

LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM

JOB DESCRIPTION

Designation:	Senior Placement Officer	Grade:	PO3
Reports to (Designation):	Senior Team Manager	Grade:	
Directorate:	Children and Young People	Section:	Corporate Parenting

Main Purpose of the job:

- To support the Senior Team Manager to ensure the smooth running of the Placements Team.
 - To provide on the job supervision and operational management to placements officers
 - To manage the duty system,
 - To quality assure and oversee the completion of due diligence checks on all new placements for Looked After Children and Young People.
 - To lead the quality assurance framework for all spot purchased provision.
 - To work in partnership with commissioning colleagues, to support quality assurance and contract monitoring of all framework providers.
 - To carry a small case load of children and young people with the most complex needs
 - To take a proactive lead on placement stability work and work closely with the fostering service to ensure effective use of internal and external fostering resources to offer children stability and permanency
 - To work with the Senior Team Manager and Head of Service, to ensure the placements team is influential in supporting social work teams to deliver children's care plans, through identifying placement options, addressing any risks and safeguarding issues, securing good, outcome focused placements, matched to children and young people's needs.
 - To be a practice lead in brokerage and placements work, advising placement officers, social workers, and managers, how to maximise opportunities for successful placement searches, selection and matching, and placement stability.
 - To effectively communicate and negotiate with a wide range of external placement providers on practice, price, and contractual issues
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Summary of Duties & Key Responsibilities

1. To effectively run the day-to-day operations of the Children's Placements Team, securing care placements in the external market for Looked After Children and Young People, including oversight of the duty system and allocation of case work to individual placement officers
2. To ensure all necessary individual placement agreements are accurate, signed off and submitted onto the child's electronic care record, any placement trackers and accurate data is provided to finance colleagues to record and make timely payments to providers
3. To maximise the involvement of children, young people in decisions that affect them, and to ensure that the voices of children and young people are represented in their profiles and plans.
4. To ensure funding splits are established prior to, or at the start of any care placement, where a funding split with health, and or education is applicable
5. To sign off and ensure that all due diligence checks are completed on all new care provision and the necessary supporting evidence is obtained before a child is placed
6. To ensure that any risk management for children and young people is addressed at each point of placement planning
7. To manage the daily work of the placement officers
8. To attend and chair if agreed; placement planning, family finding and placement stability meetings for children and young people
9. To take a proactive role in improving and maintaining good levels of placement stability for children and young people placed with external providers, contributing to a reduction of any unnecessary placement moves
10. To ensure that robust systems in place to monitor placement stability and placement searches
11. To sit on relevant childcare planning and resources panels across the directorate
12. Provide support to social workers and managers to create profiles for children with most complex needs, identifying desired placement outcomes and support creative and innovative approaches to family finding and placement searches
13. To develop and maintain strong and positive working relationships with a wide range of external placement providers, for the benefit of securing quality placement options for Looked After Children and young people
14. To plan and deliver with placement officers, a robust and consistent, quality assurance framework for spot purchased placements
15. To work with the Senior Team Manager to plan for and facilitate regular provider forums
16. To deputise for the Senior Team Manager, including representing the team in relevant regional and London wide groups
17. To recognise, respect and address the needs of children and young people who face barriers due to their lived experience, loss and possible trauma, including those from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds, LGBT communities, disabled people and children and young people with complex needs. To take responsibility for maintaining professional knowledge and skills, including national and local policy, relevant legislation, and emerging research in relation to providing placement services to children and young people
18. To have a broad knowledge and understanding of local and National care providers and resources, which offer care placements to Looked After children and young people

