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| **Job Description** | |
| **Post title** | Social Work Consultant, First Contact Service |
| **JE Reference No** | N9112 |
| **Grade** | Grade 13 |
| **Service** | Children and Young Peoples Services |
| **Service Area** | Childrens Social Care, First Contact Service |
| **Reporting to** | Team Manager with Childrens Services |
| **Location** | An approved team location, but you may be required to work at any Council workplace within County Durham. |
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| **DBS** | This post is subject to an enhanced disclosure. |
| **Flexitime** | This post is eligible for flexitime. |
| **Politically restricted** | This post is not designated as a politically restricted post in accordance with the requirements of Section 1(5) of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and by regulations made from time to time by the Secretary of State. |

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| **Description of role** |

Social workers in Children and Young People’s Services work with our most vulnerable children, young people and families. Their expertise supports families, helps keep children safe and enables them both to thrive.

The role of the social work consultant is to work with the team manager to manage and supervise an integrated, multi skilled social work led team, ensuring high quality and effective services are delivered to children and their families in line with procedures, legislation and national guidance.

The social work consultant plays a key role in developing and monitoring the competency of front-line social care practitioners by developing, maintaining and championing expertise in specific areas of work with children and families; by driving excellent practice based on research evidence and professional experience; and, by supporting achievement of improved outcomes for vulnerable children and their families.

The social work consultant provides constructive challenge to enhance practice, procedures and policies, promotes innovation and introduces new ways of working from recognised areas of excellence. S/he also contributes to the development of knowledge and promotion of excellence within the team making use of sophisticated, critical reasoning as well as modelling and facilitating reflective and evidence-based decision making.

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| **Duties and responsibilities** |

Listed below are the expectations of a social work consultant in Children and Young People’s Services. These link to the Knowledge and Skills Statement for child and family practitioners, and for practice supervisors.

* Implement measures to assure quality of practice and effective throughput of work, ensuring timescales set by legislation, Children and Young People’s Services/Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures, and Courts are met.
* Provide responsive, high quality individual supervision. Use mechanisms such as group discussion to help identify bias, shift thinking and the approach to case work in order to generate better outcomes for children and families. Promote reflective thinking to drive more effective discussions so that reasoned and timely decision-making can take place.
* Ensure practitioners adopt an approach to practice which is proportionate to identified risk and need. Use supervision processes to challenge the balance of authoritative intervention and collaborative engagement and ensure practice achieves the best long-term outcomes for children and families.
* Help practitioners to make decisions based on observations and analysis, taking account of the wishes and feelings of children and families.
* Work collaboratively as part of the First Contact Management Team, supporting MASH partners to ensure joint decision making and consistent thresholds are met.
* Support social workers to use the law, regulatory and statutory guidance to inform practice decisions. Make use of the best evidence from research to inform the complex judgements and decisions needed to support families and protect children.
* Ensure recording provides the full analysis underpinning decisions, making sure the rationale for why and how decisions have been made is comprehensive and well expressed.
* Develop and maintain a culture of learning and improvement, where team members are supported to meet their aspirations. Recognise the strengths and development needs of practitioners. Use practice observation, reflection and feedback mechanisms, including the views of children and families, to develop practice.
* Provide opportunities for social workers and triage staff across the partnership to give and receive constructive feedback on performance. Recognise and commend hard work and excellent practice and build social workers’ confidence in their practice.
* Utilise data to understand current demand, historical patterns and likely future trends. Scrutinise performance and devise and implement effective and timely improvement plans.
* Build and develop influential and respectful partnerships with partner agencies.
* In the absence of the team manager, the post holder will deputise, undertaking the full range of duties and responsibilities of the team manager to ensure effective service delivery.
* Be accountable for and review own practice using supervision, reflective practice and other opportunities for continuous professional development.
* Maintain registration with Social Work England and adhere to the Social Work England standards of conduct, performance and ethics, and standards for continuing professional development.
* Note: The post holder will be required to work flexibly to meet the needs of children, young people and their families which may include the need for some weekend working.

The above outlines the duties required at the time of writing but this is not comprehensive or exclusive list and duties may be varied from time to time. This does not change the general character of the post or the level of responsibility entailed.

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| **Organisational responsibilities** |

* **Values and behaviours**

To demonstrate and be a role model for the council’s values and behaviours to promote and encourage positive behaviours, enhancing the quality and integrity of the services we provide.

* **Smarter working, transformation and design principles**

To seek new and innovative ideas to work smarter, irrespective of job role, and to be creative, innovative and empowered. Understand the operational impact of transformational change and service design principles to support new ways of working and to meet customer needs.

