**Job Title Independent Reviewing Officer and Child Protection Conference Chair**

**Grade PO11**

**Job Description**

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| **Job Purpose** |
| To review plans for children and young people who are in need of protection, in the care of the Council or who are Care Leavers.  To provide effective independent oversight of children’s care.  To monitor the performance by the Local Authority of their functions in relation to children’s cases and where necessary to challenge poor practice. |
| **Major Tasks** |
| This post is a designated Child Protection Conference Chair & Independent Reviewing Officer responsible for delivering an element of the service.  Generic Officer tasks listed below as applied to this post:   * To support the Council’s visions and priorities both internally and externally * To assist the Team Manager in planning team and service objectives * To identify and highlight resource issues to the Team Manager * To assist the Team Manager in ensuring that team and service objectives are delivered in the most cost effective manner, minimising waste * To assist the Team Manager in ensuring that the team and service meets their objectives and targets within agreed timeframes * To deliver standards which achieve equality of opportunity   **Job specific tasks**  To assist in the strategic organisation and management of the Child Protection conference and Child in Care review process, in accordance with LSCB procedures, and statutory and local polices for children.  To manage and chair statutory Child in Care Reviews and Child Protection Conferences.  To occasionally manage and chair Foster Home Reviews where necessary in the absence of the Foster Care Reviewing Officer, adhering to foster home review procedure and fostering regulations.  To occasionally manage Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) processes regarding advice and consultation on allegations against people who work in paid employment or who are in voluntary work.    To ensure that Child Protection Plans provide the child with appropriate safeguarding, that they are achievable and are reviewed regularly.    To ensure that plans for Children in Care are based on a detailed and informed assessment, are up to date, effective and provide a real and genuine response to each child’s needs.  To monitor on an ongoing basis Children in Care cases which also includes monitoring the performance of the Council’s function as a corporate parent identifying any areas of poor practice whether on an individual case basis or establishing collective patterns of concerns.  To contribute to the development and application of QA approaches for Council safeguarding service and the LSCB.  To contribute to the team’s Annual Report.  To provide expert, professional advice and support on safeguarding matters as requested both within the Council and for other agencies |
| **Contacts & Relationships** |
| With Children in Care – daily - to gain their views, wishes and feelings. To ensure that children understand how an advocate could help and that they are entitled to one.  With children’s parents – daily - to enable families who maybe in crisis to engage in Child Protection Conferences.  Children’s Guardians – weekly – for those children subject to Care Proceedings and also those looked after by the Council.  Council children’s Safeguarding Social Workers and Team Managers daily - to give professional advice on complex cases or challenge poor practice of staff members as part of the QA function.  Team Manager – daily – to discuss children’s cases and give feedback re SW practice, give professional advice on complex cases.  Service Delivery Managers fortnightly to report on practice for individual cases or identified patterns and themes of good or poor practice, alert re potential referrals to CAFCASS. |
| **Creativity** |
| To identify and utilise the most appropriate methods to enable the effective participation and contribution of children and their families; to ensure their views are taken into account in individual care planning and service development.  To contribute to the development of policy and procedures relating to emerging areas of safeguarding practice or new guidance and legislation.  To assist in the development of Quality Assurance (QA) approaches to for council safeguarding services and on behalf of the LSCB across all agencies and lead individual QA initiatives.    To prepare complex reports involving creative thinking and in particular, on a daily basis ensure child protection conference and CIC review minutes and recommendations are clear and accurate and fit for purpose to meet the individual needs of the children. |
| **Decisions** |
| The post holder will make decisions with regard to:   * Daily; accountable for assessing whether a child’s Care Plan reflects the child’s current needs and that actions set out in the Care Plan are consistent with the Council’s legal responsibilities towards the child - recommending changes where appropriate. * Daily; chairing Child Protection Conferences - accountable for leading participants to make professional robust safeguarding decisions about whether a child needs a child protection plan. Child Protection Conference Chairs are responsible for identifying specific recommendations which safeguard the child and provide the outline of the statutory Child Protection Plan. * Weekly; using professional judgement to identify individual children’s cases, outside of the formal reviewing processes, which require ongoing monitoring by the CRO that the child protection planning process or care planning process is progressing in the best interest of the child. * Monthly; using professional judgement to identify those children’s cases that require the post holder’s direct independent intervention to address issues of poor practice by the Council or/and other and agencies. * Monthly; assist the Team Manager in making recommendations to the Council and partner agencies regarding appropriate action to address shortfalls in safeguarding procedures and care planning practice in individual cases and more generally. * Accountable for making referrals to CAFCASS in exceptional circumstances without reference to their Head of Service or Director of Children’s Services, where local dispute resolution procedures have not been successful in resolving concerns about service to or the care of a child. * Required to take decisions on complex and serious matters without reference to their manager on occasion. |
