



Principal Social Worker

Grade L (plus 15% recruitment and retention allowance)

Group: Children, Adults and Families

Service: Children Social Care

Location: Civic Centre

Line Manager: Deputy Strategic Director

Car User Status: Casual

Job Purpose

To lead, develop and oversee excellent social work practice across Children Social Work, linking with workforce development to ensure that front line staff are trained and equipped to deliver an outstanding service and positively contribute to the Gateshead strengths based and systemic practice, across Children’s Social Care.

The key roles of this post will include:

1. Working alongside the Senior Management Team, to build a shared vision and identify key areas for improvement in order to offer a consistent outstanding service to our children and families in both Statutory Social Care and Early Help provision.
2. To act as a ‘challenge’ and ‘change agent’ to the system, in the role of ‘critical friend’ providing quality assurance in social work and case holding practice to influence strategic decision making and develop and deliver the practice methodology that underpins direct work with children and families, ensuring the service is fulfilling all of its statutory, and early help, functions.
3. Supporting the development of social work career pathways and continuing professional development opportunities, whilst undertaking periodic observations of practice and support line managers in developing improvement plans.
4. To lead the AYSE Academy, Social Work Apprenticeship Programme and ‘grow your own’ programmes such as Step Up to Social Work ensuring they are interlinked across the whole service (Statutory and Early Help) whilst providing advice, guidance and support to those involved, as and when required.
5. To lead on the development and oversight of the System Practice Framework including audits, peer reviews and complaints, to drive service improvement.
6. To take the lead and have overall responsibility to champion and role model a culture which values learning, reflection and acceptance of accountability to ensure the continuous development, improvement and learning at a local, regional and national level.
7. To ensure service user engagement to enable their voice to be heard and help inform the development of practice across the service.
8. Take responsibility for identifying and responding to new initiatives and changes in legislation and government policy including liaising and developing professional networks locally, regionally and nationally to influence practice improvements.
9. Developing the body of social work knowledge and research within and outside the organisation, working in partnership to ensure that developments and organisational changes reflect the needs of front-line practice.
10. Such other responsibilities allocated which are appropriate to the grade of the post.



Essential

Expert knowledge of:

- Child care legislation and statutory guidance
- Child development throughout the age range
- Child protection and multiagency responsibilities
- Psycho Socio and economic factors impacting on children and families
- Assessment and Social work interventions, including systemic theory
- Statutory and organisational contexts, corporate parenting responsibilities and current Government policy drivers.
- Performance management approaches and Performance frameworks
- Models of reflective practice and supervisory techniques
- Budget management

Qualifications:

- Social Work qualification and Post Qualifying training
- Social Work England (SWE) registration
- Enhanced DBS clearance
- Current driving licence and access to a car, or means to mobility support

Comprehensive Experience of:

- Practicing Child Care Social Work.
- Supervising and managing staff groups.
- Practising Social Work within statutory and legislative frameworks including Child Protection and looked after children processes.
- Delivering interventions and achieving change with complex and challenging families and children
- Undertaking complex assessments of family dynamics and systems.
- Analysing and evaluating risk
- Formulating plans designed to reduce risk factors and positively influence change for children
- Supervising Social Workers or Students
- Managing performance and addressing performance issues individually and team
- Delivering training to staff groups
- Budget management

Proven ability to:

- Provide reflective supervision
- Think systemically
- Effectively challenge and influence Social Workers



- Improve the practice of others
- Develop strategies to improve the throughput of work
- Shape and influence a culture of productivity and learning
- Hypothesise and guide Social Workers in seeking evidence based conclusions
- Present complex information in written and oral form
- Chair complex meetings

Personal qualities

- Highly empathic, enabling, reflective , respectful and emotionally intelligent
- Strong ethical and moral compass which recognises power imbalance, diversity and discrimination.
- Passion and energy in delivering services to children and families
- Resilient and able to work autonomously under pressure
- Completer finisher
- Able to learn from experience
- Decisive whilst recognising professional lines of governance and accountability
- Able to recognise personal experiences that influence professional perceptions
- Comfortable in applying authority implicit to the role which develops respectful relationships and protects children
- Positive, creative and solution focussed approach.

Miscellaneous:

- ICT literate

Desirable

Qualifications:

- Post qualifying Management and leadership training

Comprehensive experience of:

- Change management
- Management experience of teams
- Leading projects
- Service redesign

Expert knowledge of:

- Adult learning styles and principles
- Budget management



Competencies

Customer Focus	Puts the customer first and provides excellent service to both internal and external customers
Communication	Uses appropriate methods to express information in a clear and concise way to make sure people understand
Team Working	Works with others to achieve results and develop good working relationships
Making things happen	Takes responsibility for personal organisation and achieving results
Flexibility	Adapts to change and works effectively in a variety of situations
Learning and Development	Actively improves by developing and applying new skills and knowledge and learns from past experiences
Developing Teams and Individuals	Promotes and supports team and individual learning and development and uses delegation to create a sense of ownership of high level organisational issues, and encouraging individuals to stretch beyond their current capabilities
Managing Performance	Effectively manages the performance of teams and individuals to ensure results are achieved
Personal Impact	Is self-aware, learns continuously and adapts behaviour in response to feedback. Makes things happen, operates with resilience, flexibility and integrity
Making things happen	Empowers people to initiate change. Supports innovative ideas and new ways of working