

Job Description

Management Grouping: Children's Services
Team: Family Support & Child Protection
Job Title: Social Worker

Purpose of this Job

To build positive, supportive, and respectful relationships with families in order to help support children in need of help or protection. Where possible, you will help support families to raise their children safely within their family network by supporting and augmenting their support network. Where this is not possible, alternate plans will need to be explored and implemented to help ensure children grow up in safe, nurturing, and happy homes that achieve long term permanence. This will require working in a supported practice environment that respectfully challenges and enables you to use your professional judgement, autonomy, experience, knowledge, and skills. These all form the key aspects of our Signs of Safety practice model which we use when working with children, families and the wider professional network.

You will have a proficient ability to communicate in English and be able to influence others in an effort to help coordinate services and supports in the best way possible to keep children as safe and well cared for as possible.

As a Social Worker in the Looked After Children Service you will have experience and understanding of permanence planning, Evidence of experience working with cases from proceedings through to adoption and other forms of permanence. In this role you will ensure that you are able to collaboratively engage and develop quality Life-story work with all Looked After Children so they have a good understanding of their family and their story both in care and before care.

There are two levels of Social Worker within Bexley Children's Services. The grades are awarded (by assessment) according to the ability and skills of the individual worker. The Grades are BEXLEYSW2 and BEXLEYSW3. It is, therefore, not the job content which greatly affects these grades but the grade that affects the job content. To a large extent work is allocated to grades according to the perceived needs of the client/community. Due to the clearly identified nature of a few cases they are not allocated to certain levels on a departmental policy basis i.e. those likely to affect the liberty of clients.

Within each grade there is also an increasing degree of "professional" autonomy granted to the worker but this does not apply in the work allocation/control areas.

Grade SW2

Social Workers who with supervision and advice are expected to manage a caseload which may include the more vulnerable clients or those with complex problems and may be expected to accept responsibility for action in relation to the liberty or safety of clients in emergency situations. They may be expected to concentrate on specific areas of work where such concentration arises primarily from organisational needs and to supervise trainees or staff other than Social Workers.

Grade SW3

Social Workers who with access to advice and within normal arrangements for professional accountability are expected to accept full responsibility for managing a caseload that will include the more vulnerable clients or those with particularly complex problems in situations where personal liberty or safety is at stake. Such officers are expected to contribute to the development of other Social Workers. They may be expected to concentrate on specific areas of work requiring more developed skills. They may be expected to contribute to the development of new forms of work or service.

You will have a proficient ability to communicate in English and be able to influence others in an effort to help coordinate services and supports in the best way possible to keep children as safe and well cared for as possible.

Main Duties and Responsibilities

- To have experience or a willingness to be trained in and use the Signs of Safety practice model we use when working with children and families.
- To work in a respectful and professional manner with children and families that is focused on achieving what is in the best interest of the child.
- Consistently use the Signs of Safety practice model when assessing risks or worries, what is working well, and exploring the next steps to improve the outcomes and safety of the children and young people we serve.
- To undertake regular visits to and work creatively with children and young people in order to develop a good rapport that allows you to obtain the child's wishes and feelings and to make sure these inform the work that you do.
- To work with children and families in a variety of diverse and complex contexts, such as mental ill health, disability, substance misuse, domestic abuse, sexual exploitation, radicalisation, poverty, discrimination, and immigration.
- To be able to apply relevant social work theories and research in a way that helps best understand the lived experiences of children and young people, such as child development, attachment theory, impact of childhood trauma, and the cycle of grooming and sexual abuse.
- To explore contingency plans that utilise the families support network as much as possible, even when exploring other caring arrangements for children.
- To recognise the importance of working within existing laws, statutory guidance, and local safeguarding policies and procedures that govern the work we do.
- To be responsible for and manage children's cases in the respective team or service area you are placed (ie: children looked after, referral and assessment, etc)
- To coordinate and implement plans that are based on updated assessments and address areas of unmet safety and welfare needs for children.
- To regularly review the progress and implementation of children's plans and update these based on new assessments or significant changes in the child or family's circumstances.
- To work in partnership with the family network and the wider professional network in order to provide the best level of support and care for the children and young people you are working with.
- To lead or chair meetings with involved family and professional members (ie: core groups)
- To make recommendations to the manager about the need to consider legal action when sufficient safety cannot be provided to a child in their current home.
- To keep contemporaneous case notes and regularly update records, reports, plans and assessments so that information and planning for the children you work with is the most relevant and current.
- To carry out and regularly update assessments of a child's needs that involve relevant family members and professionals in order to ensure these are holistic and can identify areas of strength and unmet need or concern.
- To undertake or cooperate with any child protection enquiries that are carried out in order to identify any risks or concerns for a child's safety or wellbeing.
- To work in a non-discriminatory way through recognising and appreciating the differences of others and raising ones awareness through new learning or networking opportunities with organisations that help raise awareness of such issues.

