

## North Somerset Council

### JOB DESCRIPTION

<b>DEPARTMENT:</b> Support & Safeguarding	<b>DIVISION AND/OR SECTION:</b> Fostering Support	
<b>JOB TITLE:</b> Supervising Social Worker	<b>POST NO.:</b>	<b>GRADE:</b> JG7/JM1

#### 1. JOB PURPOSE

Under the line management and general supervision of the Team Manager to manage a caseload providing services to all those involved in fostering and adoption. This includes the recruitment, assessment and training and supervision of foster carers and adopters, private foster carers, counselling adopted adults and finding placements for children and young people.

#### 2. DIMENSIONS

Individual Long-term Caseload varying between 20 and 25 depending on urgency/complexity.

Department Caseload (annual)

Adoption enquiries	52	Fostering enquiries	120
Preparation for adoption courses	3	Preparation for fostering courses	3
Adoption assessments	16	Fostering assessments	10
Support & supervision of adopters	14	Support & supervision of foster carers	90
Post adoption support	43	families	
Step-parent adoptions	17		
Section 51 counselling	26		
Birth parent/relative counselling	10		
Letterbox scheme agreements for		54 children	

#### 3. PRINCIPAL ACCOUNTABILITIES

**This is a career graded post. Social Workers will be expected to undertake the majority of the principal accountabilities as part of their development. Appropriate supervision and assistance will be given dependant on the complexity of the case undertaken.**

- a) To carry out the duties and responsibilities under a range of pieces of legislation principally the Children Act 1989, the Care Standards Act 2000, the Adoption Act 2003 and associated standards, regulations and guidance.
- b) To design and facilitate recruitment and training packages for prospective foster carers and adopters.

**Level of supervision expected at this Grade.**

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Extensive  
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- c) To undertake initial assessments and reviews in order to make judgements on the suitability of private fostering placements and of people to become foster or adoptive carers and to present the recommendations to a Foster or Adoptive Panel and/or to attend court to give evidence. Decisions made will use research and evidence based practice.
- d) To provide counselling and advice to different people in a range of circumstances, eg adopters, birth relatives, adopted children, adults who have been adopted and wish to trace their birth parents and/or relatives, adults wishing to pursue step-parent adoption; to birth parents when adoption is likely; including caseholding when the child(ren) is/are voluntarily relinquished for adoption.
- e) To establish a plan of support for an approved foster carer and adopter which will include regular supervision, including unannounced visits and monitoring of record keeping, facilitating support groups, accessing services which will ensure the best outcomes for children and their families. This will be both on an ongoing basis and also in response to crisis situations.
- f) To take on the role of family finder in fostering, both in planned and emergency situations and to contribute to planning for children and the formulation of care plans. To take on the role of family finder in adoption when required.
- g) To be a member of North Somerset's Adoption Panel or Fostering Panel, if required.
- h) To ensure that management are informed of circumstances of a serious nature where children are at extreme risk or there is a degree of public interest or other situations involving risk to staff, carers or service users.
- i) To establish and maintain good working relationships with other professionals within the Directorate and with external agencies in order to protect children, ensure positive life chances for children looked after, and to meet the needs of children in need.
- j) To participate in Duty Team rota responding to referrals and enquiries in an appropriate manner.
- k) To maintain foster carer, case and service user records and undertake general administration and maintenance of systems related to the caseload, including computerised management information systems, according to relevant legislation and Directorate procedures and policies

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**Below bar-  
accountability  
not normally  
undertaken  
Above bar –  
minimal**

**Below bar-  
extensive  
Above bar –  
minimal**

**Both grades –  
minimal**

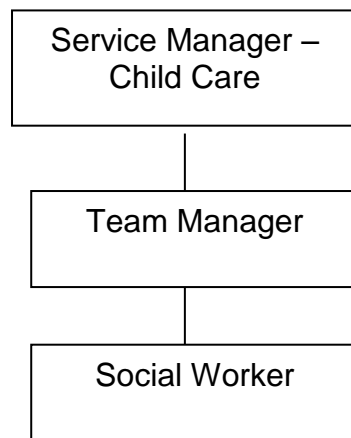
**Both grades –  
minimal**

**Both grades –  
minimal**

- l) To participate in North Somerset Council's Staff Appraisal system, undertaking training and research as required and assisting in the promotion of specialist skills.
- m) To be aware of and understand the Council's Comprehensive Equality Policy and Race Equality Scheme and ensure at all times that the duties of the post are carried out in accordance with the policy.
- n) To ensure compliance with all health and safety legislation and associated codes of practice and Authority policies.
- o) To undertake other duties as are required and are commensurate with the grade of the post.

<b>Both grades – minimal</b>
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**4. ORGANISATION**



**5. SUPERVISION AND WORK PLANNING**

Child Care Social Workers do not have specific line management responsibility for other staff but will be expected to supervise students and unqualified staff on an occasional basis.

Supervision on individual cases is given by the appropriate Team Manager at least on a monthly basis.

The Team Manager is available for advice/ consultation as problems and issues arise.

**6. QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE**

Social Worker below bar:-

A relevant professional qualification (DipSW, CSS, CQSW) is an essential requirement. A willingness to undertake post qualifying training is essential.

Social Worker above bar:-

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2 years post qualification experience is essential.

## **7. JOB CONTEXT**

North Somerset Council is responsible for fulfilling its role as a Corporate Parent to children looked after. The postholder contributes to this with a delegated authority by supporting and supervising those who care for looked after children and children placed for adoption. The postholder will be involved in pilot schemes and will participate in working groups set up by the Authority with other external agencies.