| **Management & Supervision** |
| The post holder is not responsible for line managing any staff, but provides mentoring and professional advice to social workers and other staff from a range of agencies. |
| **Supervision Received** |
| Monthly one to one meetings and occasional consultation with Team Manager as appropriate for reflection on the most complex cases; accessing advice in the course of a child protection conference or CIC review is not possible.  The post holder is expected to organise their own workload, without reference to the Team Manager. |
| **Complexity** |
| When chairing Child Protection Conferences use their professional judgement to manage a wide range of complex and sometimes conflicting contributions from a child’s family and professionals and convert this into a succinct summary and specific recommendations which may potentially be used in a court arena.  Accountability for managing conflict in sensitive and highly emotionally charged meetings which may include aggressive and challenging behaviour.  To intervene directly as appropriate with staff and managers within the Council and across partner agencies to challenge poor safeguarding practice.  Gaining knowledge and understanding in order to interpret complex legislative guidance, and assist the Team Manager to translate this into policy and procedures.  Balancing a workload with conflicting priorities.  Balancing strict deadlines and unpredictable demands beyond the post holders control; making decisions on re-prioritisation for self and others.  Lead or participate in multi-agency Working Groups to continuously develop child protection practice/protocols and policy.  Understand the importance of continuous improvement, knowing how to identify and assess current activities and make recommendations for improvements.  Excellent communication skills both verbally and in writing in order to convey messages and communicate with individual children, their families and a wide range of professionals at a range of levels of seniority.  Providing professional advice on complex cases making decisions and supporting staff working to manage risk in circumstances where there maybe conflict between professionals about the best way forward.  The post holder will be professionally responsible for decision making in a highly complex area and will need to make decisions in the most complex situations. |
| **Resources** |
| The post holder will have responsibility for processing personal sensitive information. |
| **Impact** |
| The post holder will have a key role in protecting and safeguarding children and young people in Telford & Wrekin, in providing independent oversight of the quality of practice in individual child protection and children in care cases. The role will have a significant impact on improving outcomes for children and young people – by chairing child protection conferences and CiC reviews and providing advice and consultation on allegations against people who work in paid employment or who are in voluntary work.  The role will also have an impact on the reputation of the Council and outcomes of statutory inspections |
| **Physical Demands** |
| The level of physical demands would be that expected of a typical desk based job, such as carrying laptop and/or files to meetings and setting up for meetings/training events. There may be the occasional demand for more than this. However, this would not be a typical or significant part of the job.  The post holder will be required to travel across the UK on occasion, depending on where children and young people in care are living. |
| **Working Environment** |
| In the main this post works in the environmental equivalent to working in an office in terms of heat, ventilation and lighting. There may be occasional exposure to conditions such as would be found outside; for example travelling for meetings and site visits. |
| **Emotional Context** |
| The post holder will regularly have contact with information that is distressing, including information of a child protection nature.  The post holder will regularly be required to complete complex tasks accurately and within tight timescales  The post holder will have regular contact with service users, who will often be distressed or angry  The post holder will need to manage the emotional strain arising for both the post holder and the service user in having to make decisions/recommendations concerning service users’ medium and long term future, i.e. being taken into care, being made subject to a child protection plan etc. |
| **Other** |
| The post holder will be expected carry out any other duties as are within the scope, spirit and purpose of the job, commensurate with the grade.  The post holder will be expected to actively follow Telford & Wrekin Council policies, including those such as Equal Opportunities, Human Resources, Information Security and Code of Conduct etc.  The post holder will be expected to maintain an awareness and observation of Fire and Health & Safety Regulations. |

