**Job Title - Case Progression (Court/PLO) Advanced Practitioner**

Job Ref

Job type: Full-time 35 hours

Closing date:

Contract Type: Permanent

Salary: £54, 684 - £56, 733 (SCP 41- 43)

Basic/Enhanced DBS check required

Discover yourself in Lewisham where what you do makes a difference to our vibrant and culturally diverse communities! We have a rich history of welcoming people from all over the world and are proud to be recognised as the UK’s first Borough of Sanctuary, for our work in championing the rights of refugees and migrants.

It's an exciting time to join us - Lewisham is a wave 2 Pathfinder authority and is leading the way on national reforms to social work practice through the Families First for Children programme.

**INTRODUCTION**

An exciting opportunity is available for a Case Progression (Court/PLO) Advanced Practitioner. This role will be key in driving practice improvements to our PLO and court work and have a quality assurance function across the division.

The postholder will take the lead on ensuring the effective tracking, monitoring and case progression for all children subject to PLO pre-proceedings and care proceedings. The successful candidate will work closely with social work teams, lawyers, the SGO team and other service areas to ensure effective case progression and quality of practice for all children subject to pre-proceedings and care proceedings to enable timely and well-informed decisions about children’s permanence. This is an advanced practitioner role and the successful candidate will have experience of court and PLO work as well as supervising complex case work. The postholder will report to the permanency team manager.

The postholder will have the opportunity to help design and develop the how we track and monitor care proceedings and PLO work with a focus on driving the quality and timeliness of this work. The successful candidate will also have the opportunity to be linked in with local and London wide initiatives and will represent Lewisham at the South London Care Proceedings Project.

**What’s the role?**

The key responsibilities of the role include:

* Dedicated support, consultancy and advice to social work teams regarding families involved in legal (pre-) proceedings including support and quality assurance of statements and care plans
* Monitor PLO and court work and track progress, attend legal planning and permanency planning meetings
* Provide and facilitate training to ensure the workforce is knowledgeable and skilled
* Create a Thinking Space for court and PLO work
* Work closely with the team managers across Family Help and MACPT

This is an interesting role where the postholder will be able to influence and develop social work practice in a key area of our work.

**About You**

You will have experience in:

* managing complex frontline operational safeguarding practice
* court and PLO work
* an understanding of how to improve practice across the division

The person applying must have a thorough technical knowledge of the requirements of Working Together 2023, the Pan London Child Protection Procedures and other relevant safeguarding and care planning statutory guidance.  A track record of practice improvement and an in depth understanding of the Signs of Safety practice framework are essential.

You will need to be a skilled, reflective practitioner and leader with a clear vision of what good practice with children and families looks like. You will be able to use and analyse performance data effectively to support our work with children and families and have a good understanding of different methods of quality assurance.

You will need to be a registered social worker and have recent proven experience as well as an in-depth understanding of social work practice with children and families. You will need to evidence reflective and creative practice. A child focused approach is essential, ensuring that the views of Lewisham children are central to developing and delivering services.

**What’s in it for you?**

**Our Vision - What Good Children’s Social Work Looks Like in Lewisham**

In Lewisham Children’s Social Care, we know what good social work looks like and we are passionate about creating the right conditions and culture for good practice to thrive.

* Families are respected and supported to stay together, whenever there is safety.
* Families will tell us they understand why we are involved.
* Children will tell us their social worker has made a difference to their lives.
* Children who are in our care know we care, and we won’t give up on them.
* Young people who have been in our care feel confident about their future.

We have taken a whole system approach to improving our services to children and young people in our borough using Signs of Safety as our practice model.  Ofsted recognised the progress we have made noting that:

* *Staff talk positively about their manageable caseloads, regular supervision, team meetings and access to a range of training, including the social work model of practice.*
* *Senior leaders demonstrate a clear focus on hearing the voices of children to develop and improve services.*
* *Leaders know the service well. They have a clear understanding of areas for development that are being appropriately addressed.*

In January 2024, Ofsted's report lauds significant improvements in our children's services. Praised areas include strong leadership, high-quality support for families and children, and positive outcomes across all criteria.

