



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

POST TITLE: Advanced Practitioner – Social Work Academy
Grade: ME15
Division: Children’s Social Care and Youth Justice
Section: Social Work Academy
Responsible to: Team Manager /Principal Social Worker
Responsible for: Up to 4 Social Work Students or Social Worker Apprentices
Post number:
Date: June 2023

Organisational Context:

The responsibility of the Children’s Social Care 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:

The Social Work Academy is primarily responsible for supervising and developing Social Work Students/Social Worker Apprentices and setting standards. As a CSW you will be involved in working directly with children and families allocated to your unit from across all service areas. A key way in which the participants will learn will be through observing your practice with these families which requires a broad and diverse knowledge base of safeguarding, support and children in care. Over the

course of the year you will ensure your participants are exposed to a wide range of different cases, gradually increasing the complexity of their work as they take on more responsibility. You will be the practice educator for each participant. At Frontline we place an emphasis on direct observation of practice, and over the year you will observe and grade direct observations of each participants' practice. You will be responsible for their overall assessment, and will recommend if they should qualify as social workers at the end of the year. You will have management responsibility and oversight of the unit and sit within the Social Work Academy management structure. You will be responsible for day-to-day decision making on work with families in the unit, and will manage and supervise your participants. By leading this innovative unit you will be in a unique position to influence and shape practice across the local authority. The role is challenging, but immensely rewarding as CSWs help their participants develop their professional practice over the course of the year.

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>

The Consultant Social Worker – Social Work Academy (CSW-SWA) role is pivotal to student/apprentice learning and development and is a unique opportunity to step up into a management position whilst continuing to develop practice and academic skills. As a key member of the Social Work Academy the role will provide dedicated practice education and assessment for Social Work students/ Social Worker apprentices to contribute to workforce sufficiency and stability for children requiring social work intervention.

The role purpose is to achieve the best possible positive outcomes for children and young people across Children's Social Care (CSC) by modelling, directing and supporting the work of the students/ Social Worker apprentices. Through a collaborative and relational approach to all work with children, young people and families the CSW-SWA will ensure the welfare of children is safeguarded and they are protected in accordance with the legal and statutory obligations of London Borough of Merton. In order to give Students and Apprentices a good social work foundation and knowledge base, work with children and families can come from across the whole of CSC. This provides a unique opportunity to work on a very broad range of cases across the social work spectrum, including private fostering.

The CSW-SWA will 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. The role is accountable for the quality of practice, setting standards and creating the conditions required for successful social work by motivating, nurturing and mentoring the students/ Social Worker apprentices. The CSW-SWA is also responsible for encouraging and promoting effective relationships and communication between individuals across the service and partner agencies.

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
- subject to legal processes and/or care proceedings
- privately fostered

To contribute to the management of the team in meeting service objectives, key performance targets and statutory requirements of social work legislation by supervising, coaching and mentoring social work students/ apprentices within the team to ensure that their work meets professional and academic standards of proficiency and contributes to the achievement of safeguarding and positive outcomes for children, families and carers.

The team sets standards on practice in meeting the Professional Capabilities Framework and is responsible for the overall assessment and recommendation as to individuals qualifying as a social worker, CSW – SWA are required to hold or achieve within 12 months of appointment, the Practice Educator (PE1 & 2) award

To take an active role in the Consultant Social Worker operational group and contribute to the overall development of practice and the service 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. Working with children, young people and their families, with colleagues and with communities.

- Having management responsibility for the Social Work students/apprentices, with management and day to day responsibility including allocation of work. Where required, to hold statutory social work case responsibility for all children assigned to the students/apprentices delivering and overseeing 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 and private fostering arrangements.
- You will use your judgment to expose students/apprentices to increasingly complex and varied casework at the appropriate level, increasing their autonomy as they demonstrate progress.
- Given the emphasis on leading by example, when working with children and

families you will need to role model high quality social work using and role modelling Merton's Relationship-based practice model, identifying and managing risk, being curious and analytical, hypothesising, building strong relationships and using evidence-based interventions to help families change.

- Support social work students/apprentices to improve or repair their relationships with children, families and carers to offer containment and create the conditions for change to occur.
- Support social work students/ apprentices to develop and improve the range of approaches and effectiveness of their engagement skills with children, families and carers.
- Using authoritative practice (professional judgement), support social work students/apprentices' development and delivery of skilful and effective interventions which effect change.
- To chair a range of meetings relating to own work and that of others, as appropriate to the role,
- To support social work students/ SW apprentices to develop and improve the quality of their written work and explanations to children, families, carers and professionals in a range of different settings.
- To initiate, participate in and oversee successful completion of learning and insight processes within team, ensuring strong and effective relationships between students/apprentices teams with the Principal Social Worker, Workforce and Practice Development Team and Insights Team 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. Effective Practice – developing and assessing

- Modelling Merton's Relationship-based Practice Model and creating an immersive learning environment to support social work students/apprentices to develop and improve their knowledge, skills and experience in using Merton's practice model, tools and approaches.
- To provide induction, professional development, monitoring, 1-1 supervision of student social workers and apprentices, group supervision, informal supervision, coaching and mentoring, appraisal (where applicable) encouraging reflexive practice and self awareness in situations of high complexity ensuring a high standard of social work intervention and outcomes for children.
- Leading a weekly Team Meeting which incorporates systemic thinking about families' cases, encouraging students/ apprentices to hold multiple hypotheses, encouraging peer challenge and critical reflection in decision making.
- Creating learning opportunities for participants by identifying appropriate cases and regularly hold reflective discussions about their practice.
- Using authoritative practice, lead and role model multi-agency statutory assessments and co-production, implementation and review of plans which identify and address strengths, needs and risks.
- Act as a Practice Educator and Practice Assessor and supervise, mentor and coach social work students/ SW apprentices.
- You will regularly observe the social work students/ sw apprentices in their direct work with families, giving developmental feedback. At specific observation points

in the year, you will assess and grade the practice observed to meet academic and practice standards.

