

Job Description

Senior Practitioner - Fostering Recruitment & Assessment Team

Fostering & Adoption Service

Directorate:	Children & Young People
Grade:	HC9
Location:	Plough Lane, Hereford
Responsible to:	Team Manager for Fostering Recruitment and Assessment Team

Main purpose of the role:

- To recruit, assess, train and support a range of mainstream Foster Carers, Supported Lodgings Providers and Overnight Short Breaks Carers to provide homes for children in care or requiring short breaks.
- To carry out all statutory responsibilities in relation to related regulations and statutory guidance as required by the Children Act 1989 and 2004, The Care Standards Act 2000, Adoption & Children Act (2002, 2006) Leaving Care Act 2000 and Children and Families Act 2014, The Care Planning Placement and Case Review Regulations (2010) and Special Guardianship Regulations (2005, 2016).
- To ensure that the Fostering National Minimum Standards 2011, Fostering Service Regulations (2002, 2011, 2013), schedules, formal notifications to Ofsted are adhered to in respect of the provision of Fostering Services.
- Work in partnership with a range of services; Legal, Safe connections, Safeguarding, Children in Care team, Adoption, CAMHS, LAC Nurse, Home finding, Education Services, Youth Offending, NHS, Housing, Benefits agency, Leisure and fun, Police, LADO, Fostering Panel, IRM etc. to ensure that the placement needs and outcomes of children placed within fostering arrangements are met.
- Support with supervisory tasks for students/Newly Qualified Social Workers, and non-social work roles within the team, providing mentoring and support to other less experienced workers and supporting the development of the team.

Key Duties and Responsibilities	Frequency of Task
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing an effective and high quality social work service within the Recruitment and Assessment Team. To work in partnership with managers, colleagues and key professionals to ensure that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Children and young people in need of protection and statutory intervention can safely have their needs met when in foster care. - That carers protect children and young people who are in need of protection from abuse, neglect, exploitation and/or significant harm and they are kept safe. - That foster carers, SLP placements and carers of children and young people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily



<p>placed in alternative arrangements provide sustained and improved outcomes for the children and young people, where there is a plan for rehabilitation home with their families or carers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To also build positive, supportive, and respectful relationships with families, foster carers and others in order to help support children in need of help or protection. - To provide an effective and high quality social work service foster carers and to offer advice, support, consultation and training on fostering to improve outcomes for children and young person. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To complete comprehensive Form F assessments considering the suitability of prospective foster carers, Overnight Short Breaks Carers, Supported Lodging Providers and carers transferring from other agencies. • As a Senior Practitioner you will be expected to hold more complex cases and support other colleagues as needed in their work, for example by completing second opinion visits. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To devise, coordinate and implement plans that are based on the assessments or any further updated assessments and address areas of unmet safety and welfare needs for children. • To effectively assess and manage risk and ensure that safer care plans, risk assessments are in place. To prepare and present written and verbal reports on foster carers and children where appropriate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To work in partnership with prospective carers, current carers and the wider professional network in order to provide the best level of support and care for the children and young people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 attend strategy meetings, planning meetings and undertake complaints and allegation investigations (where necessary). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide information to respond to complaints and representations and where appropriate to attend specific meetings eg. Mediation, complaints interviews, formal attendance to IRM panels. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To undertake necessary activities and tasks to ensure compliance with fostering and other relevant legislation and regulations. Attending meetings regarding foster carers or children in care as appropriate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To maintain an up to date knowledge of best practice issues and developments in fostering and for children and young people in care. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To accurately record and keep up-to-date information using the appropriate IT and Information systems in accordance with the Council's Policy and Procedures so that information and planning for the children, families and carers you work with are the most relevant and current. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To present cases to Fostering Panel and also to attend the IRM (Independent Review Mechanism) if needed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Daily
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To support the Fostering Duty system, identifying suitable homes for children with our foster carers, and undertaking other tasks required through duty, such as Requests for Information. Duty is on a rota basis. As a Senior Practitioner you will be expected to be responsible for organising the duty rota, ensuring there is cover. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Daily
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To undertake visits to and work creatively with children and young people in order to develop a good rapport that allows you to obtain their wishes and feelings and coordinating additional support where needed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Daily
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To promote close and constructive relationships with children, young people, their carers and their families, and partner agencies. To promote standards which achieve equality of opportunity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Daily
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Daily
<p>As a Social Worker in the Fostering Recruitment and Assessment Team you will support the Team's recruitment activities across Herefordshire.</p> <p>You will need:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To lead on the recruitment of foster carers throughout the County. To actively participate and support colleagues in the foster carers' recruitment activities and campaigns within the community. To support foster carers, children and young people, or care experienced adults care to participate in recruitment campaigns and departmental initiatives. To actively support with arranging and organising recruitment events around the county and to recruit different types of foster carers and Supported Lodgings Providers. This will include occasional work at evenings and weekends. To complete data gathering for foster carer recruitment. Contribute to innovative and creative ideas for recruitment of foster carers. To respond to and record initial enquiries (telephone, Facebook, website) from the public in relation to becoming a foster carer. To visit prospective foster carers. To undertake initial interviews with prospective foster carers as required, providing verbal and written information and making professional and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Daily