- To participate in regular supervision with your line manager to review case developments and critically reflect on the work being undertaken.
- To be receptive to hearing challenge that may arise from audits, supervision or feedback from families, professionals, or managers in order to reflect on one's practice and identify areas for improvement.
- Respectfully engages with children and families in a way that seeks their input and involvement in planning for children and young people, utilising their existing support networks and coordinating additional support where needed.
- To work within the Council's policies, procedures, values, and code of conduct at all times and to reflect these when carrying out professional responsibilities with members of the public.
- To follow and implement the decisions and directions given by managers or decision making panels.
- Where there are areas of professional or management disagreement, to utilise established escalation procedures in order for decisions to have further consideration and seek agreement on the best way forward.
- To help identify and to contribute to any areas of service improvement and delivery.
- Any other duties reasonably requested by the manager related to fulfilling the council's corporate parenting and safeguarding responsibilities to children and the smooth running of the support service provided by the team.

Learning and Development

- To regularly review and reflect on professional practice along with colleagues and your line manager to identify areas of further professional learning and development.
- To enrol and engage in regular training and learning opportunities, both internally and externally, in order to promote further professional development and practice.
- To identify and engage in opportunities to share professional practice and experience with other colleagues, students and professionals to promote an ongoing learning environment.

Professional Capability Framework (PCF) Expectations for Social Workers

In the social work role the person progresses to practice effectively, exercising higher quality judgements, in situations of increasing complexity, risk, uncertainty and challenge. Through growing understanding they expect and anticipate, but do not pre-judge, the issues that may develop. They have greater confidence and independence (whilst accessing support when needed), and use their initiative to broaden their repertoire of responses; they have expertise in one or more areas of practice, be familiar with local resource networks and be recognised by peers as a source of reliable knowledge and advice.

Person Specification

All applicants will be assessed against the following criteria of the Knowledge and Skills Statement for Child and Family Social Work using these performance indicators throughout the recruitment process.

E = Essential

D = Desirable A = Application

I = Interview

T = Test

Selection Criteria	Council Value	Level of Need	How Assessed
<p>Candidates should be able to demonstrate experience and capabilities in the following areas:</p> <p><u>Relationships and Effective Direct Work</u></p> <p>Experience working collaboratively, cooperatively, and respectfully with multi-agency partners and families, especially within diverse communities.</p> <p>Experience using creative means of engaging children and families according to their age, level of cognitive development, and their ability to communicate and understand (ie: words and pictures, games or activities, using interpreters).</p> <p><u>Communication</u></p> <p>Experience writing complex and sensitive reports, case notes, and court statements.</p> <p>Experience managing your own cases and workload in an organised manner.</p> <p>Have a proficient ability to speak, write, and read in English, with confidence and accuracy, whilst using the right kind of vocabulary appropriate to a given situation without a great deal of hesitation.</p> <p>Ability to listen to our children and families, understand their needs, and respond clearly even in complex situations.</p> <p><u>Child Development</u></p> <p>Experience working with children and families prior to obtaining a social work qualification (ie: nursery, school, family support worker)</p> <p>Knowledge of child development and what are typical age related physical, cognitive, social, emotional and behavioural expectations for children and young people and how health, environmental, or genetic factors can influence them.</p>	<p>Collaboration, Open & Accessible</p> <p>Collaboration, Open & Accessible</p> <p>Listen & Respond</p> <p>Leadership</p> <p>Listen & Respond,</p> <p>Listen & Respond</p> <p>Impact</p> <p>Listen & Respond, Impact</p>	<p>E</p> <p>E</p> <p>E</p> <p>E</p> <p>E</p> <p>E</p> <p>D</p> <p>E</p>	<p>AI</p> <p>AI</p> <p>AIT</p> <p>AIT</p> <p>AIT</p> <p>AIT</p> <p>AI</p> <p>AI</p>

