

LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM

JOB DESCRIPTION

Designation: Family Practitioner

Grade: SO1

Reports to (Designation) Family Therapist / Missing Coordinator/Senior Family Coach

Grade: PO1 to P06

Directorate: Children and Young People

Section: Children's Social Care / Early Help

Main Purpose of the job:

To work collaboratively with young people and their families to provide focused support to families to improve outcomes, address challenges, reduce risks to children and to enable families to make and sustain change.

To build trusting relationships with children, young people and families and extended family members/friends/communities to build sustainable change within stronger family networks, helping to alleviate their social isolation and increase capacity.

To work alongside families to prevent needs from escalating to the point where statutory services are needed and/or to reduce the risk of family breakdown and children/young people coming into care.

To undertake and contribute to assessments and plans for children and their families in line with practice frameworks and in a way that avoids duplication and promotes holistic and family led planning.

To work alongside partner agencies as part of a multi-disciplinary Team Around the Family ensuring that each service is contributing to achieving the best outcomes for children and their families.

To develop and implement effective evidenced based interventions which are grounded in principles of professional curiosity, anti-oppressive practice and systemic approaches with individuals, groups or a family in a range of settings, including community and youth settings, streets and estates, schools and in the family home according to the needs of the family.

To develop and implement effective evidenced based work, including in the home, and on an individual or a group basis in flexible and creative ways through a variety of interventions, engaging with young people and families according to the needs of the family.

Summary of Duties & Key Responsibilities

1. To effectively engage families and to work directly with them on multiple issues including parenting and family functioning, employment, school attendance mental ill health, learning difficulties, domestic abuse, drug and alcohol abuse, homelessness,

bereavement, risk of going missing and child sexual exploitation, and/or involvement in gangs, criminal and antisocial behaviour.

2. Providing intensive support to vulnerable children/young people and their families through a family centred approach, facilitating the change needed in families to improve parenting capacity and outcomes for children.
3. To maximise the involvement of children, young people and families in decision that affect them, and to ensure that the voices of children, young people and families are represented in their assessments and plans, and in service design, review and delivery
4. Assess parenting skills and help parents/carers to build physical and emotional caring abilities by providing advice and practical support with their parenting role, including use of positive activities to promote social inclusion and techniques to avoid conflict and manage challenging behaviour.
5. Undertaking one-to-one direct work and mediation work with children/young people and their families in a crisis, sometimes in challenging and volatile situations - working closely alongside colleagues from across Children Social Care and other key partner agencies to deliver best practice through an integrated response.
6. Reviewing family agreements, plans and interventions regularly with the family and professionals, working alongside parents and children to achieve shared goals and develop a clear plan to sustain progress when involvement of the service ceases.
7. To provide fast and flexible mediation, conflict resolution and rapid response support to children/young people and their families, to reduce and prevent escalation to the point where statutory services and involvement is needed.
8. To be flexible and adaptable to meet the needs of children, young people and families, including responding to call outs at short notice where appropriate. This may necessitate working out of office hours – evenings and weekends on occasions.
9. To develop, encourage and reinforce positive behaviour through working with children/young people to address complex behavioural difficulties and manage the relationship with parents and carers, other family members and their peers
10. To work with children and young people not engaged in education, training or employment and those engaged in risky behaviours including crime and anti-social behaviour to support them to achieve their potential and introduce them to new opportunities and positive experiences.
11. To identify barriers to employment for parents, and provide coaching, advice and guidance to support employment and training
12. Developing plans with families, ensuring action plans are clear, time-bound and outcome focused.
13. To take responsibility for maintaining professional knowledge and skills, including national and local policy, relevant legislation, and emerging research in relation to providing services to children and their families.
14. To have a broad knowledge and understanding of local resources and agencies which support children, young people and families, including Mental Health teams, Schools,

voluntary and community agencies, and to building close working link and communicate effectively with them in the best interests of the child and family

