

Northumberland County Council
JOB DESCRIPTION

Post Title: Child Protection Advisor/Independent Reviewing Officer		Director/Service/Sector: Children's Services/Children's Social Care / Safeguarding	Office Use
Band: 10		Workplace: Safeguarding Team Base / Agile	JE ref: 1926
Responsible to: Senior Independent Reviewing Officer		Date:	HRMS ref:
<p>Job Purpose: To chair Child Protection Conferences and Looked After Reviews for those children who have been identified, or those children who are likely to be identified as being in need of a permanent family placement other than with their birth parents, supporting children whose future is likely to be secured by Adoption or long term fostering. To provide advice and guidance to employers and voluntary organisations. Liaise with the police and other agencies to ensure the safe management of allegations made about adults that support the child. To contribute to the development of planning, review and monitoring processes aimed at tracking and securing timely permanence for children. To assist in developing and contributing to the quality assurance of all aspects of practice, planning, policy and procedural processes in relation to child protection, adoption and permanence. To take a lead role for promoting links with key teams, managers and professionals directly responsible for making decisions and progressing planning for permanence. Ensuring high quality performance through reviewing and planning systems that safeguard children and young people within the Looked After system. To scrutinise the operational safeguarding and planning performance of social workers and Looked After Children services. To provide safeguarding advice and consultation to staff in complex Looked After Children and Child Protection cases.</p>			
Resources:			
Staff	Oversight and scrutiny of multi-agency work undertaken as part of Child Protection and Care Plans		
Finance	Shared accountability for operational budget of Children's Social Care with specific responsibilities when monitoring and overseeing children's plans, ensuring efficient use of County Council resources.		
Physical	Post involves deskwork (including computer), home visits, travel to meetings both local and national, meetings in client's homes and various other establishments. Some travel to Regional and National conferences when required. The post involves lone working.		
Clients	Contact with children, or adults and their families including within their own homes. Contact with a range of agencies and partners with specific responsibility for the safeguarding and protection of vulnerable children and Young people in Northumberland through care planning process		
Duties and key result areas:			
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To fulfil all of the responsibilities and duties of an Independent Reviewing Officer, as specified in the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations and Independent Reviewing Officer Handbook (Statutory Guidance for Looked After Children), in particular to chair Looked After Reviews for children who have been identified as needing permanence through adoption and Looked After Reviews and for those children for whom permanence other than in the care of their parents may be needed. 2. To chair Child Protection Conferences, Secure Accommodation Reviews, Disruption Meetings, and Decision Sharing Conferences. 3. To ensure that adequate safeguarding arrangements are in place to promote the welfare and health of children, young people and adults who are users of the service. 4. To promote the involvement and participation of children and young people, parents and carers in planning and decision making. 5. To ensure well crafted and accurate records of meetings are produced and distributed efficiently and in timescale. 6. To assist in the development of quality assurance and performance management arrangements within the Children's Services Directorate. 7. To undertake independent quality assurance audits of frontline social work practice and residential care. 8. To carry out audit and reviews of practice and outcomes for service users and contribute to service development. 9. To provide advice and consultation for staff in Northumberland working with children and young people. 10. To contribute to the training and staff development programme as required. To develop a professional skills base through the provision of training and development as appropriate 11. To act as Designated Officer as required, chairing strategy meetings, making appropriate records of discussions and following cases through when appropriate. 12. To promote and safeguard the welfare and wellbeing of children and young people in accordance with service systems, procedures and standards 13. To develop and maintain systems and reviewing practices designed to ensure safeguarding is of the highest standard and capable of withstanding external scrutiny. 14. To address directly and decisively any safeguarding or planning/performance issues that raise concerns in accordance with the organisation's policies and procedures and in line with statutory guidance including directly to CAFCASS, when appropriate. 15. To take responsibility for developing strategies, skills, expertise and knowledge for a wide range of practice issues and to provide consultation, coaching and mentoring across the service as a whole. This includes taking responsibility to maintain and develop professional links and leads with multi agency professionals to meet the safeguarding needs of children subject to Child Protection plans or Looked After plans in accordance with statutory requirements and corporate directives. 			