<p>informed judgments on the suitability of applicants to be approved as foster carers in accordance to standards and safeguarding practice.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To undertake Fostering Form F assessments at stage 1 and stage 2. • 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 in assessments. Understanding of therapeutic parenting and parenting with PACE. • Undertake marketing, social media and website updates, presenting Herefordshire, Fostering service unique selling points and best offers for foster carers • To directly contribute to the development and production of service information to foster carers eg. Foster carers Newsletter, Website, Publicity material to promote fostering information packs etc. <p>As a Senior Practitioner you will be expected to lead on some of the more targeted campaigns, such as recruiting Overnight Short Breaks carers.</p>	
<p>Training and Support activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To undertake tasks relating to the training of foster carers. • As a Senior Practitioner you will be expected to regularly lead with planning and delivery of the Skills to Foster Training for prospective foster carers. • To directly participate in the planning and delivery of training to prospective and approved foster carers a planned rota basis – this may include evenings and weekends as required. • To contribute to and participate in the planning and delivery of support groups for carers. • To facilitate and deliver monthly fostering information events which provide prospective foster carers with further information about the fostering process for Herefordshire. These may take place on evenings and weekends. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly
<p>As a Senior Practitioner you will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake specialist roles within the team or area as required. • Be expected to maintain continual professional development in social work practice whilst modelling this to other members of staff and promoting a strong learning culture. • Help identify and contribute to any areas of service improvement and delivery. • Be responsible for role modelling best practice and mentoring other colleagues as needed. Supporting team members to further their professional knowledge and development to improve the overall quality of practice. • Liaise regularly with peer colleagues throughout the Directorate to ensure social work staff deliver existing and new practices consistently and to a high standard across the Directorate. • Contribute to the professional development of team members, by undertaking particular responsibilities with regard to less experienced staff, by co-working 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily



<p>cases to support development, supporting chairing of meetings, attendance at court/ IRM if needed, and supporting with some quality assurance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Act as the practice educator or workplace supervisor for students on placements/ Newly Qualified Social Workers, supporting their study and opportunities for them to develop their practice in a safe and supported environment. If you have not already completed the Practice Educator Stage 1 or Stage 2, you will need to commit to doing this whilst in this role. • Supervise some non-social work staff within the team. • Use professional skills and experience to provide case reflection and practice management to team members to ensure compliance with national and departmental policies, procedures and quality standards. • Contribute to the induction of all new staff in consultation with managers and the workforce support officer. • To assist the team manager in identifying issues of performance with staff in line with corporate policy and procedures. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • Have knowledge of existing fostering policies and procedures and their application, and ensure personal adherence to these. • Keep up to date with service specific legislation, guidance, good practice and other developments within social work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some tasks and responsibilities are, in many circumstances, unpredictable and varied. All staff, therefore, are expected to work in a flexible way when the occasion arises where tasks are not specifically covered in the Job Description have to be undertaken. Any other duties will be dependent upon the post holder's areas of expertise, knowledge and skills and with regard to the level of responsibility afforded to the post. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As required

Person Specification

Requirements	Essential or Desirable	Identified by A – Application I – Interview
Qualifications and Training		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Work Degree, DipSW, CQSW, CSS or equivalent. 	Essential	A, I
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SWE registration. 	Essential	A, I

