Senior Practitioner

JE Code: JE0098

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| **Values – We are dedicated, respectful, collaborative, we are Milton Keynes Council** |
| **Service** | Children’s Services |
| **Reports to:** | Team Manager |
| **Job Family** | Care and Welfare |
| **Grade:** | I |
| **Political restricted** | N |
| **Date:** | May 2022 |

**Key Deliverables**

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| **1.** | Provide the knowledge, skills and experience of a senior social care professional to a Children’s Social Care team by taking responsibility for complex cases, mentoring of staff and the provision of expert support, advice and guidance. |
| **2.** | To deliver effective social work assessment, care planning and interventions in the most demanding, sensitive and complex cases to improve the safety, development and wellbeing of children/young people involved. |
| **3.** | To supervise the case work of social workers, social work assistants, students and childcare professionals receive appropriate supervision and direction. |
| **4.** | Complex and contentious case management issues are resolved so that positive and timely action can be taken to address risks and meet demands, in conjunction with Deputy/Team Manager. |
| **5.** | Lead responsibility for an area of children’s service development and contribute to partnership working across Children’s Services and partners, where appropriate. |
| **6.** | To assist the team/ deputy team manager in building a strong and cohesive team and to be on call for emergencies within their team or other teams in the service. |
| **7.** | Participate in quality audit of the team’s and other teams’ work, where relevant. To ensure the team are updated on current practice, development guidance, legislation and research. To develop and writes policy and procedures for the team/ service as requested. |
| **8.** | Assist in the allocation, prioritisation and planning of caseloads, in conjunction with Deputy/Team Managers across the service. |
| **9.** | Responsibility for chairing professionals and strategic meetings and acting on behalf of the Deputy/Team Manager as appropriate across the service.  |
| **10.** | Represent the Local Authority in some of the most complex public and private law proceedings which will involve oral evidence being given in Court, writing Court statements, care plans and complying with the directions as set out in Court Orders.  |

*Within reason these key deliverables may evolve to meet service need and it is expected that you will be flexible and adaptable in your delivery to meet both service and council wide needs*

**Essential Requirements (key skills & qualifications)**

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| **1.** | Social work qualification (DipSW, CQSW, Degree in Social Work or equivalent) and registered as a Social Worker with Social Work England. Post qualification award in subjects to child or family work.  |
| **2.** | Specialist knowledge of childcare issues, legislation and policy and research. |
| **3.** | Able to encourage and support colleagues by sharing own expertise openly. |
| **4.** | Ability to question, challenge, solve problems and complete tasks. |
| **5.** | Able to develop, implement and monitor robust care plans. |
| **6.** | Able to undertake assessments of the most complex situations and most difficult family dynamics. |
| **7.** | Demonstrable ability to take proactive action to resolve complex issues and problems in high-risk situations. |
| **8.** | Able to supervise and support of staff and evaluate their work practice. |
| **9.** | Evidence of ability to assist in the development of new policies and procedures to ensure best practice. |
| **10.** | Able to work flexibly and be on call for emergencies within their team or other teams in the service. |

Job Family

Care & Welfare

Grade I



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| **Colleagues Expectations*** Be professional at all times
* Work together for the good of the team, council and local people
* Promote a supportive culture
* Challenge assumptions
* Take ownership
* Be willing to change and do things differently
* Always work in a safe manner
 | **Managers expectations*** Be a role model by displaying positive behaviours at all times
* Make well-considered decisions
* Support, coach and communicate with my team
* Be accountable for my team’s performance
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Care and Welfare family jobs have as their primary responsibility, the vulnerable members of our community who depend upon the Council for direct advice, guidance and practical assistance. They may personally carry out caring related tasks, or manage those that do, but it is personal interactions with those in our care that are at the centre of these roles.

**Role Characteristics**

At this level roles are generally either senior practitioners or managers.

Senior practitioners will use their advanced theoretical understanding of their specialist field to make highly consequential decisions directly impacting the welfare of those in Council care but are unlikely to have formal management responsibilities.

Managers’ principle work focus is on the ongoing care and welfare of those in their charge and the management of a local workforce.

**The Knowledge and skills required**

The expertise that underpins job holders’ decisions and authoritative recommendations is grounded in either an advanced level of theoretical understanding of a very wide range of social work issues and/or associated disciplines, or an equivalent level of very lengthy practitioner level experience.

Roles may require specific qualifications in order to comply with the legislative and regulatory requirements of their job.

At this level Job holders will engage with others in assisting with physical tasks requiring some modest manual dexterity. Computer use is also a day-to-day feature of these roles.

**Thinking, Planning and Communication**

Job holders will regularly deal with highly charged, contentious situations and individuals whose behaviour ranges from merely challenging to aggressive and threatening. Job holders will have developed their essential communication skills through a combination of formal training and lengthy experience. Delivering the desired outcomes of interventions with families and individuals will depend upon effective advisory and persuasive skills in the context of exchanges with a range of audiences, some of whom will have inherent comprehension or language difficulties.

Whether resulting from their own case work or from issues escalated from other areas, the problems and situations dealt with will inevitably be complex, involving multiple information streams such as individual needs assessment, consideration of resource allocation and prioritisation of conflicting demands. Although still working on a day-to-day basis with groups and individuals, there will also be a need to take a longer view maybe up to a year ahead in some cases.

**Decision Making and Innovation**

Job holders have freedom to operate within more general policy guidelines rather than highly defined procedures. Indeed, they will be expected to use their initiative to translate corporate policy into effective operating protocols and deal with even major issues as they arise without recourse to managerial advice or direction.

**Areas of responsibility**

Job holders will not only implement important and far-reaching care programmes to the direct benefit of families and individuals, but they will also contribute to the development of corporate policies and procedures in their working sector.

Job holders will generally have formal management responsibility within their team or centre. Those at this level who do not have this responsibility will be social work professionals, whose specialist qualifications offset this slightly reduced demand.

Job holders will be expected to account for considerable amounts of money and/or make discretionary spending decisions from an agreed budget.

Job holders will create and maintain work records, both written and electronic. There will, in addition, be sole or shared responsibility for the safe use and basic maintenance of a range of equipment, premises and/or vehicles.

**Impacts and Demands**

The requirement for greater than normal physical effort is modest, although there will always be a need for limited standing, walking and the lifting/carrying of equipment and other items. Awareness of the actions of children, vulnerable adults and others will call for long periods of sensory attention. Job holders will also be required to have moderate periods of concentrated mental attention, for example when report writing or attending case meetings. Given the range of case work involved, job holders will also experience high level pressures of deadlines and conflicting demands.

Job holders are required to develop and maintain client relationships which may need them to exert greater than normal emotional resilience, with particularly challenging service users.

Working directly with vulnerable service users will result in some exposure to disagreeable, unpleasant or hazardous environmental working conditions. This may extend to dealing with odours, intimate care and bodily fluids, and will also see job holders exposed to unpleasant or even threatening people behaviour from time to time.