Job Description

**Social Work Assistant**

**Grade Scale 6**

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| **Job Purpose** |
| To provide support to Children Safeguarding and Family Support services in the delivery of support working primarily with children and families. |
| **Major Tasks** |
| **Generic tasks listed below:**   * To complete direct work alongside families and young people, including, parenting support, supervising family time, completing direct wishes and feelings work with children and young people- under the supervision of the Team Manager. * To develop positive relationships with children, young people and their families/carers- advocating for them when required. * To support in the provision of support, advice and guidance to promote the best possible outcomes for children and their families. * To work within services which are planned and delivered in a way that maximises the participation of young people, respects their rights, and is responsive to their wishes and views. * Contribute to the assessment and management of risk, including strategies for reducing risk, distinguishing levels of risk for different situations, and the value of positive risk taking when this supports self-determination and autonomy, under the guidance of the team manager/practitioner. * Undertake preventative work with families in order to reduce the need for care or accommodation. * To inform the allocated practitioner/team manager of any concerns regarding the child/young person’s safety should they arise. * To support the allocated practitioner with administrative duties. * To enable the Councils vision and priorities to be delivered both internally and externally * To identify significant issues and solutions to the Team Leader * To work with Team Leader to translate policies into practice * To ensure the efficient and effective delivery of support services to children, young people and their families/carers. * To contribute to the provision of good quality services which integrate government and local initiatives and guidance including working within the legislative context of children’s statutory services. * To deliver standards which achieve equality of opportunity * To promote integration for children, young people and their families from protected characteristics groups including telephone and direct communication, signposting and providing advice and tuition. * To support the allocated practitioner with contributing to assessments and plans for children and young people, through effective recording in line with procedures. * To ensure close liaison with partner agencies and Local Authority staff is timely, clear and consistent with Safeguarding/Child Protection procedures. * To act on instruction of Social Workers or other appropriate staff to provide information and support to children, young people and their carers who are in receipt of support from the service. * To be able to identify vulnerability factors that impact on the child/young person and the family and communicate appropriately through line management. * To have a clear understanding and practical application of Safeguarding procedures |
| **Contacts & Relationships** |
| * Build and use effective relationships with a wide range of people, networks, communities and professionals to improve outcomes, showing an ability to understand and work effectively with negative or rejecting responses. * Use a range of methods to engage and communicate effectively with young people, children and their parents/carers, eliciting the needs, wishes and feelings of all those involved, taking account of situations where these are not explicitly expressed. * Share information consistently in ways that meet legal, ethical and agency requirements. * Work effectively as a member of a team, demonstrating the ability to develop and maintain appropriate professional and inter-professional relationships, managing challenge and conflict with support.t holder will have a direct working relationship with partner agencies including from education, health and the police. * To work alongside parents/carers in order to contribute to assessment processes, to deal with their enquiries and provide information * To work with other Local Authority services as appropriate including Adult services, in addition to liaise with external agencies including voluntary sector to ensure appropriate information sharing and co-ordination of services. * Have and awareness of adult and children safeguarding and seek advice and direction from the Team Manager/Senior Pracitioner should this arise- particularly in terms of mental ill health, trauma, abuse/neglect and domestic abuse. * Share information consistently in ways that meet legal, ethical and agency requirements. * Communicate effectively in highly charged, complex or challenging circumstance to a wide range of audiences. * Model effective engagement with a wide range of people in challenging situations, and support others to develop and maintain effective engagement, including in situations of hostility and risk. * Promote a culture which supports empathetic compassionate relationships with other professionals, families/children/young people we work alongside, and those who care for them. * Work effectively as a member of a team, demonstrating the ability to develop and maintain appropriate professional and inter-professional relationships, managing challenge and conflict with support. |
| **Creativity** |
| * Apply imagination, creativity and curiosity to practice, considering a range of options to solve dilemmas and problems * Use reflective practice techniques to evaluate and critically analyse information, gained from a variety of sources, to construct and test hypotheses and make explicit evidence-informed decisions. * The post holder will need to be creative in developing communication methods to work with children, young people and their families. The post holder will collate and present information on a diverse variety of subjects to support children, young people and their carers. * Have a good working knowledge of existing Policies and Procedures and their application and contribute to the ongoing development of these as required. * Provide direct to work to children, young people and their families and carers to reduce need, harm and risk * Work as part of a multi-disciplinary team to drive developments in practice. * Write effective and professional credible complex reports for internal and external use as required |
| **Decisions** |
| * Be supported to ensure that professional decision making is considered and evidence based. Some decisions will be taken autonomously by the postholder within established policy and practice guidelines. Majority of decisions will be made in discussions with Line Manager. The postholder will be required to make certain decisions in consultation with partner agencies, individuals and their carers. * Demonstrate clear communication of evidence-informed professional reasoning, judgements and decisions, to professional and non-professional audiences/stakeholders**.** * Decision-making will relate to a range of issues such as safeguarding concerns, identification of specific legislation to inform social work practice and risk management. Decisions will be be undertaken in consultation with Line Manager. * Ability to develop skills to use authority appropriately in professional practice. |
| **Management & Supervision** |
| The post holder will have no supervisory responsibility  They will be able to recognise personal development needs and discuss ways to address them with line manager. |
| **Supervision Received** |
| The post holder works on their own initiative and will be supervised by the Team Leader/senior practitioner. Organise and manage own workload including setting priorities for work and seeking specialist advice when required |
| **Complexity** |
| * Be supported to demonstrate effective practice in situations, assessing and managing levels of risk which promote the principles and standards of practice of Telford and Wrekin’s Children’s Services. * Developing skills to recognise complexity, multiple factors, changing circumstances and uncertainty in peoples lives and have the ability to prioritise interventions. * Developing an understanding of and appropriate response to risk factors in professional practice. * The post holder will need to work across several teams and agencies to ensure the children and families needs are met. The post holder will be required to coordinate a range of tasks and relationships where set procedures/ guidelines do not always apply. * Liasing with wider agencies to gather information to inform plans and support. |
| **Resources** |
| * The post holder will have responsibility for processing personal sensitive information. * Maintain accurate and timely recording on case management systems. * Ensure that Health and Safety requirements are adhered to and risk assessments are in place/ regularly updated when responding to children and young people who demonstrate a high degree of distress or anger which may affect self and others. * The post holder will be issued a mobile working kit, including mobile phone , laptop with access to Wi-Fi to allow them to work remotely. * The post holder is expected to be able to use this mobile kit within their day to day role in line with all aspects of recording, carer/ family and professional interventions. * The post holder will have access to training and development in line with Telford and Wrekin Learning and Development strategy. * The post holder will handle and process personally sensitive information, such as the personal details of people we work alongside. * Develop internal and external resources and networks to support front line practice. |
| **Impact** |
| * Working across children and family services to support our social work models of practice for the benefit of individuals, couples, families and carers to provide high quality social care practice. * Working with complex families who have experienced and may continue to experience abuse and neglect. * Working specifically with children that become looked after by the Local Authority; in line with all statutory legislative requirements. * Responsibility to support and challenge service delivery for looked after children as a Corporate Parent; * Responsibility within care planning processes for ensuring that resources invested for families promote the child’s best interests. Where this is not the case, ensuring that other avenues are pursued; * Support the responsibility of safeguarding children inline with its statutory duties. |
| **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 |
| **Working Environment** |
| The post holder will adhere to Telford and Wrekin Lone Working policy if visiting families their own homes.   * The post holder will be required to travel across the authority to work in multiple locations in order to support service delivery; * Visits to placements / homes of children, young people and families; * Commuting to out of area establishments for placement arrangements as necessary; * Attending appropriate meetings; * In the main, this post works in the environment equivalent to working in an office in terms of heat, ventilation and lighting utilising a hybrid approach. * The post holder will be required to work alone at majority of times unless a risk is posed which will require pairing up with a colleague. |
| **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 have to manage competing priorities and demands across the major responsibilities of the post. * The post holder will be working with vulnerable children, families and carers, they may be involved in stressful situations. * The post holder will often be exposed to children, young people, families, carers and staff who have experienced trauma and abuse and who are displaying emotional distress. * The post holder will be part of the decision making around risk and harm, including appropriate plans. * The post holder will regularly have contact with information that is distressing, including information in relation to safeguarding situations * 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 , staff and the family and carers in having to make decisions/recommendations concerning children/young people’s medium and long term future. |
| **Other** |
| The postholder will be expected carry out any other duties as are within the scope, spirit and purpose of the job, commensurate with the grade.  The postholder 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 postholder will be expected to maintain an awareness and observation of Fire and Health & Safety Regulations. |

