

# Job Description and Person Specification

Role: Independent Reviewing Officer



# Job Description

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| <b>Job Title</b>           | Independent Reviewing Officer |
| <b>Grade</b>               | 10                            |
| <b>Service</b>             | Childrens Services            |
| <b>Reports to</b>          | Service Manager               |
| <b>Location</b>            | Coventry                      |
| <b>Job Evaluation Code</b> | L3649D                        |



# About Coventry City Council

**Who we are:** At Coventry City Council we are dedicated to making a positive difference to the services we deliver to the diverse citizens of Coventry. The work we do improves people's lives – from helping them into work to providing clean and green places to live, to keeping people safe and protected.

As a Coventry City Council employee, you have our ongoing commitment to your growth and development with opportunities to work across multiple service areas including customer contact, public health prevention and education and skills, adults and children's services and provide support for the most vulnerable.

**Our Priorities:** Increasing the economic prosperity of the city and region, improving outcomes and tackling inequalities within our communities, and tackling the causes and consequences of climate change.

**Our Values:** We expect everyone who works for us to be committed to our One Coventry values and to share our commitment to becoming a more diverse and inclusive organisation:



## About the Service your team will provide

### Purpose of the role

To provide a comprehensive reviewing service for children looked after and children subject to child protection conferences and child protection plans.

To be responsible for chairing statutory reviews for children looked after, children subject to child protection plans, statutory reviews, short break reviews, strategy meetings and associated meetings.

To ensure that the plans for children looked after, children subject to child protection plans, short break reviews and children in need meet the highest standards and are implemented appropriately.

To ensure the best outcomes for children by actively addressing any drift or delay in the planning for them and promoting prompt resolution of those concerns.

To be responsible for the timeliness of reviews – that they are undertaken within the agreed statutory and procedural timescales.

To write reports and ensure that accurate records are kept in relation to the outcomes of reviews.

To take an active lead in the process of planning for children and young people in accordance with relevant legislation, guidelines, procedures and regulations and associated research and best practice.

To take a lead in inter-agency working with other agencies to promote services to safeguard children in the city.

## Main Duties & Key Accountabilities

### Core Knowledge

- To be responsible for the co-ordination and chairing of Child Protection Conferences, Looked After Reviews and associated/relevant meetings within the agreed statutory timescales for children looked after, children subject to child protection plans and children in need in accordance with The IRO Handbook, Working Together to Safeguard Children, National Minimum Standards, Departmental and Coventry Safeguarding Children Partnership (CSCP) Inter-agency procedures and related legislation and national guidance.

- To be responsible for the preparation, co-ordination and independent chairing of child protection conferences and statutory reviews and provide an independent oversight in the formulation and monitoring of plans, ensuring that children's plans aim to improve the outcomes for children and young people.
  - To identify and report upon situations where a child's human rights (as defined in the relevant legislation) may be adversely affected.
  - To advise Coventry Children's Services on the impact of planning upon children looked after and subject to child protection plans
  - To ensure children are aware of their rights to legal representation and advocacy, and that they know how to seek help.
  - Where children whose case is reviewed wish to proceed under the Adoption and Children Act 2002 on their own account, it is the function of the IRO to take a lead in assisting the child to obtain legal advice; or to establish whether an appropriate adult is able and is willing provide such assistance or bring the proceedings on the child's behalf.
  - Advise on the relevant legal processes to safeguard children
  - That the persons responsible for implementing decisions taken in the review are identified and notified
  - To ensure when reviewing arrangements for children looked after that their voice is understood and wishes and feelings are taken into account;
  - To take a lead in reporting and addressing any delays, drift or failure to review or implement the care plan for the child; that this is brought to the attention of the managers at the appropriate level of seniority within the local authority, and actively promoting resolution.
  - To take a lead in ensuring that plans for children looked after and subject to child protection plans are identified and addressed with due regard to race, religion, culture, ethnicity, disability or sexual orientation
- To be responsible for promoting and facilitating the participation of all service users, children and their families in the processes of planning and reviewing the services provided to them. In particular to ensure that children are empowered within the planning process so that their views and wishes are heard and considered
- To be responsible for ensuring that legal, government and departmental regulations and guidance are observed in respect to the planning and review of children's cases.
- To provide professional and procedural consultation and specialist advice to all professionals at managerial and practitioner levels across CSCP member agencies, to be responsible in so doing for the decision making in giving advice, its quality and consistency in relation to internal and inter agency procedures.
- To provide direction and advice on the proper interpretation of their role, practice and accountability, including prioritisation, risk assessment and risk management. Where appropriate, constructively challenge the judgements and assessments of staff at all levels within the authority and of those constituent partner agencies of the CSCP.
- Liaise with, and establish sound working relationships with other agencies, departments etc; promote joint & multi-disciplinary working partnerships, practice development and initiatives with member agencies of the CSCP to safeguard children.
- To be responsible for systematic monitoring, audit and evaluation of the services and practice of agencies and organisations in relation to safeguarding children that monitor quality and consistency in work with children, reporting to management with recommendations and taking action as appropriate.

