



How to complete the NQSW online application and write a good personal statement



How to complete the online application for an NQSW role in Lewisham

What is a job advert?

The newly qualified social worker (NQSW) job advert will give you a short description of Lewisham and what you can expect when you join our Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) programme. It will tell you what the starting salary is, and the deadline for submitting your application. It is important to note the shortlisting date, and when the assessment centre will take place. You are also given the interview date if you are shortlisted.

What is a job description (JD)?

A job description also referred to as the 'JD'; it is a Lewisham document that outlines the main purpose of the job. It also gives you a summary of the main responsibilities, personal duties and skills you need to perform the NQSW role.

What is a person specification?

The person specification provides you with a description of the personal qualities, skills, knowledge, aptitude, experience, qualification and requirements you needed to carry out the NQSW role and practice in an anti-racist and anti-oppressive way. It has been used to draw up the advert and will also be used in the shortlisting and interview process for this post. It is important to note those categories marked as 'S' (**S1- S10**) will be used to shortlist.

Online application form with guidance notes

Education and Work Details

- Employment history in chronological order with the most recent first.
- Pay particular attention to the last three years.
- All dates in the last three years (**day/month/year**) are accounted for.
- Explain the reasons for leaving each employment.
- Explain any gaps in employment.
- Put all practice placements down, specifying the number of days on placement
- Practice educator, team manager and tutor - all three should be recorded as referees for each practice placement.
- Ensure that there are a telephone number and email address for all referees.
- Note: You can the box in the personal statement section if required to explain.

Eligibility

- Are you currently under any Visa restrictions? If yes, please provide details of your Visa information.
- Have you previously been employed by the London Borough of Lewisham?
- Have you worked for Lewisham?

Note: If redundancy was with Lewisham, then there need to be a gap of **one year** before applying to Lewisham again. If retired from Lewisham early due to ill health or took voluntary redundancy, then there need to be a gap of **two years** before applying to Lewisham again.

Additional Information

1. Disability Confident Scheme:

We are committed to being a Disability Confident employer. We encourage applications from disabled people by offering an interview if you meet the minimum criteria for the job as outlined in the job description and person specification.

- Do you, therefore, wish to be considered as an applicant under the Disability Confident Scheme?

2. Reasonable adjustments for interview or testing

We are committed to providing a fair and suitable process for everyone when applying with us and will seek to accommodate any disability-related adjustments necessary. Such adjustments may, for example, include arranging a signer or changing location of the interview if access to an upper floor office is not possible.

- Is there any adjustment which you may require for interview or testing or throughout the application process?
- Please be specific what reasonable adjustments you need.

3. Armed Forces Veteran in last five years or spouse

The Council guarantees to interview any Armed Forces Veteran, who has left the Services in the last five years, or any Armed Forces spouse who meets the minimum criteria for the job as outlined in the job description and person specification.

- Are you an Armed Forces veteran?

4. Available for assessment centre and interviews

- Please indicate any dates on which you will **not** be available for the assessment centre and interviews – dates are in the job advert

5. Reservist

In March 2013 the Council signed up to a covenant with partners to demonstrate its ongoing commitment and appreciation for our local armed forces. The covenant document formed a statement of this borough's mutual support between our civilian and armed forces communities. The Council is committed to welcoming Reservists as part of our valued workforce. This includes not

disadvantaging any Reservist who informs us of their status either directly, or through the Ministry of Defence (MOD).

- Are you a Reservist?

6. Redundancy payment

Have you ever received a redundancy payment or enhanced retirement benefit from any organisation?

- If yes, please state from which organisation(s) and date(s) of payment.

7. Driving licence

- Do you have a clean/full driving licence? Yes or No.

Note you don't need a driving licence to do this role, you can make use of public transport.

8. Question: Please demonstrate your knowledge of the Children's Act and any legislation and procedures relevant to the specific service area to ensure effective safeguarding and protection of children (**S2**).

- Note duplication of question no. 11 and some overlap with question no.9, please do not duplicate information.
- The keyword is to demonstrate not just list, show clearly by giving proof or evidence.
- Use CAR or SMART model and ensure you map against shortlisting criteria, KSS, PCF where appropriate in no more than 200 words.

9. Question: Please demonstrate your knowledge and understanding of safeguarding policies and statutory procedures (**S3**).

- The keyword is to demonstrate not just list, show clearly by giving proof or evidence.
- Use CAR or SMART model and ensure you map against shortlisting criteria, KSS, PCF where appropriate in no more than 200 words.

10. Question: Please outline your understanding of the use of theory and research knowledge in social work practice (some elements of **S4**)

- The keyword is an outline - give a short description of the main points; give the main features or general principles; emphasise the structure, leaving out minor details.
- Use CAR or SMART model and ensure you map against shortlisting criteria, KSS, PCF where appropriate in no more than 200 words.

