# Senior Social Worker -Job description

Service area: Safeguarding and Family Support

Grade: PO4

Reports to: Practice Manager

Your team: Children’s Employment and Skills

Number of supervisees: N/A

## Our ambition

We're determined to make Islington more equal. To create a place where everyone, whatever their background, has the opportunity to reach their potential and enjoy a good quality of life.

We also have an ambitious goal – to be the best council in the country– with every employee clear about the part they play and inspired, focused and supported to give their very best.

We want to build an organisation where employees feel valued, inspired and empowered to help us achieve our goals and provide the best services possible to our residents.

## Our values and behaviours

‘Be Islington’ is about setting a clear challenge about what it means to be an Islington employee and sets the standard for every new recruit.

We ask our employees to ‘Be Islington’ – playing their part in working together for a more equal borough and to always be collaborative, be ambitious, be resourceful, and be empowering (‘CARE’).

## Our commitment to challenging inequality

We are committed to tackling inequality, racism and injustice and creating a more equal borough for all. In order to do this, we need to set the example by being a fair employer and creating a workplace environment which is free from discrimination, racism and inequality. Our approach needs to be proactive, consistently learning to create a more equal workplace and foster a culture which empowers all staff to challenge inequality.

Equality is at the heart of what we do. We want to celebrate and embrace our differences by:

* Ensuring our workforce is representative of the people we work on behalf of, our residents
* Creating equitable working environments and diverse teams
  + Understanding our residents in order to design and deliver services that help tackle inequality and improve life chances for our residents
  + Getting to know people and their differences
  + Interpreting issues and concerns from a cultural perspective and address situations or problems from the points-of-view of multiple cultures

## Primary Job Function

Our vision for the service is that children and young people are safe, can overcome difficulties and can form secure relationships through their childhood and into their adulthood.

As a Senior Child and Family Social Worker you will be responsible for working with complex cases of children in need of help and protection or looked after children and care-leavers, whilst maintaining the focus on safeguarding. You will work directly with the child or young person and their family or carer to build empathic, purposeful relationships that facilitate meaningful and sustainable change as well as stability in placement and permanency for children.

You will confidently model motivational trauma informed practice. You will be available to your team in sharing your experience and support Social Workers in alignment with Islington’s Practice model through coaching, consultation and co-working. You will lead on developing areas of practice.

You will share and exercise the organisational practice ethos which places Motivational Practice and trauma-informed practice at the heart of working with families. You will be ambitious for every child to reach their potential in all aspects of their development including education, health and emotional wellbeing.

## Key responsibilities

Manage the specific set of tasks relating to statutory and non-statutory case responsibility for children in need of help and protection, in public care and young people leaving care with the support of an appropriately qualified supervisor.

To develop a culture of trauma-informed practice that helps to improve the quality of relationships with children and young people, through Motivational Practice.

1. **Relationship and effective direct work**
   1. Build effective relationships with the child, young person, family or carers to decide the best way to keep them safe, bring about change and improve outcomes ensuring that child protection is always prioritised. Observe and talk to children, young people and their families/carers within their environment to help understand their physical and emotional world.
   2. Provide support using best evidence direct work to address identified needs, significant risk and support children and young people in placements, those being adopted and moving to independence.
   3. Ability to co-work cases with less experienced colleagues whilst also managing your own complex caseload.
2. **Communication**
3. To communicate clearly and sensitively with children, young people and families/ carers and other professionals within differing contexts taking into account diversity and the need to tailor communication styles. To engage and motivate people to participate in support services.
4. To listen to the wishes and feelings of children and young people and support parents, carers and other professionals to understand behaviour and improve outcomes.
5. Produce written cases notes and reports that are well argued, focused and jargon free with sound analysis and rationale for actions. Additionally, to further enhance the practice model within your team via coaching, mentoring and facilitating team sessions.
6. **Child Development**
7. Have an in depth understanding and knowledge of child development milestones, and how they can be impacted on by trauma. With this knowledge, be able to seek additional professional advice when needed in order to effectively understand, challenge and advocate on behalf of children and young people with their parents, carers and the professional network.
8. Support colleagues to increase their knowledge of child development and apply this to your complex case work.
9. **Adult mental ill health, substance misuse, domestic abuse, physical ill health and disability**
10. To have a clear and empathic understanding of how the above issues impact on the parent child relationship. To use this understanding to develop a holistic view of family circumstances. To plan collaboratively with parents and the multi-agency professional network enabling parents to effect change and to help children make sense of their history.
11. Use your extensive knowledge and experience to become a practice lead in a key area of child and family social work. Demonstrate your ability to use a wide range of evidence based models and support others in the application of these.
12. **Abuse and neglect in children and young people**
13. To have an awareness and curiosity of the indicators of abuse and neglect and to use this to collate multi agency information. Where necessary, confidently lead and co-work investigations to protect children.
14. **Child and family assessment**
15. To complete thorough, children and young people focussed assessments, which recognize strengths, vulnerabilities as well as attitude to change. Ensure that assessments bring out clearly the voice of the child or young person. Demonstrate an empathic view of how family and wider circumstances impact on children’s ability to develop to their full potential.
16. Additionally, you will bring research and practice guidance to team settings which will help to improve the quality of assessments.
17. **Analysis, decision making, planning and review**
    1. Analyse complex plans regularly to ensure the support provided is making a difference to reduce risk and adjust the plan accordingly, including the views of children, young people, parents, carers and the professional network.
    2. Demonstrate accountability for the support being provided by producing written case notes and reports, which are reasoned, purposeful and jargon free. Present a clear analysis and a sound rationale for actions and decisions made, so that all parties are well informed.
    3. Co-work cases and support colleagues to create and develop clear and purposeful plans for children and families.
18. **The law and the family, and youth justice systems**
    1. Use the law, regulatory and statutory guidance to inform practice. Demonstrate ability to participate in complex decision making to ensure children and young people are kept safe, utilising the legal powers, duties and resources available.
19. **Role of supervision**
    1. Use individual and group supervision reflectively to discuss, debate and test hypotheses when examining your cases. Using your experience, you will explore multiple perspectives and presenting issues, linked to underlying risk or needs. Utilise supervision to further your practice skills, build confidence and reflect on your own development.
20. **Organisational context**
    1. Operate successfully in a wide range of organisational contexts complying with the checks and balances within local and national systems.
    2. Maintain effective working relationships with peers, managers and leaders both within the profession, throughout multi-agency partnerships and public bodies, including the family courts. Co-work complex court cases with colleagues.
    3. Encourage and advocate for organisational focus, resource and support for the children and young people you work with.

