) and ensure the robust tracking, monitoring and reviewing of plans to and from Permanence Planning Meetings.
10. To lead on the strategic development of new processes to monitor the permanency planning arrangements for children who have been looked after for more than three months and are likely to remain looked after.
11. To lead on the provision of support and advice to social work staff ensuring high standards are set and maintained in the compilation of permanence plans across all services in Children's Social Care. To attend case tracking meetings advising on the best way to achieve the most appropriate outcome for the child.

QA management of the Integrated Panel

12. To act as the expert Panel Advisor for Merton's Integrated Fostering and Adoption Panel, the decisions of which have substantial impact on the Service and the Council. This will involve complex and contentious issues regarding placements and carers.
13. To have the lead responsibility to quality assure and sign off Children's Permanence Reports for presentation to Merton's Integrated Adoption/ Permanence and Fostering Panel.
14. To ensure that the decisions of the Agency Decision Maker for Adoption and Permanence Panel/Fostering Panel are implemented in a timely fashion. Contribute to the training of fostering and adoption panel members and giving

advice to panels where this is required. Contribute to the training of staff in conjunction with the training manager.

15. To manage the delivery of the Integrated Panel and monitor the outcomes for children who have been presented. To direct and supervise the effective administration of the Panel and ensure the quality assurance of the Panel records and their distribution.
16. To manage the provision of Fostering and Adoption training and supervise the Fostering and Adoption Training Officer and the associated administration officer.
17. To attend Permanence Planning Meetings for Looked After Children and drive the development permanence plans at the earliest possible stage and in line with Central Government guidance.
18. Take lead responsibility for the identification of children at risk of drift bringing such concerns to the attention of Senior Managers and attend Court as required to give opinions in respect of particular children.
19. To take lead responsibility for developing new strategies and policies to embed effective permanency planning across the service and lead on the provision of progress reports to Senior Managers at CSMT, DMT, SLT etc.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

QUALITY ASSURANCE MANAGER

EXPERIENCE & KNOWLEDGE

	Application Form	Interview
Essential: Social Work Qualification; Degree; recognised training/qualification in audit work; training/qualification in management. Must be HCPC registered.	X	
Experience (preferably in a management capacity) of work with children and families or policy development, gained in a Social Services context.	X	
Experience of working within a complex organisation.	X	
Understanding of the internal and external drivers which		



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influence and dictate service provision in the local government setting.	X	X
Experience of Quality Audit processes and their application within a service focussed environment	X	X
Experience and skill in audit design to include some or all of; Data collection by means of file review, review of management information; user survey; focus groups.	X	X
Experience and skill in quantitative analysis and qualitative analysis	X	
Ability to relate and communicate effectively verbally and in writing, with a wide range of audiences including service users, professional staff and senior managers in various agencies.	X	X
Ability and skill to act as change agent, driving forward changes indicated as necessary by the audit/Quality Assurance process.	X	X
Experience and competence in word processing, spreadsheet use, database management and presentation software.	X	
Ability to work creatively, on own initiative.	X	X
Experience and understanding of diversity issues and impact on total quality of services.	X	X

COMPETENCIES

The competencies described reflect the level of knowledge, skills, abilities and personal characteristics required for you to effectively perform the role of Quality Assurance Officer.



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Skills and Abilities	Application Form	Interview
<p>Leadership and Strategic Vision Able to lead project groups of staff from different agencies, motivating towards completion of project brief. Identifies continuous improvement and motivates others towards the attainment of organisational goals.</p>	X	X
<p>Analytical Thinking and Decision Making Able to diagnose themes or patterns of information through consultation and analysis of audit data and management information, in order to make interpretations. Effectively evaluates risk and the consequences of certain decisions.</p>	X	X
<p>Corporate Working (People) Is able to establish rapport with key stakeholders. Able to accurately assess capability to meet existing and future needs. Creates, maintains and actively develops appropriate relationships based upon mutual respect and trust across diversity. Recognises the need for constructive feedback, interprets the motives, concerns and behaviour of individuals/groups. Demonstrates support, resolves conflicts and responds positively to challenge.</p>		X
<p>Enabling change Ability to manage change and promote/achieve a continuous improvement cycle. Takes responsibility for own learning and seeks new sources of knowledge and development. Demonstrates creativity in solving problems, identifying new opportunities and producing innovative proposals, ideas and structures, within appropriate limits.</p>	X	X
<p>Customer Focus Constantly strives to achieve customer satisfaction. Demonstrates knowledge and understanding of the impact of delivering services within a multi-cultural and multi-ethnic environment. Injects a strong customer focus to all staff working with the postholder.</p>		X
<p>Communication High level written and oral communication skills and the ability to convey complex information in a readily accessible form, including presentations to large internal/external groups, Member briefings and report production.</p>		X
<p>Priorities Able to prioritise both current and incoming work, to achieve outcomes required, using a range of skills and resources.</p>		X



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Quality Assurance Ability to employ recognised Quality Assurance techniques and drive forward identified organisational changes	X	X
Audit Ability to design and implement audits	X	
Change agent Able to act as a positive change agent and role, including with senior managers and key members of the council	X	X

Revised July 2012