

JOB DESCRIPTION

POST TITLE:	Senior Social Worker
GRADE:	11
DIVISION / UNIT:	Children's and Adults Service
DEPARTMENT:	Children's Services
RESPONSIBLE TO:	Team Manager

PURPOSE OF THE JOB

To provide a comprehensive, effective, integrated, systemically-informed social work service, within Southwark's practice framework, managing complex cases. To deliver excellent social work practice, assessing complex need, planning and working purposefully with families, support networks and other professionals to manage risk, safeguard children and promote positive outcomes. To provide a social work service which is both relationship-based and which responds in a timely manner within statutory guidelines. To work collaboratively with the team, supporting the development of best practice and confident practitioners through coaching and mentoring of students, newly qualified social workers and less experienced practitioners.

PRINCIPAL ACCOUNTABILITIES

Responsibilities (in line with the Knowledge and Skills Statements for Approved Child and Family Practitioners)

Relationships and effective direct work

1. Provide focused and purposeful systemically-informed social work within Southwark's practice framework, in complex situations, with explicit aims and objectives about desired outcomes which are proportionate to each child's identified risk and need.
2. Establish rapport, build and maintain professional, respectful, and honest relationships with children and their families to develop trust and assist in safeguarding children, resolving conflict and promoting positive and timely outcomes.
3. Deliver social work practice which is informed by statutory guidance, best evidence, and research knowledge.

4. Provide professional guidance, support and developmental opportunities with less experienced or knowledgeable social work colleagues, including taking the role of practice educator with social work students, and assessor of NQSWs in their ASYE year.

Communication

5. Present complex information in writing and in person in a range of settings, including professional input at child protection conferences and representing the Council at Court.
6. Maintain case records and management information on appropriate systems, ensuring that case files are organised and up to date.
7. Manage and organise complex information, producing comprehensive, analytic, high quality reports which evaluate the most appropriate interventions and make cogent arguments based on evidence.

Child development

8. Observe and talk with children in their various environments to help understand their physical and emotional worlds and patterns of development, taking account of typical development over time, including the quality of child and parent/carer interaction.

Adult mental ill health, substance misuse, domestic abuse, physical ill health and disability

9. Identify the impact on children of adult mental ill health, substance misuse, domestic abuse, physical ill health and disability, including those that may indicate risk. Access the help of other professionals to ensure children's best interests are prioritised whilst vulnerable adults are safeguarded.

Abuse and neglect of children

10. Deal with the more complex and unusual cases, especially those where there are issues of risk of harm to children. Lead investigations of concerns about significant harm, in consultation with managers and other professionals. Devise, implement and review care plans, including the development and management of protection plans within a child protection framework.

Child and family assessment

11. Carry out in-depth ongoing evidence-based assessment of complex social need and risk to children, in line with statutory guidance, working directly with children and all key family members, and gathering information from other agencies. Use professional curiosity and authority, maintaining a position of partnership, whilst recognising when

there is a need for immediate action.

Analysis, decision-making, planning and review

12. Manage a complex caseload, planning work activities, prioritising tasks and responsibilities, testing multiple hypotheses, balancing risks and family strengths, using evidence and professional judgement to ensure positive and timely outcomes.
13. Work purposefully with other practitioners to devise and implement child-centred written plans of work with children and their families, in various settings including family homes, applying twin and triple track planning to minimise delay. Provide advice and support to less experienced social work staff, and chair professional meetings when required.
14. Ensure multi-disciplinary input at all stages, negotiate with other agencies to promote positive outcomes and ensure an integrated approach on complex issues.

The law and the family and youth justice systems

15. Ensure that statutory duties are met for vulnerable children and families with complex problems, including taking responsibility for child protection processes in emergency situations.
16. Use the law and statutory guidance, seeking advice as required, to inform practice decisions, support families, protect children, and look after children in public care, preparing and presenting evidence to court when necessary.