15. Making professional referrals and signposting families to relevant services where appropriate.
16. To maintain high standards of case recording and maintain case management records in accordance with service and professional standards, including electronic data entry in accordance with policy and procedures and with due regard to General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).
17. Compliance with QA of files, and all systems, processes, policies and procedures for the service, including data collection to support performance monitoring
18. Keep comprehensive records of work undertaken and provide these promptly alongside preparing other appropriate records; including preparing reports for multi-agency reviews, case conferences and courts.
19. To contribute to local and departmental training on practice issues in line with departmental policies and procedures, in light of research findings and in line with the Divisional Training Strategy.
20. Contribute to service development through attendance and contribution to team meetings and team development activities

General Terms

- To maintain personal and professional development to meet the changing demands of the job and participate in appropriate training/development activities including the council's performance, development and review scheme.
- Ensure that all duties and responsibilities are discharged in accordance with the council's policies and procedures, Code of Conduct and relevant regulations and legislation.
- Ensure compliance with safeguarding procedures
- To comply with the council's equal opportunities and diversity policies ensuring anti-discriminatory practice within the service area.
- This job description is a guide to the level and range of responsibilities you will be expected to undertake. It may be changed from time to time to reflect changing circumstances and demands. As directed, you will undertake additional duties and responsibilities that may arise from time to time commensurate with the grade of the post.

Responsibilities and Personal Duties:

Meliot Family Centre

1. To hold an allocated caseload of young people who have an allocated social worker and to work with the family to agree strategies to rebuild communication and empathy and preserve family relationships
2. To provide restorative/reunification work, working safely with children and families to assist the return home of children who are looked after. Working with the whole family and seeing the family as a whole to restore relationships using the restorative model.
3. To use the Restorative and Trauma based approaches to work with children and young people on the edge of care in order to prevent them from coming into care
4. To work with parents and their children in their homes and in groups, outside of core office hours, to increase the skills, confidence and abilities of all family members to live their daily lives in a positive and safe way.
5. To work with the allocated social worker and as part of the multi-disciplinary Team to contribute to Team around the family meetings, risk assessments and provide services from a Contextual Safeguarding perspective
6. Participating in group supervision.

First Response Team

1. To hold an allocated caseload of young people who have an allocated social worker and to work with the family to agree strategies to rebuild communication and empathy and preserve family relationships
2. To provide restorative/reunification work, working safely with children and families to assist the return home of children who are looked after. Working with the whole family and seeing the family as a whole to restore relationships using the restorative model.
3. To use the Restorative and Trauma based approaches to work with children and young people on the edge of care in order to prevent them from coming into care
4. As part of the Team Duty Rota you will support Social Workers with any duty cases that arise in order to prevent a child coming into the care system where possible.
5. To work with the allocated social worker and as part of the multi-disciplinary Team to contribute to Team around the family meetings, risk assessments and provide services from a Contextual Safeguarding perspective
6. Participating in weekly referral and case allocation meetings
7. Participating in group supervision.

Missing Service

1. To undertake the monitoring and recording related to children who go missing from home and care.
2. To provide advice, support and guidance to children, young people, parents or carers whose children have gone missing.
3. To undertake Return Home interviews.
4. To work with Social Workers within the Children and Young People division, and outside agencies, to raise awareness of the risks presented to missing children and contribute to the assessment and casework processes.
5. To record information regarding missing episodes and ensure that this is kept up to date so that reports can be produced using this data and outstanding actions highlighted to senior managers for corrective action
6. To participate with social workers in undertaking specific tasks in relation to their case work e.g. joint meeting with the missing child to support the social worker and referrals to relevant support agencies where required.
7. To provide social workers, both in borough and out of borough, with any new information received from the police, in a timely manner to help to safeguard children and share this information appropriately whilst ensuring this is recorded electronically.
8. To work as part of the multi-disciplinary Team Around The Family to contribute to a risk assessment and provide services from a Contextual Safeguarding perspective. To provide immediate assistance through the MASH service in emergency situations that arise in office working hours to help prevent children becoming looked after.
9. To prepare for and attend the weekly Concern Hub meeting and input directly into the safeguarding plans for missing children affected by criminal exploitation, CSE and serious youth violence.

