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| **Job Description** |
| **Post title** | Independent Reviewing Officer |
| **JE Reference No** | A5970 |
| **Grade** | Grade 13 |
| **Service** | Children & Young Peoples Services |
| **Service Area** | Children’s Social Care – Safeguarding & Professional Practice |
| **Reporting to** | The post holder will be accountable to the Service Manager, Quality and Review. |
| **Location** | Your normal place of work will be Greencroft, Stanley, but you may be required to work at any Council workplace within County Durham. |
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| **DBS** | This post is subject to an enhanced disclosure. |
| **Flexitime** | This post is eligible for flexible working. |
| **Politically restricted** | This post is not designated as a politically restricted post in accordance with the requirements of Section 1(5) of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and by regulations made from time to time by the Secretary of State. |

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| **Description of role** |

The post holder will act as an Independent Chairperson in Looked After Reviews, and chair Child Protection Conferences, private fostering reviews, secure accommodation reviews, foster carer reviews, disruption meetings and complex planning meetings. He/she will develop and maintain a range of quality assurance systems in relation to departmental policies and procedures, government guidance and Department of Education and Health P.A.F. requirements. The post holder will play a key role, linking with managers and staff in Children and Young People’s Services and other agencies, in the development of best practice in care planning and service provision for children and young people.

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| **Duties and responsibilities** |

Listed below are the responsibilities this role will be primarily responsible for:

* To act as an independent Chairperson in Looked after Reviews, and chair Child Protection Conferences, Private Fostering Reviews, Secure Accommodation Reviews, Foster Carer Reviews, disruption meetings and complex planning meetings.
* The ability to communicate with children, young people, and their families. To ensure the child’s views are considered by the local authority.
* To have the sufficient relevant social work experience in children’s social care to undertake the required functions.
* To have the confidence and ability to work constructively with senior managers, offering a critical perspective and appropriate challenge.
* To have a thorough understanding of the Care Planning Regulations and legal framework relating to looked after children and care leavers, including knowledge of National Minimum Standards and Fostering Regulations, and the Adoption Agencies Regulations.
* To have a thorough understanding of the legal process and the issues involved when a local authority makes an application for a care order.
* A thorough knowledge of ‘Working Together’ and quality practice in working with children and families to safeguard children and promote their welfare
* To develop effective quality assurance mechanisms in order to ensure compliance with the requirements of Children and Young People’s Services, Local Safeguarding Children’s Board Procedures, and Department of Education requirements.
* To link with social workers and team managers across the Children and Young People’s Services in order to ensure effective care planning, development of good practice and positive outcomes for children and young people.
* To play an active role in Local Safeguarding Children’s Board processes and ensure effective working relationships are established with colleagues in other agencies involved in provision of services for children.
* To participate in a range of audit and other monitoring activity as part of the wider service development function.
* To put effective systems in place, which will ensure that all children within the Looked After System have an appropriate Permanency Plan.
* To offer specialist advice, information and guidance about policy, procedures, legislation, guidance and local processes.
* To participate in a range of corporate and Children and Young People’s Services activities as determined by the Head of Service.

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| **Organisational responsibilities** |

* **Values and behaviours**

To demonstrate and be a role model for the council’s values and behaviours to promote and encourage positive behaviours, enhancing the quality and integrity of the services we provide.

* **Smarter working, transformation and design principles**

To seek new and innovative ideas to work smarter, irrespective of job role, and to be creative, innovative and empowered. Understand the operational impact of transformational change and service design principles to support new ways of working and to meet customer needs.

* **Communication**

To communicate effectively with our customers, managers, peers and partners and to work collaboratively to provide the best possible public service. Communication between teams, services and partner organisations is imperative in providing the best possible service to our public.

* **Health, Safety and Wellbeing**

To take responsibility for health, safety and wellbeing in accordance with the council’s Health and Safety Policy and procedures.

* **Equality and diversity**

To promote a society that gives everyone an equal change to learn, work and live, free from discrimination and prejudice and ensure our commitment is put into practice. All employees are responsible for eliminating unfair and unlawful discrimination in everything that they do.

* **Confidentiality**

To work in a way that does not divulge personal and/or confidential information during the course of their work and follow the council’s policies and procedures in relation to data protection and security of information.

* **Climate Change**

To contribute to our corporate responsibility in relation to climate change by considering and limiting the carbon impact of activities during the course of your work, wherever possible.

* **Performance management**

To promote a culture whereby performance management is ingrained and the highest of standards and performance are achieved by all. Contribute to the council’s Performance and Development Review processes to ensure continuous learning and improvement and to increase organisational performance.

* **Quality assurance (for applicable posts)**

To set, monitor and evaluate standards at individual, team and service level so that the highest standards of service are delivered and maintained. Use data, where appropriate, to enhance the quality of service provision and support decision making processes.

* **Management and leadership (for applicable posts)**

To provide vision and leadership to inspire and empower all employees so they can reach their full potential and contribute to the council’s values and behaviours. Managers and leaders must engage in personal development to ensure they are equipped to lead transformational change; always searching for better ways to do things differently to meet organisational changes and service priorities.

* **Financial management (for applicable posts)**

To manage a designated budget, ensuring that the service achieves value for money in all circumstances through the monitoring of expenditure and the early identification of any financial irregularity.

*The above is not exhaustive and the post holder will be expected to undertake any duties which may reasonably fall within the level of responsibility and the competence of the post as directed by your manager.*

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| Person specification |
|  | Essential | Desirable |
| Qualifications | * Final professional Social Care qualification to diploma level - Diploma in Social Work or equivalent.
* Social Work England Registration.
 | * Degree or Higher Professional Award.
* Management qualification at Level 5 or equivalent.
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| Experience | * 5 years post-qualifying experience as a social work practitioner in relation to Children and Families in relation to children looked after and children subject to child protection plans, including legal proceedings:
* (in accordance with the Independent Review Officer Handbook)
* Experience of managing and supervising social workers.
* Significant experience of partnership and multi-agency working.
* Experience of development and maintenance of quality assurance systems.
 | * Experience as a trainer of staff.
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| Skills & Knowledge | * Ability to communicate effectively and with sensitivity with children, parents and carers.
* Confidence and ability to work constructively with senior managers, offering a critical perspective and appropriate challenge
* Chairing complex multi-agency meetings.
* Ability to assimilate information, summarise and prioritise key actions required.
* Ability to establish constructive working relationships with staff and other agencies.
* Highly developed written and verbal communication skills.
* Organisational skills related to the effective running of the Child Care planning systems.
* Ability to work in partnership with a wide range of agencies and stakeholders.
* IT skills.
* Capable of independent travel to meet the requirements of the post.
* A thorough understanding of the legal framework relating to looked after children and care leavers and safeguarding children, including knowledge of Care Planning Regulations, National Minimum Standards and Fostering Regulations, and the Adoption Agencies Regulations 2005.
* A thorough working understanding of the legal process and the issues involved when a local authority makes an application for a care order.
* Knowledge of the evidence about what makes for good quality practice in working with children and families to safeguard children and promote their welfare.
 | * Research analysis and survey development.
* Knowledge of quality assurance systems.
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| Personal Qualities | * Effective collaborative and inclusive joint working practices.
* Energy and enthusiasm in the pursuit of continual service development.
* Confident, considered and analytical approach to complex child care issues.
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