The postholder will be responsible for a caseload of varying complexity receiving and responding to referrals from the Intake Teams and other professionals and members of the community.

## **8. SCOPE FOR IMPACT**

The post holder will be involved in recruiting foster carers and adopters and assessing their suitability and competence to meet the complex needs of looked after children in North Somerset thereby improving outcomes.

The postholder should have the ability to prioritise work according to competing deadlines and changing demands, understand and interpret relevant legislation to meet service needs. Also to think creatively to develop support packages by balancing needs and resources.

Problems encountered will include difficult and dangerous service users, sometimes-scarce resources and tight timescales. Social workers act as co-ordinators in situations where other agencies are involved.

The postholder may have the scope for involvement in developing links and in new initiatives with other professionals to improve services for children at risk and in need and their families/carers and to influence change in overall service delivery.

Family Placement work offers an opportunity to work in an innovative and creative way.

## **9. CONTACTS**

Principally this will be with adopters and foster carers and their children and extended families, looked after children. Also with members of the public, statutory independent/private and voluntary agencies and staff from this and other Directorates in the Council, Fostering and Adoption Panels, and Courts, the Adoption Consortium and the National Register.

## **10. GENERAL**

This job specification only contains the principal accountabilities relating to this post and does not describe in detail all the duties required to carry them out.

## **11. Special Notes or Conditions (if applicable)**

May be required to work at any location determined by the Housing & Social Services Directorate.

The postholder may on occasion be required to work outside normal office hours within a 37 hour working week.

The postholder occasionally will be exposed to objectionable, uncomfortable, unfavourable and particularly difficult working conditions.

The postholder will be required to use his/her initiative in ensuring that the Council's Equality Policies are implemented in relation to the work area. This will involve developing a good working knowledge of the policies and applying them personally and through staff managed by the postholder.

#### **DATA PROTECTION ACT 1984**

All employees are under a legal obligation not to use or disclose any personal information that comes into their possession in the course of their duties in any unauthorized manner. Duties and obligations under the Act that relate to this particular post will be explained to the postholder upon appointment to this post.

**North Somerset Council**

**PERSON SPECIFICATION**

<b>DEPARTMENT:</b> Support & Safeguarding	<b>DIVISION AND/OR SECTION:</b> Adoption and Fostering	
<b>JOB TITLE:</b> Supervising Social Worker	<b>POST NO.:</b>	<b>GRADE:</b> JG7/JM1

<b>ASSESSMENT CRITERIA</b>	<b>ESSENTIAL</b>	<b>DESIRABLE</b>
<b>QUALIFICATIONS</b>	Recognised / approved professional qualification in social work	Post qualifying award in social work or the child care award in social work
<b>WORK RELATED EXPERIENCE AND ASSOCIATED VOCATIONAL TRAINING</b>	Two years post-qualifying experience of direct social work with children in need and their families.	Experience of statutory child care work in a local authority setting.  Experience of working with foster carers and children looked after.
<b>SPECIALIST KNOWLEDGE</b>	Knowledge of relevant child care legislation  Knowledge of fostering legislation	Safeguarding and protecting children  Adoption  Children looked after  Therapeutic/counseling work  Signs of Safety approach
<b>JOB RELATED SKILLS</b>	Ability to communicate effectively with both foster carers and children/young people to ensure effective outcomes can be achieved.  Empower and support foster families to manage conflict.  Ability to safeguard and promote the welfare of vulnerable children and young people, through supervision of foster carers.  Provide child-centred social work practice based upon social work values, principles enshrined in the professional code of practice.	Being creative and use of problem solving skills to empower families to overcome challenges and barriers.  Experience of working with ICS.  Experience in working and developing groups.

	<p>Ability to communicate effectively verbally and in writing to a range of audiences including children and young people, courts, fostering and multi-agency panels.</p> <p>Ability to analyse, interpret, and make professional judgments when undertaking foster carer's assessments and reviews.</p> <p>Ability to identify placement needs, based in evidence and best practice, clarify outcomes and implement strategies that enable outcomes to be achieved.</p> <p>Ability to manage own caseload and to make effective decisions appropriate to the responsibilities of a social worker.</p> <p>Team player working as part of a multi-agency team, including acting as a lead professional.</p> <p>Ability to regularly use computer programs and other technologies.</p> <p>Reflect on own professional practice, the practice of others, and to make effective use of supervision, coaching and training/development opportunities.</p> <p>Be emotionally resilient to cope with the responsibilities and stresses associated to social work.</p>	
<p><b>SPECIAL WORKING CONDITIONS</b></p>	<p>Registered with the HCPC</p> <p>Willingness to travel within North Somerset and out of County as necessary</p> <p>Willingness to work flexible hours, which include planned and short notice out of office hours visits or events.</p>	<p>Willingness to be part of an out of hours telephone support service.</p>

	<p>Commitment to training and professional development and to participate in North Somerset Council's appraisal system.</p> <p>Commitment to maintain the Council's comprehensive equality policy, race and disability equality scheme and ensure at all times that the duties of the post are carried out in accordance with these policies.</p>	
<b>OTHER</b>	<p>To be subject to a satisfactory report from the Council's appointed occupational health physician.</p> <p>Satisfactory enhanced DBS disclosure certificate (relevant applications and checks will be carried out before any job offer is confirmed).</p>	