

Job Title: Participation Mentor

Grade: Bexley05

Management Group: Children's Social Care

Department: Transitions and Leaving Care & Participation Service

Reports to: Participation Leader, or in their absence, Service Manager for the Transitions and Leaving Care Service.

Main purpose of the job:

The Participation Mentor will support the Participation Leader to deliver a monthly programme of participation activity that supports the learning and personal development priorities for children in our care and young people leaving our care. This will include contributing to planning, organising and sessional support that are delivered by the service (Monday Club, PJS programme, Conversation Club), or in collaboration with partner services (Cafcass Youth Justice Board, Youth Council, London CiCC, and other local and national CiCC events led by agencies including Coram, NYAS and Barnardos). The Participation Mentor will record outcomes from sessions in a range of ways including minutes, debrief notes, attendance registers, child voice and photos and video to inform sharing and reporting.

The Participation Mentor will support the Participation Leader with delivering a wide programme of training and outreach to a range of audiences, to help them understand what it means to 'Walk a mile in my shoes', and to bring the 5 Good for Me priorities from the Bexley strategy for children in our care and young adults in our care to life through Skills to Foster, Children's Services Induction, Total Respect, Train the trainer and other training and corporate parenting events as required. This will include a special focus on 'Becoming a child in our care' and helping children and young people to have a softened landing when they come into care.

The Participation Mentor will work directly with children in our care and young people leaving care, using a relational approach to safeguarding, and supporting them with understanding what it means to be in care and how to make sense of their experiences as they prepare for independence. Direct work will be recorded in reports or case notes, and may take place in a range of settings including homes, schools and colleges depending on the needs of the service. The Participation Mentor will be skilled in providing learning support to children and young people as part of this work and will promote their active participation in their reviews, and access to support such as Independent Visiting and Advocacy.

The Participation Mentor will help the service retain and develop the identity of the children in our care councils; Positive Journeys and Positive Journeys Seniors which are a positive environment within which all children in care can be supported to engage, be given a voice in how services are delivered and know that their feedback is heard and valued. They will also support the training and development of the Young Director and Young Leaders, as required by the Participation Leader. The Participation Mentor will actively and strategically promote the views and feedback of children in our care and young people in our care, at meetings, briefings and events.

Major Duties and Responsibilities:

Working with and reporting to the Participation Leader, the Participation Mentor will:

Provide sessional practical support for a range of learning and participation activities, which require a contribution to planning, recruitment of participants, preparation and set up, responsibility for supervision of children and young people, and direct work, management of activity in line with appropriate policies and risk assessment plans, and participation in debrief and playing an active role in record keeping (minutes, registers, reports etc).

Deliver direct work with children and young people, using a range of direct work tools and strategies to promote their learning outcomes, participation and preparation for independence. This can be through 1:1 activity, small or large groups, formal learning settings, participation events or informal outreach and visiting. This work will support and promote children and young people's participation in statutory plans and reviews and help them develop a good understanding of how to express their wishes and views on a range of issues, including family time.

Assist and support service leaders with planning, preparation and administration of planned activity, for individual children and young people and planned group activity. This will include:

- Preparation of resources, including shopping and making orders for the service when required
- Attending a range of team meetings, planning meetings and supervisions, taking minutes when required and updating records such as trackers or registers.
- Contributing to risk assessment and trip or activity planning documents, and understanding the procedures for this, and maintaining the training required to contribute to effective planning and delivery (e.g. Evolve, H&S, First Aid, Food Hygiene)
- Understanding the components of a good record keeping including case note recordings, and being able to write individual reports or case note recordings to be filed for individual children and young people
- Be able to use a range of IT skills and systems to manage the communication and tasks associated with the role.

The Participation Mentor will:

- Draw on a range of communication skills, written, verbal, social media in to respond to enquiries and to develop a professional working relationship where good communication is used with intention to promote positive outcomes.
- Demonstrate excellent customer service skills that complies with the organisation's procedures, and communicating with appropriate empathy when this is needed.
- Comply with all aspects of safeguarding, confidentially and statutory processes informing our work with children in care
- Support the learning and development programme of the service, participating and also sharing knowledge and feedback of the client group.
- Own and evaluate tasks; participating in team meetings and training days. Trainees will be encouraged to make suggestions to improve the current ways of working within the team.
- Be self-motivated, plan and organise their workload and meet appointments and timetable commitments on time. The individual must be able to work on their own and within the team and be able to demonstrate initiative and meet deadlines in the workplace and for training on time and to raise concerns about deadlines in advance.
- Provide general information and advice regarding the services provided by the team, and to promote key service priorities in all aspects of our work.
- Represent the service and London Borough of Bexley at formal board meetings, professional sector events, pan London forums and networking meetings as required.

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- To present timely and relevant advice and information to the Participation Leader, Virtual School Head or in their absence, to other Children's Social Care Managers and ensure any major or sensitive issues are immediately reported/escalated to the management team.
 - To deal promptly with all matters requiring the post holder's personal attention.
 - To be fully conversant with relevant statutory provisions and the Council's constitution, processes and procedures; to develop the full range of managerial and professional skills and knowledge to satisfy the requirements of the post.
 - Through personal example, commitment and clear action to value diversity in the service and ensure that this is maintained within the groups and at all times in service delivery.
 - To adapt to changing priorities effectively.
 - To be a supportive and collaborative team player internally and externally.
 - To prepare for and attend supervision and appraisals as required.
 - To undertake any other duties from time to time as required and commensurate with the grade of the post.