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of continual professional development e.g. Post Qualifying Award or portfolio of CPD evidence. 	Essential	A, I
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practice Educator Stage 1 	Desirable	A, I
Experience & Knowledge		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experience of working with children, young people, and foster carers. 	Essential	A, I
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experience working collaboratively, cooperatively, and respectfully with multi-agency partners, colleagues and families, especially within diverse communities. 	Essential	A, I
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Substantial knowledge and experience of undertaking fostering assessments. Experience of completing high quality assessments. 	Essential	A, I
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge and experience of undertaking holistic assessments of children and their families using the assessment framework (triangle) for children in need. 	Essential	A, I
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experience of delivering training, mentoring and supervising others. Experience of providing consultation, mentoring and developing qualified staff. Experience of taking a lead on an area of practice. 	Essential	A, I
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge and experience with formulating a professional analysis from holistic assessments. Making clear and solution focused plans with involved family members and key professionals to help improve the safety, outcomes and wellbeing of children. 	Essential	A, I
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge and experience in working within the court environment. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working knowledge and understanding of The Children Act 1989, Fostering relevant legislations, schedules, regulations, The Fostering National Minimum standards and its context. 	Essential	A, I
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working knowledge of Fostering, Special Guardianship and understanding of other relevant legislation, guidance, policy and procedures relating to children in care and Children Services. 	Essential	A, I

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working knowledge of policies and procedures in relation to the care and protection of children, kinship care and fostering. 	Essential	A, I
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge and understanding the importance of keeping information confidential, securely stored, used and communicated in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and GDPR. 	Essential	A, I
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge, understanding and compliance with the Local authority's equality and diversity policy. 	Essential	A, I
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To actively promote equality of opportunity and an anti-discriminatory service. 	Essential	A, I
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The post is subject to an enhanced DBS check. 	Essential	A, I
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to travel as required in given region. 	Essential	A, I
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Current full driving license. 	Essential	A, I
Skills and Abilities		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Excellent oral and written communication skills i.e. ability to express complex concepts and information. Ability to communicate effectively. 	Essential	A, I
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to function at a high level of autonomy including representation of the service as required. Ability to organise and prioritise a complex workload and managing conflicting demands and timescales. 	Essential	A, I
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to assess effectively the development needs of social work staff. Support the development of appropriate training. Act as a mentor and demonstrate teaching skills. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Excellent assessment and report writing skills and developing package of support. 	Essential	A, I
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to use IT systems effectively, ensure regulatory standards are met and performance standards maintained. 	Essential	A, I

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding of child care and Fostering legislation and procedures. 	Essential	A, I
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to plan, organise and prioritise a demanding workload. 	Essential	A, I
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be able to respond positively and effectively to children and their families, promoting 'working in partnership' at all times. 	Essential	A, I
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to work in partnership with other professionals/agencies. 	Essential	A, I
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To respond positively to training and development opportunities. 	Essential	A, I
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To work in accordance with the Council's Values and behaviours. 	Essential	A, I



All council staff have a duty to promote the welfare of children, young people, and adults with care and support needs at risk of abuse and neglect who cannot take steps to protect themselves. Ensuring you attend mandated safeguarding children and safeguarding adults training to enable you to recognise the concerning behavior, know how to talk about it, and consent/duty to share information effectively. You will also learn about the legalities and procedures the social care staff can take.

Our Values and Behaviours

The council's THRIVE core values are our guiding principles and beliefs that shape our culture and behaviour within the council. They **help us to achieve our Council Plan vision "do our best for Herefordshire" acting as our DNA and the "way that we do things around here"**. **We expect all colleagues to act as a role model by living our values and setting an example for others.** Our values strive to promote a thriving workforce by fostering a culture of trust, being honest and responsible, inclusive, valuing people and resources and leading with empathy.

Trust - Developing and maintaining relationships based on a culture of transparency and open communication. Supported by integrity and the confidence that you are reliable and fulfil commitments.

Honesty - Demonstrating truthfulness, integrity, and transparency in all communications, decisions, and relationships. Being trustworthy, reliable, and accountable for your actions. Acting with sincerity and fairness, even in challenging situations.

Responsibility - Taking ownership of individual and collective actions, decisions, and delivering on commitments. Being reliable, fulfilling obligations and being accountable for outcomes and results. Proactively contributing to the achievement of your own, the team and council goals.

Inclusivity - Embracing diversity, equity and inclusion by recognising and valuing the unique perspectives, backgrounds and experiences of our staff, customers and residents. Creating an environment where every individual is valued, respected and can belong.

Value - Upholding high standards, ethics and integrity to guide our actions and decisions. Demonstrating commitment to creating and delivering value in our work by recognising and appreciating each other, our resources, processes, customers, community and environment.

Empathy - Demonstrating a genuine and caring understanding of others' feelings, perspectives, and experiences. Listening attentively, acting with compassion, supporting with respect and kindness and considering the impact of our actions on others.