11. Question: Please demonstrate your knowledge and understanding of the Children Act 1989, the Children Act 2004, and any other legislation relevant to this role

- Note this is a duplicate of question 8 – you can say 'see question 8'.

12. Question: Please outline your awareness and understanding of the roles and responsibilities of different partner agencies working with children and young people.

- The keyword is outline - give a short description of the main points; give the main features or general principles; emphasise the structure, leaving out minor details.
- Use CAR or SMART model and ensure you map against shortlisting criteria, KSS, PCF where appropriate in no more than 200 words.

13. Question: Can you please give an example (one) which demonstrates your understanding of how equality and diversity can be promoted within a children's social work setting (**S1**)

- The keyword is to demonstrate not just list, show clearly by giving proof or evidence.
- Use CAR or SMART model and ensure you map against shortlisting criteria, KSS, PCF where appropriate in no more than 200 words.

14. Question: How do you ensure that you continue to develop professionally?

- Explain how you have kept your CPD up to date until now
- Use CAR or SMART model and ensure you map against shortlisting criteria, KSS, PCF where appropriate in no more than 200 words.

15. Question: Please specify which social work qualification you hold, where you studied for this qualification and in which year you obtained it (**S9**)

- If you have not qualified as yet, when are you likely to complete your qualification?

16. Question: Please select which service area you would like to work in:

- ~~Multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH)~~ - not available to NQSWs
- ~~Early help team~~ - not available to NQSWs
- Referral and assessment team **
- Family social work service **
- ~~Adoption, looked after children and leaving care service~~**
- ~~Fostering, placements and business strategy~~ - not available to NQSWs
- ~~Quality assurance service~~ - not available to NQSWs
- Children with complex needs service**

** Note we can't guarantee you will get your first choice, it is all dependent on the number of NQSW vacancies.

17. Question: Please choose one of the following options which describe the role you have applied for with Lewisham.

- Newly qualified social worker
- ~~Social worker~~
- ~~Senior social worker~~
- ~~Advanced practitioner~~
- ~~Team manager~~

Please note: There is no specific question to cover shortlisting criteria **S5, S6** and **S7**. These three areas are essential responsibilities and duties of an NQSW and will need to be demonstrated within your personal statement to be shortlisted.

A good personal statement in five steps and a 1000 words

Step 1: It is all in the preparation

Ensure you have a copy of the job advert, the job description and person specification, to help you identify:

1. What you will be doing in the NQSW role
2. What skills and knowledge you will be using
3. When you will be using these skills and knowledge

You will also need a copy of:

- [Knowledge and Skills Statements for Children and Family Practitioners](#) (March 2018),
- [Professional Capabilities Framework](#) (August 2018) at the ASYE level and
- [Social Work England Professional Standards](#) (November 2019).

Step 2: Knowing your shortlisting criteria

- Make sure you are clear what the shortlisting criteria is, these are marked as 'S' (S1-S10) in the NQSW person specification.
- Make sure you know the Knowledge and Skills Statements (KSS) and the three or four paragraphs under each Knowledge and Skills Statement heading.
- Make sure you map the shortlisting criteria, Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF) and Social Work England (SWE) Professional Standards where possible.

Step 3: Ensure and avoid

Ensure you:

- Use the ten KSS headings as it makes it easier to read.
- Be clear about how you will meet the shortlisting criteria within these headings.
- Demonstrate with examples your knowledge, skills and experience against the KSS.
- Use a range of examples throughout your personal statement.
- Use the CAR or STAR Model to help you demonstrate your examples.
- Referencing the shortlisting criteria (S1-S10), PCF, and SWE Professional Standards were possible.
- Stick to the word count where specified, no more to 200/1000 words, any information over the word count will not be considered.
- Record your word count at the end of your personal statement (in brackets).

Avoid:

- Using lengthy descriptions.
- Lifting keywords from the job description.
- Make something up if you haven't got it.
- Ignoring the word count.
- Plagiarism!

Step 4: Review and refine

- Review your draft statement using the CAR (**C**ontext, **A**ction(s), and **R**esult) model or STAR (**S**ituation, **T**ask, **A**ction, and **R**esult) model.
 - **The Context** – have you provided a short context, what knowledge, skills and experience does the example show you have?
 - **The Actions** – have you shown what specific task, action, the intervention you have taken, what were the challenges, and how did you overcome them.
 - **The Result** – have you included the outcome, the difference it has made or the lessons you have learned?
- Ask yourself
 - How can you make it more concise?
 - Have you demonstrated all the KSS heading with examples?
 - Have you covered all the Knowledge and Skills Statements?
 - Have you mapped the shortlisting criteria against your examples?
 - Have you mapped the PCF and SWE professional standards against your examples?

Step 5: Grammar and spell check

- Make sure your grammar and spell check your application and personal statement (**S8**)
- Ask someone else to read through your personal statement before you submit it.

Good luck with your application!