



JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title	Principal Social Worker
Evaluation ref:	RP130
Grade:	Grade 6
Role purpose	
<p>Reporting directly to the Executive Director for Children, Families and Education, the Principal Social Worker's (PSW) primary responsibility is the development of excellent social work practice. Responsible for ensuring that the highest standards of social work are maintained, promoting best practices, and driving continuous improvement in service delivery. Providing professional leadership and support to social workers, ensuring that Practice Standards, Children's frameworks, policies and procedures are effectively implemented to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people.</p> <p>Working collaboratively with other agencies and a range of stakeholders to be innovative in developing and implementing strategies that improve outcomes for children and families. Accountable for development of Children's workforce by taking learning forward from quality assurance activity ensuring that the development and implementation of training programs is appropriate and sufficient to meet workforce training needs. Manage direct spend and staffing budgets maximising service provision and ensuring service area spending remains within allocated resources. Support Quality Assurance service with regulatory inspections, contribute to serious case reviews and plan outcomes for the continuous professional development of staff and improvement of the quality of Children's services.</p>	
Accountabilities	
<p>Professional Leadership: Being the conduit between the Executive Director Children & Families and the social care workforce to provide leadership and guidance to social workers, ensuring compliance with legislation, statutory guidance and Social Work England professional standards. Responsibility for advising the Executive Director Children & families and the Service Director for Children and Families on the quality of social work practice. Provide leadership and direction to the workforce; setting out the service goals; conveying how they support the fundamental purpose of Children's services and the council and energise staff towards their achievement incorporating the Council's values and behaviours. To provide a high support, high challenge approach to ensure high standards of operational practice is in line with statutory duties and sensitive to the needs of children and families at risk. Ensure that Children's Social Care performs its duties and functions in fulfilment of its statutory obligations. Lead responsibility for workforce development for Children's Social Care. Lead Somerset's 'grow our own offer' to support the development of children's social work capacity through access to social work courses, the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE), and the post qualifying development offer, aimed at improving social work skills and the retention of experienced social workers. Lead responsibility for</p>	



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recruitment and retention for Children's Social Care. Represent Somerset at PSW network sand link into regional university/college networks.

Policy Implementation: Identify and respond to new initiatives and changes in legislation and government policy, maintaining a high level of professional expertise and utilising professional networks to maintain a sound awareness of relevant law, policy and regional and national developments; ensuring it informs local policy and practice. Involve children, families, and the workforce in the creation and implementation of policies. Ensure the effective implementation of policies and procedures that safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people.

Quality Assurance: Lead on the Social Work Health Check and action plans and promote and take an active role within quality assurance. Drive forward the learning from quality assurance activity, to support continuous improvement in social work practice. Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of social work interventions and programs. Write reports, and make presentations when required for a wide audience, such as Heads of Service/Directors SMT's, Council Members, Project Boards, Cabinet and Council Committees, Community Groups etc

Training and Development: To facilitate and participate in the development and delivery of training programmes to help ensure that a workforce development strategy is in place within the organisation to ensure that the workforce are equipped to deliver quality outcomes for children, families and carers.

Collaboration: To help promote organisational development, championing the rationale for change. To help drive effective partnership and collaborative working both internally and externally, to further improve outcomes for children and families in need or at risk.

Continuous Improvement: To help ensure that organisational change and integration takes account of professional social work issues, promoting and taking part in developing the body of social work knowledge and research within and outside of the organisation, working in partnership to ensure that developments reflect the needs of front-line practice. Challenging current processes using knowledge of social work practices to move the service forward in the support it provides, aiming to make Somerset Children's Social Care an 'Outstanding' service.

Compliance: Ensure compliance with statutory requirements and best practice guidelines.

Expert Advice: Provide expert advice and guidance on complex cases and social work practice.

Monitoring and Evaluation: Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of social work interventions and programs.



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Reporting: Prepare and present operational and strategic reports on social work practice and outcomes to senior management and other stakeholders.

Advocacy: Advocate for the needs and rights of children and families within the organisation and the wider community.

Line Management: Grade 8 Consultant Social Worker and strategic oversight of the consultant social worker group. Grade 8 Team Manager with oversight of the Preventing Exploitation Team and representing CSC in the Violence Reduction Partnership (VRP).

Knowledge / Experience / Skills

	Essential	Desirable
Knowledge		
In-depth understanding of social work principles, practices, and legislation.	✓	
Knowledge of child protection and safeguarding procedures.	✓	
Familiarity with the Children Act 1989 and other relevant legislation.	✓	
Understanding of the complexities of social work within the context of children and families.	✓	
Knowledge of quality assurance and continuous improvement methodologies.	✓	
Awareness of multi-agency working and collaboration.	✓	
Experience		
Extensive experience in a senior social work role within a children and families setting.	✓	
Proven track record of leading and managing social work teams.	✓	
Experience in developing and implementing policies and procedures.	✓	
Experience in quality assurance and continuous improvement initiatives.	✓	
Experience in multi-agency working and collaboration.	✓	
Experience in providing training and professional development to social workers.	✓	
Qualifications / Registrations / Certifications		
Degree in Social Work or equivalent qualification.	✓	
Registration with Social Work England.	✓	



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Continuous professional development in social work practice.	✓	
Postgraduate qualification in a relevant field.		✓
Management or leadership qualification.		✓
Skills		
Excellent leadership and management skills.	✓	
Strong communication and interpersonal skills.	✓	
Ability to influence and drive change within an organisation.	✓	
Strong analytical and problem-solving skills.	✓	
Ability to work collaboratively with other agencies and stakeholders.	✓	
Proficiency in using social work management systems and software.		✓
Working Conditions		
This role requires travel across the county to support the service. This may include attendance at service user's places of residence and/or educational establishments.		
Dimensions of the role		
<p>Learning & Development budget up to £500K.</p> <p>Budget for Exploitation Team not set yet as this line management will be as a result of restructure by March 2025.</p> <p>Contract management with the appointed Higher Education Institution to deliver the "Step Up to Social Work" programme valued at £1.6M.</p>		
Working Arrangements		
Somerset Council's dynamic Working Strategy will be applied to this position		
Corporate Accountabilities		