19. 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).
20. Compliance with QA of files, and all systems, processes, policies and procedures for the service, including data collection to support performance monitoring
21. Keep comprehensive records of work undertaken and provide these promptly alongside preparing other appropriate records; including preparing reports of placement searches and family finding for courts and panels.
22. To contribute to local and departmental training on practice issues in line with departmental policies and procedures, considering research findings and in line with the Divisional Training Strategy.
23. Contribute to service development through attendance and contribution to team meetings and team development activities
24. To support the Senior Team Manager in providing operational management of a team of placement officers , including day to day supervision and general management oversight, determining priorities and allocation of work to meet changing circumstances, and the assessment of risk and appropriate escalation of significant events.
25. To model leadership and behaviours that continuously develop staff and services, including group and reflective supervision for the team.
26. To support the Senior Team Manager in ensuring the workload of the team is managed and prioritised appropriately and is allocated to Placement Officers making best use of their skills and capability.
27. To work with the Senior Team Manager to monitor and support the performance management and development of placements staff, to support individual development and ensure that individual contributions are maximised.
28. To work in partnership with allocated social workers and other agencies to ensure an effective, coordinated response to finding and maintaining external care placements.
29. To contribute to risk assessment and safety planning in care placements for children and young people

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.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

JOB TITLE: Senior Placements Officer

DEPARTMENT: Corporate Parenting

GRADE: PO3

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	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awareness of and a commitment to Equality of Access and Opportunity in a diverse community 	S
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding of equality and diversity issues within the context of family support and early intervention. 	S
Knowledge	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge of the roles and responsibilities of statutory and voluntary services in Looked After Children and Care Leavers 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A sound knowledge of Safeguarding procedures for children 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A good knowledge and understanding of child development and the needs of Looked After Children and Care Leavers with regard to their lived experience, recognising the impact of their trauma and loss and resulting care needs 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Excellent knowledge of different types of care provision for Looked After Children including fostering, semi supported accommodation and residential care and residential schools 	S
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge of local and national care providers and the emerging market 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding of national and local developments on good practice in placement provision for Looked After children. 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding of professional boundaries and appropriate relationships with all care providers and how to adhere to confidentiality policies and GDPR regulations 	
Aptitude	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Having a strong commitment to making a positive difference to the lives of Looked After Children and Care Leavers 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to bring about positive change through both supporting and challenging placement officers, social workers and care providers to find the best quality and best value seeking to achieve saving where possible for example in agreeing retainers provisions y meet children needs and improve their outcomes 	S
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ability to be impartial and professional when working with internal and external stakeholders 	
<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 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to use initiative especially in complex situations relating to a child's care placements. 	
<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 staying into the evening 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 supervision and line management skills including allocation of case work and managing a daily duty system 	
<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 internal and external stakeholders 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ability to advocate, negotiate, mediate and interpret on behalf of service users when arranging and overseeing their care placements 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Excellent organizational skills, able to manage own work program and meet agreed timescales 	S
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Excellent IT skills 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 to provide care placements and offer support services to children and young people in registered care placements and semi supported accommodation 	
<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 Looked After Children and young people with complex needs and in environment of limited care resources being available 	
Experience	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Substantial experience of working in a placements or brokerage team or a service with similar profile which provides support to vulnerable children/young people 	S
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experience of developing and maintaining relationships with internal and external stakeholders and across services and supporting them to work together to achieve coordinated responses to needs and achieve best outcomes for children and young people 	S
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experience of supervision of staff, and/or line management in a children's service 	S
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experience of caseload management and prioritizing and planning support. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experience of working in culturally diverse communities 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experience of addressing equal opportunities issues. 	S
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General Education	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significant relevant experience in a social work/health/or related children's services area. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of continuous professional development related to social work, social care, care, youth work, or equivalent. A professional qualification would be an advantage 	
Personal Qualities	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Willingness to take responsibility for personal and professional development. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Willingness to work in different stressful environment managing competing demands and skill to prioritise own work and work of others 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interpersonal qualities to support developing, maintaining and managing relationships including during periods of stress, 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Innovative and creative to introduce new approaches to delivering children's placement 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, the voluntary sector, the private sector, 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:

Up to four Placement Officers

Circumstances

- Ability to work outside of normal hour's e.g. to continue with securing a same day placement for a child or young person
- 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**

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

Physical

Generally candidates must meet the standard Lewisham requirements for the post