



Role profile

Role title	Principal Social Worker
Corporate directorate	Children Schools and Families
Service	Children and Family Services
Grade	L
Reports to (role title)	Team Manager
Version	
JE code	004142

Approving manager	
Date	

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Role purpose

Under the leadership and management of a Team Manager, qualified and registered Principal Social Workers provide a statutory social work service, undertaking direct work to help and protect children, young people and support their families/carers and communities. They demonstrate learning in practice and consistently good performance. They play a key role in developing and monitoring the capabilities of front-line social work staff through developing, maintaining and championing expertise in social work practice, driving excellent practice based on research and professional experience.

They take part in and provide high quality, reflective supervision in line with the Service Supervision Standards. This includes providing critical reflection, challenge and evidence informed decision making in complex situations, supporting others in developing these capabilities and finding their own solutions. This includes positive participation in the Service Framework for Quality Assurance and Performance Management as a source of learning and professional accountability.

They model continuous professional development and learning through engagement with the core curriculum and possess accredited M-Level post-qualifying awards. They work closely with the Principal Child and Family Social Worker and practice educators to establish and sustain a learning team culture. They provide mentoring, training and support to less experienced team members including practice learning for sponsored trainees, student social workers, and newly qualified Social Workers undertaking the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment.

They model and promote effective and respectful communication in highly charged, complex or challenging circumstances to a wide range of audiences, for different purposes and at different levels, including public speaking and presenting. They work collaboratively and positively with other professionals and partner agencies in and across teams in order to provide a seamless and coherent service along the continuum of need set out in the Integrated Service model and contribute to a supportive organisational culture. This will include the development of liaison at local and regional levels, resolving dilemmas actively where necessary.

The Principal Social Worker deputises for the Team Manager, promoting and developing professional leadership within their area of responsibility and representing the team in working groups set up to raise the quality of practice and improve the effectiveness of the service.

Dimensions

Annual financial accountability
Supporting the Team Manager in setting and controlling the team budget. Making decisions on resources within the scheme of delegation.
Management accountability
Nature of management: Supervision social workers and other social care staff. Making the full range of decisions commensurate to the role and grade. Deputising fully in the absence of the Team Manager. Number of staff managed: Up to 4-6

Context

Child poverty in Cornwall has increased significantly over the last 10 years, and many of our communities have levels of child poverty, by the government's own measures, of 35-40%, and some with 40% plus. Despite these high levels of deprivation, Cornwall's children's social care service is recognised as one of the foremost in the country.

We are an ambitious, child-focused service, with a track record of improvement in terms of outcomes for the children we work for. We have been subject to positive reviews, research and inspections over the last 5 years, culminating in being rated 'Outstanding' overall in the Ofsted Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services inspection in October 2019. We remain committed to continuously improving practice and service delivery to 'build on Outstanding'.

We have maintained and built on quality and performance in the face of significant demand pressures – in volume and complexity of needs and risks. We have developed and embedded a strong learning and performance culture. We respond to well-founded criticism with a willingness to learn and to change. We identify what we are worried about and do something about it – often from what children and young people tell us. Together For Families, our integrated children's services directorate, is enabling new opportunities to make integration a reality for children and families.

Accountabilities

Cornwall Council is a dynamic organisation and the particular duties and accountabilities may vary from time to time without changing the general character of the role or the level of responsibility entailed.

Individual objectives will be agreed via the PDS appraisal process

- Undertaking all aspects of casework in accordance with the approved practice quality standards and the requirements of the Service Framework for a Balanced Caseload. By;
 - Developing an excellent understanding of the child's lived experience, conveying their views and feelings through high quality practice skills in assessment, planning, intervention and review
 - Gathering, analysing and reviewing complex and/or contradictory information quickly and effectively, using it to reach informed professional decisions
 - Ensuring the values and ethics of the profession in practice, using a legal and human rights framework and supporting others to do so
 - Using evidence-based practice to improve the child's welfare and safety, leading to improved outcomes, modelling the integration of research and current professional knowledge into daily practice
 - Modelling effective engagement and partnership working with children and young people, parents/carers and networks in challenging situations
 - Supporting others to develop and maintain effective engagement, including in situations of hostility and risk
 - Using sophisticated knowledge of the law relevant to their area of practice and the use of more specialist advice when appropriate
 - Supporting and encouraging professional decision making in others, identifying when more strategic / expert advice is needed
 - Maintaining the child's case record accurately and up to date, including a record of significant events in the child's life, a case summary and family map
 - Taking personal and professional responsibility for the quality of own practice and that of supervisees including the contribution to the child's progress in reducing the risk of harm and achieving improved outcomes
- Providing formal, reflective supervision and appraisal to other social workers and social care practitioners. Supporting less experienced colleagues and supervisees to develop the knowledge and skills required to meet the approved practice quality standards. Sharing knowledge and skills through mentoring, coaching and supervision and modelling positive and constructive engagement in the Career

& Qualification Pathway and Council's system for appraisal as a key process for feedback and career development.

