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| **Job Description** |
| **Post title** | Enhanced Social Work Practitioner and NQSW Mentor |
| **JE Reference No** | N10183 |
| **Grade** | Grade 12 Plus £2,500 temporary recruitment/retention allowance in Families First Teams for permanent appointments only |
| **Service** | Children and Young Peoples Services |
| **Service Area** | Children’s Social Care, Families First Service |
| **Reporting to** | Team Manager within Childrens Services  |
| **Location** | An approved team location, 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 flexitime |
| **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** |

Social workers in Children’s Services work with our most vulnerable children, young people and families. Their expertise supports families, helps keep children safe and enables them both to thrive.

The Enhanced Social Work Practitioner will play a really important role in supporting the newly Qualified Social Workers (NQSWs) within a social work team. In addition to holding a protected caseload, they will consistently model exceptional social work practice and skill to inspire and provide ongoing support and guidance to the NQSWs on their cases. This will be delivered both informally and via a structured induction and fortnightly structured reflective sessions. They will also work closely with the Practice Leads in the Social Work Academy and the Team Manager to ensure that the NQSWs have appropriate caseloads in terms of number and complexity, and that their Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) progresses well. The enhanced practitioner post is line managed by the Team Manager.

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| **Duties and responsibilities** |

Listed below are the expectations of the enhanced practitioner in Children’s Social Care which blends the skills of a case holding senior social worker with those of mentoring newly qualified colleagues. Assessment of the newly qualified social worker is linked to the post qualifying standards (the Knowledge and Skills Statements for Child and Family Social Work). The enhanced practitioner role is directly line managed by the Team Manager but links closely to the Social work academy programme:

* Hold a protected caseload within the team.
* Provide advice and guidance to the NQSWs to help them build their confidence.
* Plan and facilitate a structured induction and fortnightly reflective sessions for the NQSW’s which: incorporate thinking using the Signs of Safety practice model, encouraging the NQSWs to reflect, develop multiple hypotheses, encourage peer challenge and critical reflection in decision making thus building evidence towards their ASYE portfolio.
* Provide ongoing advice and guidance to the NQSWs on their cases, co-working more complex cases where appropriate and to ensure this guidance is reflected on the child’s electronic record.
* Work closely with the Practice Leads in the Social Work Academy and the Team Manager to ensure that the NQSWs have appropriate caseloads in terms of number and complexity, and that their Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) progresses well.
* Undertake direct observations of the NQSW’s practice as learning and development opportunities alongside the Team manager and Practice lead.
* Communicate clearly and sensitively. Building effective relationships with children, young people and families on their caseload, other professionals and the NQSW’s in their team. Listen to their views and enable their full participation in assessment, planning, and review.
* Build and maintain high quality and appropriate professional relationships with children, young people and families to enable positive change to take place. Support children, young people and families even they are angry, hostile and resistant to change. Manage tensions between parents, carers and family members, in ways that show persistence, determination and professional confidence.
* Promote optimal child development and be alert to signs that may indicate that the child is not meeting key developmental milestones, has been harmed or is at risk of harm.
* Identify the impact of adult mental ill health, substance misuse, domestic abuse, physical ill health and disability on family functioning, social circumstances and child development. Promote awareness of the impact of ACES and promote trauma informed and strength-based practice.
* Carry out in-depth and ongoing family assessment of social need and risk to children, with particular emphasis on parental capacity and capability to change. Ensure that the voice of the child is heard, and that families and partner agencies contribute in a meaningful way to the assessment, safety planning and risk management. Promote the embedding of signs of safety within all aspects of the role.
* Develop realistic, child centred safety plans within a review timeline, which will manage and reduce identified risks and meet the needs of the child. Ensure that children, young people and families, and partner agencies participate fully.
* Produce well argued, focused, and jargon free case notes, plans and typed reports e.g. single assessments, court reports, ASYE documentation. Present a clear analysis and a sound rationale for actions and conclusions.
* Evaluate and review the development and progress of children, young people and their families against the agreed plan, monitor their changing needs and evaluate impact. Amend plans as and when necessary.
* Social workers working in Child Protection and Disability services, Families First and Looked After Services will also lead the investigation of allegations of significant harm to children in consultation with other professionals and practice supervisor.
* Use the law, regulatory and statutory guidance to inform practice decisions. Make use of the best evidence from research to inform the complex judgements and decisions needed to support families and protect children.
* Be accountable for, and review own practice using supervision and reflective practice. Seek advice from a range of sources. Discuss, debate, reflect upon and test hypotheses.
* Use appreciative enquiry, candour, legislation and policy, procedure, theory and critical feedback to help the NQSW develop their practice.
* Maintain personal and professional credibility through effective working relationships with peers, managers and leaders both within the profession, throughout multi-agency partnerships and public bodies, including the family courts.
* Participate in developments to improve the quality of the service and improve outcomes for children, young people and families.
* Share learning with colleagues by mentoring, coaching, and reflective discussion.
* Maintain registration with Social Work England and adhere to the Social Work England standards of conduct, performance and ethics, and standards for continuing professional development.
* Where a team comes to a position where they no longer have ASYE social workers the EP’s skills and expertise can be channelled into those working towards progression and their caseload adjusted accordingly.