- To obtain user feedback and involvement to contribute to the assessment of practice and quality assurance of interventions and outcomes for children, families and carers and improvements in service delivery
- Where performance issues arise, you will address these in a professional way, holding high standards whilst supporting the participant to resolve issues.
- Using authoritative practice devise and deliver presentations, workshops and other learning events to share and develop practice and improve knowledge, skills and effectiveness of self and colleagues.

3. 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 social work students/apprentices with effective time management strategies
- Provide expert oversight and approval of reports and plans completed by social work students/apprentices as agreed by your line manager
- Provide input to the line manager for data analysis with trends and forecasts to support the effective management of the team and service delivery

4. Information, Advice and Signposting

- To provide information and signposting for children, young people, families and carers and also to student social workers and apprentices, to relevant universal, early help and specialist services in the local area and beyond where appropriate.
- Have an in-depth knowledge and understanding of information and advice available to children, young people and families, encouraging colleagues and partners to engage.

5. Multi-Agency and Partnership Working

- Actively build strong and effective relationships and networks with 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.
- Negotiate and influence cooperation and engagement of relevant partners or services, assisting and empowering social work students/ SW apprentices to navigate partnership challenges; providing professional consultation and challenge where necessary to ensure effective collaboration and achievement of positive outcomes

6. Leadership

- To provide leadership and development on agreed practice issues including standards in relationship-based practice ensuring those comply with statutory guidance and legislation, procedures, agreed targets and timescales and exceed best practice standards.
- To lead and actively contribute in developing, monitoring and reviewing systems within the team; contributing to training, review and inspection of casework and services and to planning or project work including pilots and initiatives, for the development of the service, when necessary providing direct support to children, families and carers.

- To lead and actively contribute to specific programmes to train, recruit, develop and retain social work students and apprentices.
- To initiate, organise, and deliver training, workshops, presentations and reflective group supervision
- To lead and actively contribute to pilots and projects to improve practice and/or trial new initiatives
- To provide induction, professional development, monitoring and formal supervision of student/trainee social workers; and group supervision, informal supervision, coaching and mentoring of student/trainee social workers in situations of high complexity ensuring a high standard of social work intervention and outcomes for children.
- Engage in individual and group supervision with managers and practice leads, performance appraisal and consultation as required.
- Responsible for managing conduct, performance and attendance of team members with support from the line manager.
- 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.

7. Universal tasks - Managing Risk and Safeguarding

- Using authoritative practice, 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.
- Have regard to best value principles and budget monitoring, making 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.
- 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.

Autonomy:

The Consultant Social Worker (CSW-SWA) role will:

- Be expected to share their experience, knowledge and skills with social work students/trainees, to provide consultation, advice and guidance; role modelling thoughtful, high quality and effective skills, approaches, interventions and behaviours to determine the level of intervention required to safeguard and

support for children, families and carers and develop and improve the practice of others.

- Be responsible for expert social work oversight, supervision and support for staff and social work interventions with children, families and carers using authoritative practice to identify and resolve problems and informing managers where appropriate.
 - Use authoritative practice 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, escalating to a manager decisions or issues that fall outside their delegated responsibilities.
 - 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.
 - 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
 - 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

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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.



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PERSON SPECIFICATION

POST TITLE: Advanced Practitioner - Social Work Academy

Grade: ME15

Date: June 2023

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 18 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, including mentoring and supervision
- g. In depth knowledge of relationship-based practice and principles and of a range of social work tools, approaches and evidence-based interventions including Signs of Safety and systemic social work
- h. In depth knowledge of relevant legislation and statutory guidance for children's services, including specialist knowledge in private fostering.
- i. Working knowledge of safeguarding procedures and the roles and responsibilities of key children's agencies and statutory partners.
- j. Expert knowledge of the social and emotional factors that affect a child's capacity to learn and develop.
- k. 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.

Specific Experience / Knowledge / Skills:

- Demonstrable practice knowledge in educating and assessing social work students and SW apprentices in line with the competency and regulatory requirements

2. Skills/Competencies

- l. Demonstrable high level of consultative, interpersonal, communication and negotiation skills at different levels and across different agencies, services and groups, including the ability to deal with complex issues in a sensitive and appropriate manner and challenge where necessary and to make informed evidence based decisions.
- m. Ability to demonstrate awareness/understanding of equal opportunities and other people's behaviour, physical, social and welfare needs
- n. An understanding of relationship management and the capacity to establish and maintain effective communication and working relationships.
- o. Knowledge and understanding of using appropriate assessment tools and research.
- p. Able to summarise, analyse and evaluate complex information.
- q. Experience of formulating and implementing effective social work interventions.
- r. Able to write concise high quality reports and have excellent verbal communication and presentation skills.
- s. Excellent written and verbal communication skills including ability to use Word and Excel to produce reports carry out correspondence and keep accurate records.
- t. Able to chair meetings effectively and represent Children's Services in a professional, responsible and effective manner.
- u. Able to create a rapport and build relationships with children and parents/carers.
- v. Ability to quality assure the work of others, provide advice, consultation, coaching and mentoring to social workers.
- w. Ability to prioritise and consider the cost-effective and best use of available resources.
- x. Proficient in information technology.
- y. Advanced organisational skills and the ability to prioritise work of self and others and meet deadlines.
- 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. Willingness to undertake training as required to update knowledge and skills.
4. Evidence of successfully working alone as well as part of a team.
5. Ability to undertake out of hours working if required.
6. 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.