- Promoting learning by;
 - Taking part in and facilitating team meetings, team-based seminars and development days, contributing to a positive and supportive team culture.
 - Promoting, articulating and supporting a positive social work identity within the organisation and through external collaboration with colleagues
 - Participating in consultations and when required to lead task and finish groups aimed at improving the quality of practice and the effectiveness of service
 - Accessing professional and academic research from validated sources as the basis for reflective practice and supervision
 - Modelling a commitment to continuous professional development, undertaking relevant elements of the core curriculum and completing accredited post-qualifying awards in order to progress in line with the Career and Qualification Pathway for social workers in Cornwall
 - Modelling the development and use of evidence-based practice skills and validated assessment tools
 - Maintaining an awareness of changes in national and local contexts and their impact on practice, communicating this effectively within and outside of the organisation, positively influencing developments that affect social work practice
- Working collaboratively and positively within an integrated, multi-disciplinary service. Developing and sustaining excellent partnership working with other professionals involved with children and families, voluntary and community groups.
- Acting as a representative of the Service and the profession at all times, modelling and promoting confident and critical application of professional ethics and the Service in accordance with our Statement of Mission and Values. Advocating and using influencing skills to promote social justice, inclusion and equality.
- Undertaking any other duties required of the role and commensurate to the grade for the role.
- Complying with the full range of the Council's employment relations policies.
- Fulfilling all the requirements of registration with Social Work England in relation to personal conduct and fitness to practice.

Corporate accountabilities

Information security and governance

Manage information in line with the Council's policies, procedures and guidance on subjects such as Data Protection, Freedom of Information, confidentiality, information security and sharing, the information lifecycle and data quality, to ensure compliance and efficient and effective information governance

Safeguarding

Maintain awareness of Council policies and practices regarding the safeguarding of children, young people and/ or adults who may be at risk. Report concerns/ allegations in accordance with corporate guidance and procedures

Equality & Diversity

Work to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and report incidents as they occur. Treat everyone with dignity and respect and ensure individual's needs are met. Challenge inappropriate behaviour and language constructively, advising on alternatives so the opportunity for change can be considered

Customer Experience

Drive to continually improve customer satisfaction and maintain a clear and consistent focus on delivering outstanding customer experience

Health, Safety and Wellbeing

Proactively manage health and safety risks and lead on the creation of a positive health and safety culture to safeguard the health, safety and wellbeing of yourself and others. Understand your health and safety responsibilities and lead on compliance with council policy and procedures.

Key objectives

To undertake the full range of statutory social work tasks at an advanced level in accordance with relevant childcare legislation, statutory guidance, approved procedures, management action notes and practice quality standards. Undertake direct work within a statutory social work service, possessing specialist knowledge and skills in advanced practice with children and families, leading on areas of practice by extending and disseminating knowledge, skills and expertise throughout the service.

To model positive and constructive engagement in reflective supervision, as the primary source of coaching, learning and professional accountability.

To promote a positive culture of learning and development and contribute to the development of a learning organisation.

To work collaboratively and positively with other professionals and partner agencies in and across teams within an integrated, multi-disciplinary service.

To deputise for the Team Manager as needed, promoting and developing professional leadership within their area of responsibility.

Competencies and other requirements

We use the following criteria below to assess your suitability for the role; please refer to the recruitment & selection column to establish at which stage the criteria are assessed. Requirements assessed at the 'Application' stage represent the minimum essential requirement for shortlisting purposes