- To take a lead in monitoring, audit, evaluation of the performance of the local authority in respect of children looked after and children subject to child protection plans and their reviews via agreed quality assurance measures against procedures and best practice standards in line with performance management framework, policies and procedures.
- To maintain a high level of working knowledge of legislation, statutory instruments, codes of practice, Departmental policies, procedures and good practice in order to maintain and improve professional competence and decision making ensuring they are adhered to and communicate with the post holder's area of responsibility
- To chair, participate and assist in working / task groups, panels and other appropriate forums in the development of practice and policy development within the directorate and Coventry CSCP
- To prepare and maintain and monitor systems and management information for planning and reviewing the care of children looked after children looked after and subject to child protection plans which will establish consistency and quality of practice in the City Council in collaboration with the Manager/Designated Manager for children subject to child protection plans
- To be responsible for advising designated managers of any operational or practice issues of concern in accordance with agreed procedures/protocols
- To be responsible for the referral of cases to the highest authority within the City Council and to the Child & Family Court Advisory Support Service (CAFCASS) where appropriate.
- To promote and implement Departmental policies, procedures, practices, principles and quality standards, and to act in accordance with agreed Practice Standards to ensure that the needs of looked after children and children subject to child protection plans are met.
- To contribute to the delivery of service within allocated budget(s) and in compliance with the Council's financial and other regulations, apply the principles of "best value" in utilising the resources and maximise the use of alternative sources of funding to enhance the provision of services.
- To be responsible for contributing to the management of resources through appropriate recording of expenditure and activity and utilise resources to provide flexible range of services and tailored packages of support / care
- To provide cover for other Independent Reviewing Officers in their absence at the request of the Manager.
- To participate in the overall management of Children's Services.
- Promote and enforce the council's Equal Opportunities Policy.
- Any other duties and responsibilities within the range of the salary grade.

## Key relationships

| External   | Internal  |
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| Health<br>Education<br>Police<br>Probation<br>Housing<br>Other Local Authorities<br>Charities including third sector agencies<br>CAFCASS | All service areas in Childrens Services<br>Human Resources<br>LADO<br>Adults Services |

## Standard information

Post holders will be accountable for carrying out all duties and responsibilities with due regard to Code of Conduct, Safeguarding, Health & Safety and the City Council's Workforce Diversity and Inclusion Policies.

Duties which include processing of any personal data must be undertaken within the corporate data protection guidelines.

### Smoke Free

The City Council is Smoke - Free. Smoking is not permitted on any of our premises or the surrounding land including car parking facilities.

### Training

The postholder must attend any training that is identified as mandatory to their role.