Selection Criteria	Council Value	Level of Need	How Assessed
<p><u>Adult Mental Ill Health, Substance Misuse Domestic Abuse, Physical Ill Health & Disability</u></p>			
<p>Experience working with and understanding the impact of adult mental ill health, substance misuse, domestic abuse and physical ill health or disability can impact a parent's capacity to care for their child.</p>	Listen & Respond, Impact, Open & Accessible	E	AIT
<p>Ability to help identify support from professionals and within the family network that help parents facing these issues, and for young carers helping to support them.</p>	Listen & Respond, Collaboration, Impact	E	AIT
<p><u>Abuse and Neglect of Children</u></p>			
<p>Experience working in a statutory child protection role (ie: child in need child protection, children with disabilities, children looked after).</p>	Innovation, Leadership, Impact	E	AI
<p>Experience working with and supporting children and young people who have experienced physical, sexual, emotional abuse and neglect.</p>	Innovation, Leadership, Impact	E	AIT
<p><u>Child and Family Assessment</u></p>			
<p>Experience undertaking holistic assessments of children and their families using the assessment framework (triangle) for children in need.</p>	Innovation, Collaboration	E	AIT
<p>Experience carrying out human rights assessments, especially when working with families who have no settled immigration status or are seeking asylum.</p>	Innovation, Impact	D	I
<p>Experience undertaking assessments of significant risk factors that are posed to children or yourself, and developing safety plans to reduce those risks.</p>	Innovation, Leadership, Impact	E	I
<p><u>Analysis, Decision Making, Planning & Review</u></p>			
<p>Experience with formulating a professional analysis from holistic assessments and making clear plans with involved family members and professionals to help improve the safety and wellbeing of children.</p>	Leadership, Collaboration, Listen & Respond	E	AIT
<p>Experience using a Signs of Safety approach to using a strengths bases analysis that takes account of both strengths, signs of safety, and areas of risk and concern for children.</p>	Listen & Respond, Open & Accessible	D	AI
<p>Experience using a solution focused approach to making plans that are clear to children and</p>	Open & Accessible, Impact	D	I

Selection Criteria	Council Value	Level of Need	How Assessed
<p>families and focus on a positive outcome for the child and not just the absence of the problem.</p>			
<p><u>The Law & the Family & Youth Justice Systems</u></p>			
<p>Working knowledge of the Children Act 1989, Working Together and related statutory guidance governing child protection procedures.</p>	Leadership, Impact	E	AIT
<p>Takes initiative to research and explore relevant local policies or guidance related to working with children and families in a variety of contexts (ie: female genital mutilation, child sexual exploitation, unaccompanied minors and asylum seeking children).</p>	Innovation, Leadership, Impact	E	I
<p>Experience attending and testifying in court proceedings seeking legal orders to safeguard children.</p>	Leadership, Impact	D	AI
<p>Understand the importance of keeping information confidential, securely stored, used and communicated in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.</p>	Leadership, Impact	E	AI
<p><u>The Role of Supervision</u></p>			
<p>Experience of being jointly responsible, with the line manager, for participating in and arranging regular supervision to update on case work, review progress on children's plans, agree decisions, and critically reflect on practice.</p>	Leadership, Listen & Respond, Impact	E	I
<p>Demonstrates the ability to be jointly responsible, with the line manager, for recognising learning development needs and identifying training or learning opportunities to enhance professional knowledge and skills.</p>	Leadership, Open & Accessible, Impact	E	I
<p><u>Organisational Context</u></p>			
<p>Possess a relevant social work qualification (ie: DipSW or CQSW or degree in social work).</p>	Leadership	E	AI
<p>Are registered with the professional regulator for social work (Social Work England).</p>	Leadership	E	AI
<p>Have a good understanding of and ability to use IT systems, such as case recording systems (ie: Liquid Logic), word processing (ie: Microsoft Word), Email and Calendars (ie: Microsoft Outlook), Internet search engines (ie: Google or Bing), computers, mobile phones, and secure remote working systems (ie: Wifi, Citrix or Cisco VPN systems).</p>	Innovation, Impact	E	AIT

This position is exempt from the main provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. This means the Act permits the disclosure of any “spent” or “unspent” convictions, cautions or reprimands that are not “protected” as defined under the Exceptions Order 1975 (2013). This is due to this position is working with vulnerable children and adults and is thus deemed a “regulated activity” as defined by the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012. This means checks will also be made against barring lists related to working with vulnerable children and adults.

We recognise the contribution that ex-offenders can make as employees and volunteers and welcome applications from them. A person’s criminal record will not, in itself, prohibit that person from being appointed to this post. Any information given will be treated in the strictest confidence. Suitable applicants will not be refused posts because of offences which are not relevant to, and do not place them at or make them a risk in, the role for which they are applying.

All cases will be examined on an individual basis and will take the following into consideration:

- Whether the conviction is relevant to the position applied for.
- The seriousness of any offence revealed.
- The age of the applicant at the time of the offence(s).
- The length of time since the offence(s) occurred.
- Whether the applicant has a pattern of offending behaviour.
- The circumstances surrounding the offence(s), and the explanation(s) offered by the person concerned.
- Whether the applicant's circumstances have changed since the offending behaviour.

We will not undertake a DBS check unless an offer of employment is made. It is important that applicants understand that failure to disclose any convictions, cautions, reprimands or final warnings that are not “protected” could result in withdrawing an employment offer, or later disciplinary proceedings or dismissal. For further information on which disclosures are considered “protected” and thus may be “filtered” from a disclosure, please visit

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-filtering-guidance/dbs-filtering-guide>