Family Thrive (Early Help)

1. To hold an allocated caseload of families fulfilling the key duties described above and working with the family to build resilience and achieve and sustain improved outcomes
2. To complete Early Help Assessments and lead Teams Around the Family, building and sustaining relationships with children, young people, parents/carers, families and other professionals and be able to reflect, challenge and change and/or test your hypothesis in the face of conflicting evidence
3. To support other organisations/professionals within the locality areas to provide support for families through an early help assessment and TAF
4. To develop and deliver structured and targeted evidence-based interventions and positive activities with children, young people and parents individually, in groups or as a family in a range of settings, including community and youth settings, streets and estates, schools, colleges and within the family home.
5. To carry out individual one to one diagnostic interviews in order to identify barriers to employment and employment and skill gaps and to develop individual personal development and employment and skills action plans
6. To use Restorative and Trauma informed approaches to work with children and young people
7. To adhere to the standards of the Early Help Practice Framework and Principles when working with families, colleagues and partnership agencies.
8. Participate in group and reflective supervision

FOSTERING

To support Lewisham's Fostering service, working collaboratively with social workers, carers and Placement's team to ensure placements meet the needs of children in our care, and that carer's are supported to meet these needs.

To build trusting relationships with carers, young people and families and extended family members/friends/communities to build sustainable change within networks to ensure placement stability.

To work alongside carers, social workers and managers to prevent needs from escalating to the point where placements are at risk of breaking down or not meeting the needs of children.

To undertake in-house placement searches, offer support calls to carers and develop and implement effective record keeping.

To record inhouse placement costs once a placement has been agreed.

To undertake some virtual or 1-1 evidenced based interventions which are grounded in principles of professional curiosity, anti-oppressive practice and systemic approaches with individuals, groups or a family in a range of settings according to the needs of the family.

To support the team in the facilitation of support groups, training, events and celebrations for carers.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

JOB TITLE: Family Practitioner

DEPARTMENT: Children & Young People/Early Help

GRADE: SO1

Note to Candidates

The Person Specification is a picture of the skills, knowledge and experience needed to carry out the job. It has been used to draw up the advert and will also be used in the shortlisting and interview process for this post.

Those categories marked 'S' will be used especially for the purpose of shortlisting.

Please ensure that Equality and Diversity issues are addressed specifically in relation to the role for which you are applying when addressing the requirements of this person specification where appropriate.

If you are a disabled person, but are unable to meet some of the job requirements specifically because of your disability, please address this in your application. If you meet all the other criteria you will be shortlisted and we will explore jointly with you if there are ways in which the job can be changed to enable you to meet the requirements.