The role of supervision

17. Work with a degree of independence without the need for close supervision, whilst recognising when and how to seek advice from a range of sources. Use supervision to identify strategies to build professional resilience and balance the potential for bias in decision-making.
18. Contribute experience and expertise to group and individual supervision processes, to support evidence-informed judgements in complex cases. Provide supervision to other staff where required by particular service needs.

Organisational context

19. Deliver services flexibly across different parts the service and within homes, schools or community settings. Contribute to organisational development, taking a leading role in practice development, helping to sustain a learning culture, and in multi- agency liaison processes where required.

Grade/Conditions of Service

The employment is subject to a probationary period of twenty six weeks from your start date of employment with Southwark Council, during which time you will be required to demonstrate to the council's satisfaction your suitability for the position in which you are employed.

A satisfactory Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check at an enhanced level is required.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

The person specification is a picture of skills, knowledge and experience required to carry out the job.

Knowledge, including educational qualifications:	Essential (E) or Desirable (D)	How assessed (S/ I/ T)
1. Knowledge of childcare legislation, statutory guidance and the London Child Protection Procedures	E	I, T
2. Knowledge and understanding of child development, parenting capacity, environmental factors and risk and protective factors	E	T, I
3. Knowledge and understanding of current issues, developments and research in children's social work practice, particularly in relation to child protection, looked after children, and planning of interventions	E	S, I
4. Knowledge of roles and responsibilities of key children's agencies	E	I
5. Knowledge of best practice for assessment and care planning, and some understanding of and commitment to the approaches within Southwark's practice framework: systemic practices including Signs of Safety, restorative practices, and trauma/attachment-informed approaches including Secure Base	E	I, T
Experience:		
6. Must hold a recognised social work qualification and have a current registration as a Social Worker with Social Work England, including evidence of appropriate and relevant continuing professional development	E	S
7. Experience of delivering effective direct social work interventions with children and their families to support change, from the beginning to the outcome of their care plan, be that Child in Need, Child Protection, Legal Proceedings, Looked After Children or Care Leavers	E	S
8. Experience of undertaking investigations under Section 47 CA 89; holistic assessments and parenting assessments either for birth or connected children	E	T, I
9. Experience of developing and delivering care plans within limited resources including commissioning services with regard to financial procedures	D	I

10. Experience of providing professional leadership, including Practice Educating social work students on placement (PEPs 1), or supporting the development of others.	D	S
11. Experience of preparing reports and presenting these within formal settings, such as court proceedings, fostering or adoption panels, youth justice panels, or other formal settings	E	S
Aptitudes, Skills & Competencies:		
12. Awareness of issues relating to communities from diverse backgrounds, ability to take into account issues relating to diversity and the experience of discrimination	E	T, I
13. Ability to collate and analyse complex information, and produce high quality data and reports that are easily understood by others, with clearly evidenced recommendations.	E	S, T
14. Commitment to the principles of openness, transparency and accountability and to the principles in Southwark's practice framework (child/young person-centred, family minded, strengths-based, evidence informed, relationship based, outcome-focused, fair and reflective)	E	I, T
15. Ability to formulate and implement effective social work interventions	E	T, I
16. Ability to work effectively as part of a team, manage own workload and be accountable for work with children and families	E	I
17. Ability to provide professional guidance, support and developmental opportunities with colleagues and contribute to organisational development	E	T, I
18. Ability to develop professional relationships with children and their families	E	I, T
19. Computer literacy skills at a level to maintain case records within information management systems.	E	T
Special Conditions of Recruitment:		
<p>Must hold a recognised social work qualification Must have a current registration with Social Work England A satisfactory Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check at an enhanced level. Comply with and promote the Council's Equal opportunities policy. Occasional requirements to work evenings and weekend.</p>		

Key:

D	Desirable	S	Shortlisting criteria
E	Essential	I	Evaluated at interview
		T	Subject to test