Person Specification

Management Group: Children's Social Care

Department/Section: Virtual School & Participation Service

Job Title: Participation Mentor

Selection Criteria	Essential/ Desirable (E/D)	Method of Assessment (see key)
(a) Education and formal training		
A relevant Level 4 or higher qualification in an area related to Children & Families/Social Care or Education.	E	A
Level 2 qualifications in Maths and English (or equivalent, or working at in both areas)	E	A
Evidence of mandatory social care training such as safeguarding, Prevent, Modern Day Slavery and its application in practice etc. Also specialist training specific to the role offered through social care and external organisations when required	E	A
(b) Relevant technical experience, knowledge & skills/abilities		
Demonstrate good knowledge of children and young people's learning and development, and the specific needs of children in care and care leavers and how to develop and maintain strong, relationships-based practice.	E	A/I
A secure understanding of the care system, and statutory provisions for children looked after and care leavers including the specific role for Participation.	E	A/I
Demonstrate a professional, flexible and proactive approach to work with good working knowledge of organisational procedures and legislation, including Working Together to Safeguard Children.	E	A/I

Experience of using ICT packages to input and manipulate data, which must include Word, Outlook, Excel.	E	A/I
Work experience relating to children and families in a education, health and/or social care setting.	E	A/I
Good written and verbal communication skills. Ability to pay attention to detail.	E	A/I
Ability to maintain confidentiality, professionalism and sensitivity in all circumstances and demonstrate an acceptable level of customer service and empathy at all times.	E	A/I
English Language Requirements for Public Sector Workers. Include these criteria where it is an intrinsic and regular part of the role to speak to members of the general public either face-to-face or over the telephone:	E	A/I
• Ability to speak with confidence and accuracy, using accurate sentence structures and vocabulary. • Ability to choose the right kind of vocabulary for the situation in hand without a great deal of hesitation. • Ability to listen to customers and understand their needs. • Ability to tailor your approach to each conversation appropriate to the customer, responding clearly even in complex situations.		

KEY:

I = Interview, A = Application Form, AT = Ability Test, PQ = Personality Questionnaire,

P = Presentation, PE = Practical Exercise, DBS = Disclosure & Barring Service, DL = Driving Licence

Applicants will be assessed against these criteria and the following high-performance indicators throughout the recruitment process.

High Performance Indicators

Values	Behaviours for staff	Behaviours for managers
Innovation	I respond flexibly and adapt to changing demands	I routinely look for innovative and cost-effective ways to improve performance and customer service
	I am prepared to take managed risks to achieve better outcomes	I champion change and deal successfully with ambiguity, enabling people to see positive and exciting possibilities for the future
	I ask 'What if...?' to develop fresh thinking and innovative approaches to generate and implement solutions to improve performance and challenge the status quo	I take calculated risks based on available evidence and my professional judgement to learn and try new things
Leadership	I demonstrate a clear sense of purpose and direction, in line with organisational objectives	I take responsibility for my service and for making things happen to make a difference to my service users
	I am willing to take difficult decisions	I create an environment where staff can thrive and show I value and trust staff, give praise and recognise good work
	My personal actions promote a positive image of Bexley	I inspire, lead and encourage staff to move forward
Collaboration	I show respect for others and value contributions from internal and external partners and customers	I encourage the feeling that the team is a collective unit with shared goals
	I recognise the right solution, regardless of who initiated it	I engage with service partners and other areas of the Bexley organisation to understand the demands on others and seek solutions as One Council
	I seek out and work with partners who can help me achieve the outcomes and objectives I need to deliver	I network internally and externally

Listening and Responding	I acknowledge other people's viewpoints and work with them to find a win-win solution	I seek regular service user feedback and review customer data to shape service improvements
	I prepare and present information anticipating questions and problems	I ask staff for ideas on how to improve our service and how I can improve as a manager, listen to them and act on them
	I adapt my style to the audience and their needs, using the most appropriate communication channels	I empower staff to make decisions and changes to improve value for money, customer service and productivity
Open and Accessible	I see issues from the customer / user perspective	I am accessible to my service users, customers, staff and Members
	I monitor customer feedback and level of satisfaction with the service they receive, and use this to improve and pre-empt customer needs	I communicate and share a clear vision for the bigger picture as well as specific service areas
	I seek to build and maintain positive relationships with customers and partners	I outline what is expected of individuals and their contribution to the whole, and am consistent in my expectations
Impact	I prioritise my activities and resources to focus on those which have the most impact for residents	I design services that provide value for money and deliver our outcomes, informed by evidence
	I take responsibility for making things happen and achieving my objectives	I produce, prioritise and adapt plans to meet changing requirements
	I make decisions and clear recommendations based on my professional opinion and experience, informed by a range of information and evidence	I set interim goals to achieve notable wins on the way to larger objectives
		I deal with poor performance