* **Communication**

To communicate effectively with our customers, managers, peers and partners and to work collaboratively to provide the best possible public service. Communication between teams, services and partner organisations is imperative in providing the best possible service to our public.

* **Health, Safety and Wellbeing**

To take responsibility for health, safety and wellbeing in accordance with the council’s Health and Safety Policy and procedures.

* **Equality and diversity**

To promote a society that gives everyone an equal change to learn, work and live, free from discrimination and prejudice and ensure our commitment is put into practice. All employees are responsible for eliminating unfair and unlawful discrimination in everything that they do.

* **Confidentiality**

To work in a way that does not divulge personal and/or confidential information during the course of their work and follow the council’s policies and procedures in relation to data protection and security of information.

* **Performance management**

To promote a culture whereby performance management is ingrained and the highest of standards and performance are achieved by all. Contribute to the council’s Performance and Development Review processes to ensure continuous learning and improvement and to increase organisational performance.

* **Quality assurance (for applicable posts)**

To set, monitor and evaluate standards at individual, team and service level so that the highest standards of service are delivered and maintained. Use data, where appropriate, to enhance the quality of service provision and support decision making processes.

* **Management and leadership (for applicable posts)**

To provide vision and leadership to inspire and empower all employees so they can reach their full potential and contribute to the council’s values and behaviours. Managers and leaders must engage in personal development to ensure they are equipped to lead transformational change; always searching for better ways to do things differently to meet organisational changes and service priorities.

* **Financial management (for applicable posts)**

To manage a designated budget, ensuring that the service achieves value for money in all circumstances through the monitoring of expenditure and the early identification of any financial irregularity.

*The above is not exhaustive and the post holder will be expected to undertake any duties which may reasonably fall within the level of responsibility and the competence of the post as directed by your manager.*

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| Person specification | | |
|  | Essential | Desirable |
| Qualifications | * Degree in social work **or** equivalent social work qualification, e.g. Post Graduate Diploma in Social Work (PDDipSW) Certificate of Qualification in Social Work (CQSW), Diploma in Social Work (DipSW), Certificate in Social Services (CSS)   **AND**   * Current Social Work England Registration | * Relevant and accredited management qualification * Post qualification modules in social work e.g. Consolidation Module * Staff development qualification e.g. Practice Educator, Coaching, Mentoring, Certificate in Education |
| Experience | * Significant experience of social work with children, young people and their families * Significant experience of identifying and responding to and guiding others to understand and manage risk/need across the threshold continuum * Significant experience of identifying and responding to need and risk * Using evidence-based practice to devise effective interventions * Explaining and championing high quality practice to practitioners, other professionals, children, young people and families * Recognising and commending hard work and excellent practice, and building practitioner’s confidence in their practice * Building and maintaining respectful partnerships with practitioners and partner agencies * Implementing effective strategies for ensuring throughput of work * Developing innovative practices to improve outcomes for children, young people and families * Experience of implementing recommendations from audits and serious case reviews | * Experience of supervising staff and/or students * Facilitating group case discussion e.g. though group supervision, learning communities * Supporting practitioners to meet their aspirations * Using data to understand and improve performance * Ensuring that processes are fit for purpose and efficient * Service project development and implementing innovative practice |
| Skills & Knowledge | * Knowledge and experience of implementing legislation and national standards relevant to the role * Ability to implement a range of social work theories relevant to the role * Evidence based methods and tools * Best practice within local and national contexts * Build and maintain positive relationships with children, young people and families, ensuring their views are heard * Build and maintain positive relationships with other professionals * Offer constructive advice and creative, strengths-based solutions to difficulties * Deal with complex issues in a sensitive and appropriate way | * Full legal, regulatory, procedural and performance framework * Recent Government initiatives affecting social work * Challenge complacency and confidently hold poor practice to account * Quality assure work and give constructive feedback |
| Personal Qualities | * Commitment to improving outcomes for children, young people and families * Recognise, respect and value the expertise of practitioners * Professional integrity * Creative/innovative approach to work * Resilience * Reliable * Clarity of purpose * Open, honest and assertive manner * Commitment to creating an environment that promotes equality and diversity * Ability to recognise own professional limitations and know how and when to seek advice * Ability to work flexible hours, including some evenings and weekends * Hold a current driving licence and have access to a car (social workers with a disability must have access to a means of mobility support) * Commitment to Continuous Professional Development |  |