Additional

The post holder is expected to:

* Ensure all the services within the area(s) of responsibility are provided in accordance with the Council's commitment to high quality service provision to users.
* To be committed to the Council’s core values of public service, quality, equality and empowerment and to demonstrate this commitment in the way they carry out their duties.
* To carry out their responsibilities/duties within the framework of the Council's Dignity for all Policy (Equal Opportunities Policy).
* Carry out their duties and responsibilities in accordance with the Council’s Health and Safety Policy and relevant Health and Safety legislation.
* Ensure that duties are undertaken with due regard and compliance with the Data Protection Act and other legislation.
* Adhere to the standards of conduct, performance and ethics of the Health and Care Professions Council.

### Compliance

Ensure legal, regulatory and policy compliance under GDPR, Health and Safety and in area of your specialism identifying opportunities and risks and escalating where appropriate.

## Budget responsibilities

None

## Work style

Office-Based/Frontline Role

## Person specification

You should demonstrate on your application form how you meet the essential criteria. Please ensure that you address each of the criteria as this will be assessed to determine your suitability for the post.

Assessment Guide

A = Application

I = Interview

T = Test

### Essential criteria

#### Qualifications

| Essential criteria | Criteria description | Assessed by |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | SWE recognised social work qualification. | A |

#### Experience, Knowledge and Skills

| Essential criteria | Criteria description | Assessed by |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 2 | Demonstrate understanding of Motivational Practice skills and trauma informed approaches. | A/I |
| 3 | **Relationship and effective direct work**  Demonstrate expertise in building purposeful relationships balancing empathy and authority and supporting colleagues to do the same. Experience of direct work, understanding the impact of trauma and ensuring safeguarding is prioritised in the most complex cases. | A/I |
| 4 | **Communication (verbal)**  Demonstrate evidence of expertise in communicating and listening, taking into account diversity and the need to tailor communication style. Evidence of observing and providing feedback to colleagues of direct practice. | A/I |
| 5 | **Communication (written)**  Produce written cases notes and reports that are well argued, focused and jargon free with sound analysis and rationale for actions. | A/I |
| 6 | **Child Development**  Demonstrated ability to utilise and apply research and/or evidence-based approaches in complex casework in to engage children and young people in their environment and understand the world in which they live. Evidence of disseminating this learning to support colleagues in recognising child development milestones. | A/I |
| 7 | **Adult mental ill health, substance misuse, domestic abuse, physical ill health and disability**  Demonstrated expertise in one or more of the above areas in order to mitigate risk to children and young people to improve individual and family functioning in complex cases. Evidence of sharing this expertise within the service. | A/I |
| 8 | **Abuse and neglect in children and young people**  Demonstrate the ability to assess the impact of cumulative trauma demonstrating clarity of concerns about what the risks are, namely; sexual, physical, emotional abuse, neglect CSE, gangs, and radicalisation as well the impact of parental issues on children. | A/I |
| 9 | **Child and family assessment**  Demonstrate ability to collaboratively undertake multi agency, in-depth and ongoing assessments of social need and risk to children and young people with particular emphasis on capacity for change, leading to effective planning to address the impact of trauma, where the voice of the child or young  person is given precedence. | A/I |
| 10 | **Analysis, decision making, planning and review**  Evidence of positive change within a complex or challenging case by identifying thresholds of risk and need, making clear recommendations based on evidence and professional judgement. Collaborate with the child, young person, family or carers to set out clear goals about what needs to change including family’s own support network, ensuring plans are purposeful and support children and young people to reach their potential. | A/I |
| 11 | **The law and the family, and youth justice systems**  Participate in decisions about whether to make an application to the family court, the type of order to be applied for and the preparation and presentation of evidence. Evidence of supporting others through this process. | A/I |
| 12 | **Role of supervision**  Demonstrated ability to make effective use of reflective discussion opportunities to enhance your professional practice. Awareness of your own emotional response to the work and the ability to identify strategies to ensure a high quality of service. | A/I |
| 13 | **Organisational context**  Evidence of enhancing the effectiveness of practice within your organisation.  Demonstrated high organisational skills and ability to prioritise workload in order to meet the requirements of the organisation and national systems.  Advocate for the children, young people and families you work with to maintain organisational focus, resource and support from internal and external agencies. | A/I |
| 14 | Ability to carry out duties and adhere to the council’s equal opportunity and diversity policy “Dignity for All.” | A/I |

## Special requirements of the post

| Essential criteria | Criteria description | Assessed by |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 15 | This role will require you to obtain an Enhanced satisfactory clearance from the Disclosure and Barring Service |  |

## Our accreditations

Our accreditations include: the Healthy Workplace award, Timewise, London Living Wage Employer, Disability Confident Committed, The Mayor’s Good Work Standard, Stonewall Diversity Champion, and Time to Change.