Behaviours	Recruitment and selection
<p>Working together</p> <p>You understand and focus on customer satisfaction and work well with colleagues and partners.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You deliver exceptional customer service – you understand and are attentive to the needs of your customers • You listen to the views of others and seek them out • You support and show consideration for others • You work well with colleagues and partners and acknowledge the different ideas, perspectives and backgrounds of others • You are committed to the protection and safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults • You share information and expertise with others • You are honest, you respect and you build relationships of trust • You share your achievements and acknowledge the achievements of others 	<p style="text-align: center;">Interview/ Assessment</p>
<p>Resourceful</p> <p>You apply expertise, solve problems and make improvements to deliver the best possible customer outcomes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You plan and organise your work and manage your time effectively • You gather relevant information, analyse it and make timely informed decisions in the course of your work • You are flexible and adaptable • You respond constructively to change • You demonstrate financial awareness relevant to the job you do • You use your initiative and are creative in problem solving • You deliver results and demonstrate commitment to serving customers 	<p style="text-align: center;">Interview/ Assessment</p>
<p>Personal responsibility</p> <p>You take responsibility for your work, your environment and your development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You are trustworthy and reliable • You pay attention to your own health, safety and wellbeing and that of others • You acknowledge errors, report them as appropriate and play your part in addressing them • You appropriately challenge unhelpful behaviour • You seek feedback and review your own contribution • You are open to change and improvement • You take responsibility for your development • You are enthusiastic about and take pride in your work 	<p style="text-align: center;">Interview/ Assessment</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You act as an ambassador for the Council to our customers 	
<p>Engaging leadership</p> <p>You create a healthy and engaging working environment by building trusting and supportive relationships, encouraging development, recognising achievement and tackling underperformance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> You give clear direction, you delegate appropriately and you provide a supportive environment in which team members can learn, grow and take responsibility You take opportunities to influence and contribute to strategic planning and development You help your team to understand how their work contributes to delivering the Customer Service Promise and what the Council is trying to achieve You create opportunities to interact personally with all members of your team, you actively encourage team members to share their views and concerns and you give feedback on the outcome You take time to understand the strengths of your team and you encourage and support their development You coach your team to fulfil their potential and recognise individual and team achievements You identify and effectively address your responsibilities for customers, people, finance, performance and change management 	<p>Interview/ Assessment</p>

Knowledge, skills & experience	Recruitment and selection
Social Work Degree with relevant Social Work Qualification.	Application Form and Certificate
Current registration with Social Work England.	Application Form and Certificate
Master's level post qualifying specialist award totalling 120 level 7 credits (PGDip Advanced Practice with Children & Families for internal applicants) or accredited equivalent PQ award within an advanced field of social work.	Application Form and Certificate
Demonstrable advanced knowledge and practice skills in working with vulnerable children, young people and their families - under The Knowledge and Skills Statement (KSS) for child and family practitioners at PCF Advanced Practitioner level	Application Form/Interview/Assessment
A sound knowledge of legislation and statutory guidance relating to childcare.	Application Form Interview/ Assessment
An accurate understanding of the role, function and accountabilities of a local authority social worker with children and families.	Application Form Interview/ Assessment
A good understanding of the main risks to a child's welfare, development and safety, along with a developing knowledge about how to reduce those risks.	Interview/ Assessment
An applied understanding of issues of equality, diversity and cultural capability.	Interview/ Assessment

A good understanding of the current issues and themes related to social work with children and families	Interview/ Assessment
Ability to engage positively with children and young people, gaining their trust and confidence.	Interview/ Assessment
Ability to undertake statutory social work assessments of need, risks, strengths, produce a sound analysis and translate that analysis into a coherent plan to improve the child's outcomes.	Interview/ Assessment
Ability to communicate effectively and to write coherent reports, including reports for statutory panels and Court.	Interview/ Assessment
Ability to work together, in partnership with other professionals and agencies.	Interview/ Assessment
Ability to facilitate multi-disciplinary groups, including professionals meetings and core groups.	Interview/ Assessment
Ability to represent the Service and Council effectively in a range of multi-professional settings, including the Family Courts, Child Protection Conferences and Child in Care Reviews.	Interview/ Assessment
Ability to demonstrate calmness and resilience under pressure and to manage the stress of working with children subject to neglect and abuse.	Interview/ Assessment

Other requirements	Recruitment and selection
Evidence of progressive engagement with a post qualifying career and qualification developmental pathway, demonstrating sustained commitment to own continuous professional development. (Internal candidates should provide evidence of two observations of practice annually as per Cornwall TFF Supervision Standards policy).	Application Form
The normal duties of the role may involve travel on a regular or occasional basis. It is a condition of employment that staff can exercise satisfactory travel mobility in order to fulfil the obligations of the role. For those journeys where an alternative form of transport is unavailable or impracticable staff will be required to provide a suitable vehicle.	Application Form
The normal duties of the role may involve the need to work flexibly, including extended hours and the ability on occasions to join the out of hours rota.	Application Form
This position is subject to an enhanced criminal records disclosure check	YES
This is a politically restricted position	NO