Note: The postholder will be required to work flexibly to meet the needs of children, young people and their families which may include the occasional need for some weekend working. We would hope our enhanced practitioners can also model efficient ways of working to promote work / life balance, resilience and self-care in the team.

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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. In line with the Post qualifying standards and Social work England practice standards.

* **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 chance 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.

* **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 | * Degree in social work or equivalent social work qualification, e.g. Post Graduate Diploma in Social Work (PDDipSW) Certificate of Qualification in Social Work (CQSW), Diploma in Social Work (DipSW), Certificate in Social Services (CSS)
* Current Social Work England Registration
* Commitment to work towards Practice assessor qualification PA1 and 2 in line with skills for care good practice
 | * Relevant and accredited management qualification
* Post qualification modules in social work e.g. Consolidation Module
* Post-qualification CPD in social work practice and/or training/leading others
* Practice Educator Professional Standards Stage 2 qualification, or equivalent and experience of supporting students or NQSW
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| Experience | * Significant experience of social work with children young people and their families
* Significant experience of identifying and responding to need
* Risk Management
* Using evidence to devise effective interventions
* Explaining and championing high quality practice to practitioners other professionals, children, young people and families
* Building and maintaining respectful partnerships with practitioners and partner agencies
* Developing innovative practices to improve outcomes for children, young people and their families
 | * Supporting staff/students to ensure practice achieves the best long-term outcomes for children, young people and families
* Supporting practitioners to make decisions based on evidence, and taking account of the wishes and feelings of children
* Recognising where relationships between professionals are likely to compromise the welfare of families and the safety of children, taking immediate and corrective action
* Supporting practitioners to achieve quality work
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| Skills & Knowledge | * Legislation and national standards relevant to the post
* Thorough understanding of the range of Social Work theories, evidence based tools and direct work with children
* Commitment to stregnths based , trauma informed , child centred practice
* Understanding of best practice within national and local contexts
* Able to use excellent communication skills to confidently provide analytical, constructive feedback to others to develop their practice
* Recognise harm and the risk indicators of different forms of harm to children
* Use the law, regulatory and statutory guidance to inform practice decisions
* Understanding of different learning styles, how we emotionally regulate and the importance of reflective supervision
* Undertake analysis and make realistic, child centred safety plans within timescales which will manage and reduce identified risks and provide support which meets the needs of the child
* Ability to empower children, young people and their families in make long term positive changes for their future
 | * Understanding of performance management
* Knowledge of research relevant to the post
* Ability to identify relevant research and apply to practice

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| Personal Qualities | * Demonstrate confidence in having your own practice observed and scrutinised by others
* Self-reflective, aware of strengths and areas for development, and able to use critical feedback to improve own performance, taking responsibility for own professional development
* Organised and manages time effectively, planning ahead systematically well in advance
* Persistence, determination and professional confidence
* Commitment and enthusiasm to achieving positive long-term outcomes and promoting the welfare and safety of children and young people
* Commitment to shaping the learning of others.
* Anti-discriminatory and anti-oppressive practice and non-judgemental stance and the confidence to challenge oppressive practice.
* Able to work well under pressure
* Modelling efficient practice to promote work life balance, resilience and self-care
* Kindness, patience and excellent communication skills
* Ability to balance own caseload demands with ASYE support to ensure the NQSW’s develop and progress.Ability to work flexible hours, including some occasional evenings and weekends
* Commitment to Continuous Professional Development
* Hold a current driving licence and have access to a car (social workers with a disability must have access to a means of mobility support)
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