## Responsible for:

Staff managed by postholder: N/A

## Person specification

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| <b>Job Evaluation Code</b>  | L3649D |
| <b>Knowledge</b>  |        |
| Sound knowledge of strengths based, relational best practice with children and families, children in care and care leavers, adoption, child protection and an understanding of the relevant legislative framework and associated guidance.  |        |
| Understanding of the role, function and statutory responsibilities of the CSCP and interagency responsibilities of other agencies, statutory bodies and the private community and voluntary sector in relation to safeguarding children, child protection and children looked after.                          |        |
| Sound knowledge of legislation, guidance and research in relation to all aspects of work with children and their families and detailed knowledge of guidance with particular reference to child protection; children looked after, care leavers, adoption and care planning.                                  |        |
| Knowledge of national strategies and frameworks for the provision of Children's Services for safeguarding children and improving the life chances of children.  |        |
| Sound knowledge of the business of City Council departments and other public services such as the police, PCT, private, voluntary and community sector organisations.   |        |
| Knowledge of local and national policy, practice and legislation with the wider context of provision to Children, Young People and their families especially Change for Children, Safeguarding Children, Every Child Matters, Care Matters, Care Planning regulations and IRO Handbook, CAF, National Minimum |        |
| Standards for Fostering Adoption, Children's Homes and Residential Special Schools, Secure Accommodation.   |        |
| Understanding of effective partnership working and interagency responsibilities and structures for children and families service delivery.  |        |
| Knowledge of effective performance management and quality assurance systems.  |        |
| Developed knowledge of equal opportunities issues in social care and employment and issues faced by families from minority ethnic communities, or other minority groups   |        |
| Excellent written and verbal presentational and communication skills including the ability to communicate effectively at all levels and produce coherent written reports, letters and minutes.  |        |
| Ability to communicate effectively with children and young people and people at all levels within and outside the department.   |        |
| <b>Skills and Abilities</b>   |        |
| Ability to assist in building strong working relationships in a team and with other parts of Children's Services, with other Directorates and Agencies as well as Service Users with the aim of collectively achieving service objectives.  |        |
| Highly developed skills in the assessment of need and risk to children and ensuring that effective action is taken to safeguard children in respect of complex child care cases.  |        |
| Ability to promote and facilitate the participation of children and their families and ensuring service users' views and needs are central to service delivery.   |        |
| Ability to take decisive action, based on options that are available so that service objectives are successfully achieved.  |        |



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| Ability to generate viable plans, ensure that they are put into operation and to monitor progress to ensure objectives are achieved.  |
| Ability to set, work to and enforce service standards and objectives, monitor performance against key indicators of performance, give feedback and demonstrate a commitment to the provision of high quality services.  |
| Ability to seek ways of improving services or working practices and to respond enthusiastically to implement changes that are introduced by others.   |
| Ability to focus on objectives and delivering outcomes that meet or exceed service expectations.  |
| Ability to constructively, assertively and effectively challenge practice, reporting issues of performance and issues for resolution by managers at all levels in the organisation.   |
| Ability to anticipate, mediate and enable resolution of inter-agency / multidisciplinary conflicts.   |
| Ability to chair complex meetings, including strategy meetings, child protection conferences, reviews for looked after children.  |
| Ability to assimilate research, legislation, guidance, problem solving and analytical skills.   |
| Ability to work on own initiative and the capacity to make independent judgements as well as manage an assigned workload prioritising tasks to achieve deadlines and performance measures.  |
| To lead in the monitoring, auditing and quality performance of services provided to children.   |
| To provide professional advice to staff from all agencies on matters of policy, practice and procedure in child protection and planning for children looked after.  |
| To represent the "Coventry Safeguarding Children Partnership" in a range of tasks including training and participating in relevant working parties.   |
| Ability to ensure that due consideration is given to race, religion, culture, ethnicity, disability or sexual orientation in planning for children and that these are underpinned in development of the plans for children looked after and subject to child protection plans are identified and addressed with due regard. |
| <b>Experience</b>   |
| Experience of supporting resolution of inter-organisation and/or intercommunity conflicts.  |
| Experience of supervision and management.   |
| Experience and ability to communicate well with children and young people and promote their participation in planning processes.  |
| Positive action responses to equal opportunities needs in employment or service delivery.   |
| Audit and Performance Management.   |
| Using Information Technology.   |
| Experience of supporting resolution of inter-organisation and/or intercommunity conflicts.  |

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| Experience and ability to relate to children and young people.   |
| Positive action responses to equal opportunities needs in employment or service delivery.  |
| <b>Qualifications</b>  |
| CQSW, Dip SW or equivalent qualification recognised by Social Work England (SWE) – Registered to practice with SWE.  |
| Experience of working at a management and supervision level within child care/child protection setting, including the leadership, management and supervision of professional and support staff and resources.                                    |
| Post qualification experience of Social work practice in related field   |
| <b>Special Requirements</b>  |
| This post is exempted under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and as such appointment to this post will be conditional upon the receipt of a satisfactory response to a check of police records via Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). |
| The post holder will be required to work outside normal office hours and travel within and outside the City.   |

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| <b>Date Created</b> | March 2021 | <b>Date Reviewed</b> | February 2023 |
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