**Person Specification**

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| **Criteria** | **Standard** |
| **Qualifications** | * Requirement to possess a post graduate qualification or equivalent professional qualification * Currently registered with HCPC |
| **Experience** | * Experience of managing or reviewing social care services for children in need of care or protection * Extensive experience of resolving conflict and problem solving * Extensive Experience of working on a multi-agency and multi-disciplinary basis * Experience of managing staff and supervision of complex child protection and children in care cases * Experience of Quality Assurance approaches to service improvement * Extensive experience of writing complex reports for a range of audiences |
| **Knowledge** | * Detailed knowledge of child protection practice and procedures * Knowledge of Adult and Public Protection procedures * Detailed knowledge of child abuse, its manifestations, causes and consequences * Detailed knowledge of child development * Detailed knowledge of care planning * Detailed knowledge of current legislation, guidance and regulations relating to children and families in general and safeguarding and children in care in particular * Working knowledge of anti-discriminatory practice and equal opportunities. * Comprehensive knowledge of assessment processes and risk management knowledge |
| **Skills** | * Ability to effectively chair and manage complex meetings and make appropriate decisions and recommendations without immediate access to advice. * Ability to communicate effectively with children and their families in circumstances which can be difficult and stressful for service users. * Ability to communicate effectively verbally and in writing with internal and external colleagues at all levels of seniority * Ability to apply high level analytical skills to monitor and audit children’s cases * Well-developed organisational skills * Information Technology skills * Ability to prepare complex reports * Ability to lead, participate and contribute to the Corporate Parenting philosophy and practice for children in care and leaving care * Ability to positively and constructively challenge poor practice with staff from a range of agencies at all levels of seniority * Ability to drive by holding a full driving licence (unless prevented by a medical condition) * Political sensitivity |
| **Personal style & behaviours** | * As a council employee you will be supported and expected to demonstrate the Councils Core Behaviours. Please note that these may be updated from time to time and are available on the Council’s intranet pages. * Behaves with integrity, treating people with respect and leading by example * Commitment to recognising and challenging anti-discriminatory and oppressive practices. * Commitment to personal and professional development * Creativity and flexibility * Promotes diversity and equality of opportunity for service users * Must demonstrate a commitment to Safeguarding and Corporate Parenting * Must have the ability to work flexibly, on occasions outside of normal working hours which may include evenings and weekends. |
| **Fluency Duty** | This post has been identified as a customer facing role and therefore the Council is required to fulfil their statutory duty under Part 7 of the Immigration Act 2016. As a public body the Council is obliged to ensure member of staff in such roles are able to have a command of spoken English which is sufficient to enable the effective performance of their role.  The post holder is required to be able to summarise, generate and comprehend complex written materials and to express such material verbally through discussion with other professionals from varying disciplines and with children and young people, parents and the general public. They will require the ability make legal and professional guidance around children in care and child protection procedures this understandable to a range of audiences, including those lacking any professional knowledge.’ |
| **Political Restrictions\*\*** |  |

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We will ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that no disabled applicant is placed at a substantial disadvantage. This person specification includes what we believe are fully justifiable essential and desirable selection criteria. Provided that the selection criteria unconnected with the disability are met, we will make ALL reasonable adjustments in order that someone with a disability can undertake the duties involved.

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| **Type of criminal records checks required for this post** | **Ticked as required** |
| None |  |
| Basic Disclosure |  |
| Standard Disclosure |  |
| Enhanced Disclosure |  |
| Working with Adults - Regulated Activity |  |
| Working with Children - Regulated Activity |  |

Information on types of criminal records checks is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/disclosure-barring-service-check>

*\*\* Political Restrictions*

This post is not subject to political restrictions.