Equality & Diversity	
• Awareness of and a commitment to Equality of Access and Opportunity in a diverse community	S
• Understanding of equality and diversity issues within the context of family support and early intervention.	S
Knowledge	
• An excellent working knowledge of relevant legislation including the Children and Families Act 2014, Children's Act 1989 & 2004, 'Working Together'; Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their families; Care Standards 2000, The Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations 2011, Equality Act 2010 (other country equivalents may apply)	S
• Knowledge of the roles and responsibilities of statutory and voluntary services in supporting families	
• A sound knowledge and application of Safeguarding procedures for children and vulnerable adults	
• A good knowledge and understanding of child development and the needs of children	
• Significant knowledge and understanding of issues affecting children/young people and their families, particularly the impact of social and economic disadvantage and multiple disadvantage on motivation, culture, confidence and progression through education employment and training.	S
• Knowledge of whole family approach and solution focused practice	
• Knowledge of a wide range of methods used to develop personal, social and educational, mental health capabilities in children/young people and families in order to empower them and facilitate improved life outcomes.	S
• Understanding of national and local developments on good practice and evidenced based initiatives in relation to Health, education, social care and family support.	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding of professional boundaries and appropriate relationships with young people and their parents, carers or guardians and how to adhere to confidentiality policies. 	
Aptitude	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Having a strong commitment to making a positive difference to the lives of families 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to bring about positive change through both supporting and challenging individuals and families towards agreed goals and outcomes 	S
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ability to be impartial and professional when working with young people, parents, carers and members of the community. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A positive, non-judgmental, empathetic and sensitive approach. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to undertake the work within an anti-discriminatory and empowerment framework 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to remain calm and effective in crisis and when under pressure, including making difficult decisions or dealing with challenging or confrontational behaviour. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to use initiative especially in complex family situations. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to work effectively both independently and as part of a team. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to undertake inter-agency work and a commitment to working in partnership at all levels. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resilience and the ability to cope with emotionally-draining and traumatic situations 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to work hours in a flexible way, including evenings and weekends to meet the needs of the service. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flexibility to adapt to new tasks and situations. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ability to reflect on own practice; undertake training advice and constructive feedback 	
Skills	
Skills can only be used as shortlisting criteria if the skill is to be tested	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective team work skills, including within a multidisciplinary service or multi-agency network. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Excellent interpersonal and communication skills - ability to communicate sensitively and effectively with children and adults 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ability to advocate, negotiate, mediate and interpret on behalf of service users as appropriate. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Excellent organisational skills, able to manage own work programme and meet agreed timescales especially as relates to caseload management 	S
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Excellent IT skills in order to record and maintain accurate data. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ability to develop and maintain knowledge and understanding of local resources and provision, including community and statutory services, including Mental Health Teams, Social Services, Health, CAMHS, Benefits systems 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good observation and listening skills. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to apply effective and innovative strategies to meet the needs of families. 	
Experience	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Substantial experience of providing support to vulnerable children/young people and their families on a range of complex issues, including where there are safeguarding concerns, utilising a range of strategies to engender positive change. 	S

● Experience of developing and maintaining relationships across services and supporting them to work together to achieve coordinated responses to needs and achieve best outcomes for children and families.	S
● Experience of caseload management and prioritising and planning support.	
● Experience of working in culturally diverse communities	
● Experience of addressing equal opportunities issues.	S
● Experience of using different intervention models to support parenting.	
● Experience of using practice models and structured assessments to assess risk, needs and action plan with families and individuals	S
General Education	
● Professional qualification or relevant experience in a social work/health/or related children's services area.	
● Training and/or qualifications in social care, youth work, social work or equivalent to national standards, minimum NVQ 3	
Personal Qualities	
● Willingness to take responsibility for personal and professional development.	
● Willingness to work in different establishments and settings around the borough as required	
● Innovative and creative to introduce new approaches to delivering children's services.	

Internal Contacts: These include representatives from across Council Departments who may be engaged with children and families, for example Children's Social Care, Adults Services, Housing, Youth Offending Service.

External Contacts: This will include all partner agencies working with families e.g., Police, Probation, Health Mental Health, voluntary sector as well as members of the public and other Local Authorities.

To carry out the duties of the post with due regard to the Council's relevant codes and procedures.

All employees are required to participate in the Performance Evaluation Scheme (PES) and to undertake appropriate training and development identified to enhance their work.

Undertake other duties, commensurate with the grade, as may reasonably be required.

Consideration will be given to restructuring the duties of this post for a disabled post holder

THIS JOB DESCRIPTION MAY NEED TO BE AMENDED BY THE DIRECTORATE TO MEET THE CHANGING NEEDS OF THE SERVICE.

Number of fully managed staff:

Title: Grade: No of posts:

Number of partially managed staff:

Title: None

Grade:

No of posts:

Circumstances

- Ability to work outside of normal hour's e.g. early evening training & on some occasions weekends.
- Can travel to attend meetings in and out of the borough at short notice.
- Satisfactory enhanced criminal records bureau disclosure.

DBS Disclosure Required? No Basic Enhanced X

(Tick as appropriate – guidance available from your HR Advisor)

Physical

Generally candidates must meet the standard Lewisham requirements for the post