



Practice Leader

£61,530

Group: Care, Wellbeing & Learning

Service: Children and Families Social Work

Location: Civic Centre

Line Manager: Deputy Strategic Director

Area of responsibility

To be a key member of the Children and Families Social Work management team and to lead on Social Work practice within the portfolio area(s) as delegated by the Service Director. The overall portfolio of services which will be shared between 34 full time equivalent Practice Leader posts includes:

- Assessment & Intervention teams
- The Integrated Referral Team (Duty)
- Edge of Care and Wrap around service
- Safeguarding and Care Planning teams
- Looked After Children teams
- Fostering Team
- Kinship Care Team
- Social Work Academy
- Children with Disabilities Team
- Service Improvement
- Grove House, Respite Care for Disabled Children
- Blaydon, Residential Children's Home
- Longside, Residential Children's Home
- Kites Rise, Residential Children's Home

Job Purpose

- Providing effective strategic leadership, planning and robust performance management and oversight for a range of statutory children's social care services (as required by the Service Director) whilst promoting a culture which values learning, reflection and acceptance of accountability.
- To lead and drive continuous service improvement, cultural change, learning and development within Children's Social Care. To develop, create, embody and communicate the service vision and manage change whilst ensuring that the professional requirements and quality of standards of social work practice are met.
- Being part of the out of hours senior management rota to give management oversight and advice on critical decisions, and make immediate safeguarding decision to the Council's out of hours service (Emergency Duty Team) on behalf of children and adult services.
- Champion the needs of vulnerable children and families.



The key roles of this post will include:

1. To strategically and operationally develop the designated portfolio areas to ensure the effective management and delivery of social work practice relevant to the specific service area to promote the Council's commitment to achieving excellent outcomes and engagement of children, young people and their families.
2. To implement legislative, statutory and regulatory requirements across the service and conduct regular quality assurance audits, performance management, benchmarking and the sharing of good practice to ensure safe and high standards of performance are consistently in place in anticipation of statutory regulatory inspections.
3. To ensure the effective performance management and quality assurance through the consistent application of thresholds, social work assessments, associated planning and child protection investigations to maintain the highest possible professional standards of social work within the Service, ensuring appropriate safeguards are instigated and legislative and statutory requirements are met.
4. To lead, develop and implement strategy, planning, performance and policies and review annual service and improvement plans that are based on achieving excellent outcomes for children and young people with reference to identified performance indicators and instil a strong sense of ownership and accountability of staff. to ensure the highest possible professional standards of social work within Children's Social Care
5. To lead in the designated portfolio area for strategy, planning, performance and policies, working in partnership with other statutory, voluntary and independent organisations in the borough to maintain and develop strong collaborative working practices ensuring that everyone is working towards a common goal and intended outcomes which safeguard and enhance the wellbeing of children and young people and result in better outcomes for children, young people and their families to enable them to fulfil their potential.
6. To provide effective and efficient leadership, direction, motivation and overall management of the service, managing employees within council's policies and procedures including effective supervision and appraisal and the identification of development programmes for frontline managers, workload management and strong collaborative working practices.
7. To effectively manage and monitor the dedicated budget to provide best value for money and the optimum possible level of service whilst operating within the terms of the Council's Constitution, Financial Regulations and Standing Orders and ensure effective spend against priorities and targets.
8. To promote equality of opportunity, learning and organisational development to create and maintain the skills and competences required to deliver an effective collaborative service.
9. To be accountable for the decision making within the service area and be responsible for the effectiveness and quality of social work.



10. To effectively manage risks within the designated portfolio area and where necessary identify and communicate to the Service Director and risks to the effective work, reputation or interests of the Council.
11. To respond effectively to service users' complaints and where appropriate act as adjudicating officer to ensure continuous improvement in the services.
12. To ensure that health and safety policies and procedures are understood, implemented and monitored to ensure that health and safety standards are met.
13. To deputise for the Service Director as and when required.
14. Such other responsibilities allocated which are appropriate to the grade of the post.

Essential and Desirable criteria

Knowledge:

Essential

- Exceptional knowledge of Social Work methodologies, theory and best practice.
- Working knowledge of relevant legislation and case law
- Knowledge of the national political and professional context.
- Knowledge of regulatory processes, inspections and expectations
- Risk assessment and risk management models
- Child protection system and thresholds and welfare systems
- Performance and improvement frameworks
- Financial management within large organisations
- IT systems including Microsoft office
- Management/Leadership qualification

Desirable:

- Change theory
- Personality profiling
- Adult learning theory
- Leadership styles and best practice
- Financial forecasting within large organisations

Qualifications:

Essential

- Professional qualification in social work to degree level or equivalent.
- Social Work England registered

Desirable

- Project management qualification

Experience of:

Essential:

- Leading and motivating front-line managers and teams.



- Managing risk and making sound decisions in complex and pressured situations
 - Developing and delivering on strategic visions and plans
 - Delivering within tight deadlines and targets
 - Writing and delivering reports to high profile forums
 - Significant post-qualifying experience in a broad range of social work settings.
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- Significant children's services management
 - Management and monitoring of budgets
 - Partnership working with other statutory and voluntary agencies
 - Human resource management and effective performance management
 - Chairing complex and challenging meetings.
 - Multi agency / partnership working with other statutory and voluntary agencies at a senior management level

Desirable:

- Delivering change programmes

Ability to:

- Analyse and evaluate complex information
- Deliver in set timescales
- Set and hold high standards of practice and accountability for Social Work and the work of the organisation.
- Design, transform and re-configure services and structures aligned to Political, financial, and user's needs.
- Develop processes that are fit for purpose and promote maximum efficiency for the organisation and practitioners
- Negotiate complex and challenging situations within the local and national political context.
- Communicate with authority, balance and compassion
- Develop and grow a culture where managed risk is accepted and understood, and Social Work is recognised and celebrated.
- Develop Retention and Recruitment processes that ensure talent is attracted and retained.
- Analyse, implement and evaluate professional development programmes for staff
- Think creatively, harness innovation and motivate.
- Demonstrate strong leadership that articulates vision, clarity of purpose, engages staff and drives change.
- Identify and address difficulties in individual, team, or service practice or performance.
- Form positive and constructive working relationships
- Engender trust and confidence in others
- Demonstrate trust in the workforce



Competencies

Customer Focus	Puts the customer first and provides excellent service to both internal and external customers
Communication	Uses appropriate methods to express information concisely 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