

Job Description

Lead Child Protection Practitioner

Role Structure	Role Details
Directorate:	Children & Young People
Grade:	HC10
Location:	Plough Lane, Hereford
Responsible to:	Team Manager

Main purpose of the role

To act as the council's lead practitioner for child protection decision-making, providing expert professional oversight, direction and challenge to ensure statutory safeguarding responsibilities are met.

The postholder will exercise delegated management authority to make complex, high-risk decisions, ensuring that child protection practice across the service is consistent, legally compliant and of high quality.

Key Duties and Responsibilities

- Lead on the development, implementation and evaluation of child protection practice across the service, shaping operational procedures and contributing to service-wide improvement activity to ensure that the work of social workers undertaking child protection duties meets required quality standards.
- Ensure that competent professional judgements are made based on evidence, sound assessment and provision for the needs of the child and young people.
- Attend strategy meetings *chaired by Family Help Team Managers providing professional leadership and ensuring clear decision making and risk analysis.
- Complete section 47 enquiries on non-open cases, ensuring timely progression, high quality analysis and appropriate risk management and to closure/ allocation.
- Provide and present high quality reports ensuring clear recommendations and attend Initial child protection conferences, where S47 leads to ICPC
- Provide case consultation for social care practitioners undertaking S47 enquiries on open cases



Key Duties and Responsibilities

- Chair complex multi-agency child protection conferences and safety planning meetings, ensuring statutory functions are fulfilled and partners are held to account for safeguarding responsibilities.
- Support the Childrens Social Work Managers in quality assurance activity, analysing themes and highlighting areas for improvement.
- Represent the Local Authority as the professional safeguarding lead at relevant meetings including MAPPA, MARAC and other strategic forums where requested ensuring that the council's statutory responsibilities are met and risks are effectively managed.
- Have awareness of equality and diversity issues as they relate to the role.
- To contribute to staff training programmes and the professional development of social workers service developments across the Directorate.
- Provide expert practice leadership, coaching and mentoring across the workforce, supporting the development of a confident, skilled and legally compliant child protection service.
- Ensure effective outcomes for children and young people subject to child protection processes are achieved in line with statutory guidelines.
- Maintain continual professional development in social work practice whilst modelling this to other members of staff and promoting a strong learning culture.
- Attend relevant external multi-agency meetings to represent the Local Authority to ensure that key professional input and expertise is provided.
- Implement and evaluate the outcomes of social work interventions with children and young people to ensure high standards of professional practice.
- Act as lead officer for the management of practice quality within child protection, contribute to staff performance conversations, identifying training needs of individuals whilst contributing to the training programme of the Directorate.
- Operate with a high level of professional autonomy, being accountable for decisions that directly impact the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.
- To attend management meetings in the absence of the children's social work manager and participate effectively



Key Duties and Responsibilities

- Any other duties as required by the MAPCT Team Manager or Service Director commensurate with the nature of the job and level of responsibility
- To deputise when required for the children's social work manager and hold any delegated responsibility to authorise key decisions, including safety plans, Section 47 outcomes, and progression to Initial Child Protection Conference.
- Build and sustain strong working relationships across agencies ensuring coordinated safeguarding responses and actions.
- Promote the council's THRIVE values, championing a culture of integrity, accountability, inclusivity and empathy.



Person Specification

Requirements	Essential or Desirable	Identified by A – Application I – Interview
Qualifications and Training		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A UK recognised professional social work qualification 	Essential	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of continued personal and professional development e.g. portfolio of CPD evidence 	Essential	
Experience & Knowledge		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extensive post qualification social work experience in Child Protection work 	Essential	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experience of mentoring and/or supervising the work of others. 	Essential	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detailed knowledge of relevant legislation and practice guidance, in particular the statutory responsibilities of a registered Social Worker 	Essential	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experience and commitment to the use of IT systems and communication tools 	Essential	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experience of working in partnership with other agencies in the field of child protection 	Essential	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experience of performance management and the ability to operate a performance management framework 	Essential	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of managing and resolving conflict in a work setting 	Essential	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experience of recruitment and assessment processes 	Essential	



Requirements	Essential or Desirable	Identified by A – Application I – Interview
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experience of working within a Children Social Work team 	Essential	
Skills and Abilities		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Excellent written and verbal communication skills 	Essential	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Excellent record keeping skills 	Essential	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to prioritise workload, the needs of children and their families within the resources available to the team 	Essential	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to lead and motivate others 	Essential	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Able to demonstrate well developed knowledge and specialist skills in relevant areas of social work practice 	Essential	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to nurture working relationships across professional boundaries 	Essential	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to practice from a strong equality and diversity, ethic and value base 	Essential	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to implement staff performance conversations, identify the training needs of team members and contribute to the training programme of the directorate 	Essential	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skills in mediation, negotiation, managing conflict, managing change and teamwork 	Essential	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skills in assessment, planning and a broad range of intervention techniques 	Essential	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Time management skills 	Essential	



Requirements	Essential or Desirable	Identified by A – Application I – Interview
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to make effective decisions in a timely manner 	Essential	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to plan and manage own workload to agreed targets and to maintain accurate and accessible records 	Essential	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge of current legislation and guidance on services for children and young people including child protection / assessment 	Essential	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commitment to own continuing CPD 	Essential	
Other Factors		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Current registration as a Social Worker 	Essential	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Current enhanced clear DBS 	Essential	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Willing to work flexible hours to meet the needs of the service 	Essential	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commitment to involving service users and carers in assessments and evaluation of intervention and services 	Essential	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to travel freely in and out of the county 	Essential	



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.