* *The Executive Director for Children and Young People and his team are credited for driving these improvements, with particular focus on enhancing workforce stability, early help services, and partnerships with stakeholders.*
* *Noteworthy practices include creative life-story work and culturally sensitive social work approaches, crucial in a diverse borough like Lewisham.*
* *The Council's anti-racist practice network and safe space platform also garnered praise for supporting staff from black and global majority backgrounds.*
* *Overall, the report highlights a commendable commitment to improving outcomes for vulnerable children and young people in Lewisham.*

**Why choose Lewisham?**

*“Lewisham has so much to offer any social worker. I feel supported, respected and valued every step of the way”*(Social Worker).

Our social workers benefit from working in small, supportive teams with caseloads on average between 15-20 children. Our Signs of Safety family-led practice framework means we are committed to working in a relationship-based way with children and families, focussing on strengths in the family network to effect change. A positive learning culture which promotes opportunities for reflection and relationship-based practice is important to us. We are committed to developing our practice using reflective practice spaces such as case mapping, thinking spaces and group supervision.

Our permanent and stable senior management team are visible and approachable.  Our dedicated workforce team supports professional development across the service so that you will;

* be supported through our comprehensive learning and development offer, which includes subscription to ‘Research in Practice’.
* receive regular supervision and appraisal.
* have 1-1 practice development coaching as a case holder, and professional development coaching as a manager.
* have access to regular Signs of Safety training.
* have access to external leadership development opportunities such as the Black and Asian Leadership Initiative (BALI).
* have a clearly defined career progression pathway with opportunities for professional development at all levels.
* have opportunities to become a practice educator and work with students and newly qualified social workers.

**What we’re looking for**

If you want to work in a thriving borough and our social work vision connects with your professional values, then we are interested in hearing from you. We are looking for people to join our team who:

* value the importance of communication and seeking feedback
* can inspire and motivate those they work with, manage and lead
* are committed to developing their skills and expertise to deliver an excellent service
* are professionally curious and value thinking slowly and calmly in a balanced way
* work inclusively, collaboratively with others recognising their strengths
* take responsibility and make a positive contribution by focusing on solutions
* are transparent, are appreciative in enquiry, reflect and learn.

In return, we’ll offer excellent development opportunities, the opportunity to make a real difference to our local community plus a range of benefits including:

* Generous leave entitlement
* Local Government Pension scheme
* Flexible working and family friendly policies
* Season ticket and bicycle loans
* A range of staff discounts including local subsidised gym memberships
* Supportive staff networks

**Location**

The job is primarily based in Laurence House in Catford SE6. There are 2 local train stations 3-5 minutes’ walk from the office, and the train journey from London Bridge is approximately 15 minutes. There are also numerous bus routes that stop right by the office.

We operate a hybrid approach where you will be required to work both in the office and from home on a regular basis.

**Creating an Inclusive Lewisham**

A core value of Lewisham Council is to 'draw on the diversity of our communities to create a more inclusive Lewisham'. We believe that freedom from discrimination and equality of opportunity are fundamental rights, and that each person should be valued regardless of race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, gender re-assignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, or age. Social inclusion lies at the heart of everything we do as a Council in our roles as an employer, a provider of services and a community leader.

**Diversity**

Lewisham Council is a Disability Confident employer. We welcome and encourage job applications of all abilities. If you require any reasonable adjustments in the application or interview, please contact the lead contact on this advert. We will make reasonable adjustments to make sure our disabled applicants and those with health conditions are supported throughout our recruitment process. We support the access to work scheme, further details are available at [www.gov.uk/access-to-work/apply](https://www.gov.uk/access-to-work/apply)

The Council has a dedicated employment support service, [Lewisham Works](https://lewisham.gov.uk/lewishamworks), which offers Lewisham residents guidance in relation to applying for jobs. If you want to join Lewisham Works, please email JobsAndSkills@lewisham.gov.uk and an advisor will be in touch with you.

**Your Application**

The recruitment process is anonymous and we don’t accept CV’s.

Applicant handbook- please read the guidance in this handbook when applying. It is essential that you complete the application fully and that your supporting statement covers how you meet each of the person specification criteria listed.

**Special conditions**

* The post holder must have a social work qualification and be registered with Social Work England
* The job is subject to a DBS check (Basic/Enhanced)

For an informal discussion about this job, please contact pathfinder@lewisham.gov.uk

**Salary**

£54, 684 - £56, 733 (SCP 41- 43)

All appointments will be offered at the minimum spinal column point (SCP) for the grade of the role. The only exception to this will be when matching current salary (up to the maximum of the scale), which is subject to evidential proof.

The Council reserves the right to close adverts early if there is a large response.

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