**Person Specification**

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| **Criteria** | **Standard** |
| **Qualifications** | * NVQ4 or its equivalent in terms of relevant qualification(s) and experience in health/social care/child care * English qualification * IT qualification |
| **Experience** | * Relevant experience of working alongside children, young people their families and carer which can be transferable to the role. * Experience of completing direct work with families, children and their carers.   Experience of working with vulnerable groups and individuals within diverse ethnic communities, including the ability to work with those in pressured situations, and to work with high levels of risk and anxiety.  Ability/experience in providing consultation to those involved in the child/young person’s system of concern in a social care or youth justice context. |
| **Knowledge** | * Working knowledge of the statutory duties of Children’s services in terms of children in need, child protection and children who are cared for by the Local Authority.   Knowledge of the factors affecting the emotional wellbeing of children in need and looked after children, including issues of attachment, separation and loss, and ability to respond to these.   * Knowledge of the factors relating to abuse and neglect |
| **Skills** | High level oral and written communication skills including the ability to express complex concepts and information and communicate effectively with children, young people, their families, professionals and others.   * Ability to manage work load including timescales   High level inter-personal skills, including the ability to develop effective working relationships, promote good customer care, influence, and challenge, motivate and enable others.  Able to be compassionate and sensitive to the experiences of children, young people and their families.   * Plan, organise and prioritise a demanding workload, in order to maintain the delivery of multiple, competing short and long term objectives   Use information technology effectively, having necessary keyboard skills to use email and update computerised diaries and update and retrieve information from organisational record systems.  Ability and willingness to work independently with children and families and in a variety of settings such as family homes.  Ability to safely manage conflict and highly emotionally charged meetings. |
| **Personal style & behaviours** | * As a council employee you will be supported and expected to demonstrate the Council’s Core Behaviours. Please note that these may be updated from time to time and are available on the Council’s intranet pages.   Relates appropriately to vulnerable children and their families.  Has a partnership/holistic approach to problem solving.  A commitment to working alongside children and young people and their families/carers to effect change.  Develops good relationships with others by behaving with integrity, treating people with respect and leading by example.  Committed to promoting diversity, equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory practice.  Willing to work flexibly with some evening and weekend work.  Holder of current and valid driving licence, and day to day use of a car. |
| **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.  Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer clauses, and recognize implicit meaning.  Can express ideas fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions.  Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes.  Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organizational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices. |
| **Political Restrictions\*\*** | * This post is not subject to political restrictions. |

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 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 | Yes |
| 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>