

Senior Practitioner

Department: Children, Young People, Education and Skills

Division: Children's Services

Reports to: Team Manager

Job purpose

To carry a small caseload of more complex cases commensurate with the senior practitioner role and assist the team manager in performance management, quality assurance and providing support and mentoring for social workers, family support workers and other colleagues.

The senior practitioner will support the team manager to ensure the delivery of a comprehensive assessment and protection service to children, young people and their family/carers who may be deemed to be at risk or in need of support services, and ensure quality support/protection interventions and plans are in place.

Job specific outcomes

- To be responsible for a small caseload of more complex cases commensurate with the senior practitioner role.
- To support and mentor social workers and family support workers in the delivery of core social work business.
- To ensure assessments, interventions and case planning are delivered to a high standard and outcome focussed and in the best interests of service users.
- To ensure case records are accurate and up to date (in relation to both own cases and those of team members they may be asked to support).
- To ensure a holistic approach to assessment and care planning and ensuring the involvement of service users and their family/carers where appropriate. The senior practitioner must balance this with an overriding duty of care to protect those who are at risk of abuse, mistreatment or self-harm.
- To lead by example, establishing and maintaining the trust and confidence of service users, families, carers and other stakeholders by communicating in an appropriate, open and transparent way, clearly explaining their role and responsibilities from the outset, including any statutory intervention which may be required if necessary.
- To support and guide social work colleagues in challenging and reporting dangerous, abusive, discriminatory or exploitative behaviour or practice, including potential criminal offences wherever this may be found.
- To work in accordance with department policies and procedures as required.
- To use statutory powers to ensure and promote the service user's safety and wellbeing where necessary.
- To maintain the highest standards of personal and professional conduct, adhering to both departmental and professional codes of conduct.
- To treat all information relating to service users in the strictest of confidence in line with data protection, relevant disclosure and consent policies, and information sharing protocols and procedures.

- To undertake any additional tasks as required by the department, commensurate to the grade of the post holder.

Statutory responsibilities

Active engagement, participation and compliance with any other statutory responsibilities applicable to the role, as amended from time to time.

Organisational structure



Person Specification

Specific to the role

It is an essential requirement that the post holder possesses a professional qualification in Social Work (Degree or Diploma in Social Work), and has social work experience in their specialist area.

Senior practitioners must be registered with the appropriate UK professional governing body, i.e. The HCPC and locally, must also register under the Health Care (Registration) (Jersey) Law 1995. The post holder must possess and be able to demonstrate a wide range of information technology skills as most assessments and records are electronically generated.

The post holder must possess a proven ability to work autonomously in their particular area of expertise, be highly motivated and conscientious, exhibiting the capacity for independent, responsible professional decision making, often whilst under considerable pressure supporting social workers and other staff working as part of a multi-disciplinary approach. They must have considerable experience and confidence in prioritising and managing casework based upon urgency, assessed level of need and risk.

Senior practitioners will be able to provide evidence of and commitment to, relevant continuing professional development to an advanced level and will have developed additional skills relevant to their interest and responsibilities to meet the needs of children, young people and families for whom they hold responsibility.

They will be expected to possess or be willing to undertake any relevant Post Qualification training in line with their role, whilst also ensuring they have undertaken relevant specialist training such as Achieving Best Evidence (for those involved in child protection work)..

Senior practitioners must be able to demonstrate substantial personal and social skills. Because their role in supporting and developing interventions is reliant upon effective inter-professional and inter-agency communication and co-operation and the building of effective professional relationships with child and adult family members, it is essential that practitioners possess positive and constructive attitudes to colleagues, service users and carers.

Core Accountabilities, Attributes and Behaviour Indicators

The senior practitioner role requires the post holder to have the ability to communicate effectively with a wide range of service users, their families, and carers, some of whom may have communication, psychological or behavioural difficulties or disabilities, which make the forming of effective and open relationships challenging.

Senior practitioners work in a multi-disciplinary, multi-agency context. It is essential that they have a detailed knowledge of the broad range of professionals and resources they may need to call on.

It is important that they maintain respectful relationships within these services in order that they can be effective in advocating on staff and service users' behalf and accessing resources necessary to meet their own and other staff's needs. Individuals and agencies which form an essential part of the social workers network include representative organisations advocating on behalf of particular client groups, advocacy workers, and service providers in the independent and private sectors.

Part of the social work role is to exercise statutory powers where appropriate. Senior practitioners therefore play a lead role in the civil court arena, facilitating communication with legal advisors, overseeing and endorsing the preparation of evidence and court reports, acting as lead witnesses in applications for care and supervision orders in relation to children, providing information to and taking a lead role in investigation with States of Jersey police colleagues in cases where criminal offences against vulnerable adult and children may have occurred.

As part of the role supporting the team manager, it is critical that the post holder liaises with and highlights any concerns to their line manager, and is able to challenge and deal with any work related issues presented by supervisees.

Senior practitioners have a key role in their profession, supporting social workers, family support workers and other staff whilst managing the most complex cases. They typically build up significant knowledge and expertise in their own specialist area and act as 'experts' within their teams and across their service on those particular issues, offering advice and support as required.

Senior practitioners are able to exercise appropriate levels of autonomy and make a particular contribution in situations where there are very high levels of complexity, uncertainty, stress, conflicts of interest and risk, particularly to children and vulnerable adults. They apply high-level analytical skills and knowledge to assessing these situations, and contribute to making complex judgements on what action to take. They must also recognise situations when a higher level of decision-making or authority is required.

Where necessary, the senior practitioner will be supporting parents to improve their ability to effectively meet their children's needs, or, in some cases, removing children and placing them in other care settings, in accordance with the safety and best interests of the child and supporting them to reach their potential.

The senior practitioner reports to their Team manager as the first line of oversight, guidance, review and support for direct case management, but they also need to keep up to date and

informed regarding national initiatives and risk management issues with regards to service users in their specialist field.