16. To assist in the formulation, monitoring and development of policies and guidance relating to services.
17. To ensure the service practice meets the agreed NCC and OFSTED quality standards, regulation. procedures and codes of conduct.
18. To oversee the quality / professional standards of the social work team, making decisions and providing advice and guidance to social workers and advanced practitioners with regard to adults capacity to care and safeguard children subject to children in need, children subject to child protection processes and Looked After children. Identifying adults that do not meet the regulatory standards or their care standards are deemed a risk to children, including chairing LADO strategy meetings and advising on Adoption and Fostering Regulations and Minimum Standards.
19. Chairing a range of meetings including signs of safety meetings, where there are child protection and child welfare concerns.
20. Quality assuring social work assessments and reports via the department's electronic integrated children's system, ensuring that work is of a consistently appropriate standard.
21. Manage and maintain positive relationships with partner organisations and other external bodies.
22. Responsible for ensuring that the team achieve key service delivery objectives identified within the service plan. In addition, develop and implement systems to ensure satisfactory team performance against key performance indicators
23. Responsible for ensuring that the objectives set out in statutory guidance and departmental procedures are implemented within the team, including specialist knowledge relating to fostering and adoption regulations and procedures.
24. Responsible for ensuring that specific areas of service delivery are developed and delivered to meet the needs of children and families requiring specialist social work for a range of associated assessed needs.
25. To manage resources effectively and efficiently in line with NCC regulations and to report to senior management on a regular basis regarding the financial position of the designated service area.
26. To monitor and evaluate team performance and effectiveness against service targets including the monitoring of care plans, evaluation of effectiveness of service provision and quality standards.
27. To provide reports and updates to the management teams as required.
28. To ensure the maintenance of record keeping in accordance with statutory requirements and NCC policy and procedures.
29. To ensure the service is child and family centred, focussing and promoting the overall safety and safeguarding of all vulnerable children and those at risk of significant harm.
30. Contribute to the strategic development of the service by developing new ways of working and efficient practices.
31. To actively participate in directorate wide projects related to children's safeguarding as approved by the Senior Manager.
32. Deputise for the IRO Safeguarding Manager - at internal and external meetings as and when required.
33. To advise and alert the IRO Safeguarding Manager and Senior Managers of any situation that may be contentious, complex or critical or costly to the team or service so that an appropriate risk assessment and management plan can be put in place.
34. To act with professional authoritative confidence in autonomous working and decision making, to shape the working environment to achieve the best possible outcomes for children and young people.

The duties and responsibilities highlighted in this Job Description are indicative and may vary over time. Post holders are expected to undertake other duties and responsibilities relevant to the nature, level and extent of the post and the grade has been established on this basis.

Work Arrangements

Transport requirements:	Travel to work sites, area offices, meetings or other venues throughout the County, region and Country
Working patterns:	May include weekends and evenings. Office based but including significant travel requirement.
Working conditions:	Mainly indoors. Occasional exposure to working outdoors.

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PERSON SPECIFICATION

Post Title: Child Protection Advisor/Independent Reviewing Officer	Director/Service/Sector: Children's Services/Children's Social Care / Safeguarding	JE ref: 1926 HRMS ref:
Essential	Desirable	Assess by
Qualifications and Knowledge		
<p>A professional social work qualification e.g. Degree in Social Work, DipSW, CQSW, CSS Valid HCPC registration. Evidence of CPD. Knowledge of child development and issues around work with families and children. including safeguarding and child protection. Detailed knowledge of Children's legislation. Up to date understanding of the key issues and relevant theoretical background facing professional child care social workers, particularly related to children's safeguarding and looked after children.</p>	<p>Management qualification Completion of or working towards the Safeguarding Module of the PQ Award.</p>	
Experience		
<p>In depth diverse experience in children's social care. Extensive experience in children's safeguarding, including experience of working with child protection systems and procedures. Minimum two/three years experience of team management including appraisal and supervision. Experience of managing performance to agreed standards and targets. Ability to work in stressed and pressured situations to meet deadlines. Proven experience in decision making skills and abilities.</p>	<p>Experience of working within a multi agency setting. Experience of budget management</p>	
Skills and competencies		
<p>Highly developed interpersonal skills with the ability to communicate effectively with a variety of people through a variety of mediums including complex cases in a court arena. Ability to lead and manage a multi-skilled team. Ability to manage change and conflict. Highly developed negotiating and organisational skills. Able to prioritise conflicting demands and requirements, meet tight deadlines and timescales. Ability to assess service needs, develop and evaluate programmes and projects/plans to meet those needs. A commitment to equality of opportunity. An awareness of the principles of budget management. Effective IT skills to be able to write reports, produce court documentation and update relevant systems. Ability to work across agency boundaries within a multi-professional setting. Ability to work at both operational and strategic levels in terms of future service development.</p>	<p>Use of IT databases and spreadsheets</p>	
Physical, mental, emotional and environmental demands		
<p>To be a resilient practitioner with the ability to manage intense emotional demands. Able to meet the physical demands of the post. Lengthy periods of mental attention and high levels of pressure from conflicting demands and pressure to meet statutory deadlines.</p>		

<p>To be able to satisfy the mobility requirements of the post which will include regular journeys to children and their families' home across the County, region and County To work agilely in line with the Council policy.</p>		
<p>Other</p>		
<p>This position requires an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Check. Commitment to inter-agency working. Registration with HCPC. Willingness to work occasional evenings/weekends. Positive attitude towards supervision and training. Willingness to attempt new challenges and approaches. Positive attitude towards supporting equality and diversity.</p>		

Key to assessment methods; (a) application form, (i) interview, (r) references, (t) ability tests (q) personality questionnaire (g) assessed group work, (p) presentation, (o) others e.g. case studies/visits