



Job Description

Job Title: Advice & Information Officer	Grade/ Level: M	Job Code: SO1224
Directorate: Children & Families, Children Services	Job Family:	Date Prepared: 03.07.09

Role reports to (Job Title): Team Manager Referral and Assessment Team

Job Purpose:

The Advice and Information Officer provides a front line initial point of contact for the public or partner agencies for all enquiries, notifications and requests for a service from the Referral and Assessment Services in Children and Families social care. The service receives initial contacts through a variety of media; telephone, office visits, electronic communications, letter and other formal notifications.

This initial point of contact has a gate keeping/screening function, alongside a signposting service. Much of this information is sensitive and confidential and requires a skilled response under the relevant legislation and procedures. In this post it is a requirement that information/data is collated directly from service users on occasions within SBC lone working and health safety procedures.

A contact may also come directly from a vulnerable child, or distressed and challenging member of the public. Gleaning accurate information requires good communication skills and sensitivity to obtain relevant information. The Advice and Information Officer will be required to make an initial judgment as to the immediate response and whether it is necessary to seek further advice as to the urgency and appropriateness of any request for service or the giving of advice and information. Working in close collaboration with the referral and assessment team workers, the aim is to provide a high quality, professional and proactive service to improve outcomes for children young people and families.

Often requests are received by people experiencing difficulties unrelated to children's social care, and the customer service aspect of this role requires that staff maintain a wide range of knowledge of up to date services and helpful information from our partner agencies, so that people can be signposted to available relevant resources elsewhere.

The scope of this role may change in line with service development.

Key Accountabilities:

1. To provide a responsive consistent service working with young people and their parents and partner agencies to ensure that accurate relevant data on specific young people is collated and entered specifically for children entering the care system
2. In consultation with a manager or social worker and using the definition of a referral and the eligibility criteria, to gather, record, and collate information offered by the referrer, especially when an urgent response is necessary.
3. To listen to the needs and feelings expressed by the range of people contacting the service, and to respond sensitively including to those whose behaviour is distressed or challenging, within policy and guidelines.

4. To make an initial judgment on the appropriateness and urgency of any request for service against specified criteria, by obtaining sufficient basic information.
5. To advise on cases not deemed eligible for social care but likely to benefit from the common assessment (CAF) process and to signpost to the relevant multi agency team.
6. To advise partner agencies and colleagues of the written consent and referral procedures and how to access these and the social care criteria for service.
7. To respond to unplanned office visits, initially by telephone and in some instances by face to face contact if requested.
8. To record social care contacts and information using the relevant information technology and electronic processes and to file paper documents once receipt noted and responded to where necessary.
9. To check data base(s) information on the child/ siblings referred and cross references, including CAF involvement and child protection plan details, and source files both within the borough and details in other local authorities where necessary.
10. To ensure accurate presentation, within the required timescales and frameworks, of service user records, reports and other information for practitioner and managerial use as required.
11. To integrate and retrieve different types of data and paper records/files of families/children where it is necessary for duty workers to assess historical information.
12. To process routine notifications and reports from colleagues and partner agencies involving children e.g. reports of young people coming to police notice, notification of assessments for special educational needs, in accordance with procedures.
13. To undertake straightforward tasks related to referral outcomes e.g. standard letters, ensuring people can receive the necessary documentation/leaflets/web advice on our services, one off financial payments, organising transport requests.

Supplementary Accountabilities:

1. To provide word processing support; this will include the creation of letters, memo's and tabulation etc, making full use of text editing facilities available.
2. To attend meetings when requested and take notes of proceedings.
3. To undertake the administrative tasks in setting up, coordinating and minuting strategy discussions, with statutory agencies relating to safeguarding children.
4. To create and update chronologies and genograms when requested, in conjunction with the allocated duty worker.
5. To contribute to the effective and efficient service delivery according to priorities with the service.
6. To work within the legal and departmental requirements for recording.
7. To work within Children and Families supervision and appraisal requirements, and attend team meetings.
8. To take responsibility for keeping up-to-date with changing government requirements, departmental procedures, protocols and government guidelines.
9. To ensure that any identified personal learning needs are discussed with your immediate supervisor. Participate in learning and development as required.
10. To undertake any other duties that can be accommodated within the grading level of the post.

Job Scope: Number and type of jobs managed:
Typical tasks supervised/allocated to others:

Job Scope:

Budget:
Assets:

Knowledge and Experience:

The post holder will be required to assess contacts and requests, working in accordance with legislative requirements and departmental procedures, policies and guidance relevant to carrying out these duties. They will need to be particularly aware of anti discriminatory practise and will need to demonstrate experience of working with the public in a sensitive environment.

Relevant recent legislation includes The Children Act 1989, Children Act 2004, and Care Leavers Act 2000.

Key Guidance includes Private Fostering Guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children 2006, The Assessment Framework, Every Child Matters and Care Matters.

All teams work within the South West Regional Safeguarding procedures to ensure safe practise. The post holder will need to act and be aware of the primary recommendations of the Laming Report into the death of Victoria Climbié when receiving and acting upon information requested.

Knowledge and understanding of the difficulties faced by disadvantaged groups alongside the knowledge of the role and functions of Children and Families and Children Services is key to this role.

Experience of working effectively as an integral part of a team ensures that safe practise is optimised.

Knowledge of the Integrated Children Service framework and in IT software and maintaining an accurate database.

Decision Making:

The post holder will report for supervision to their Team manager/Assistant Team Manager/Senior Practitioner, and through supervision will receive guidance on actions and decisions relating to their work.

Contacts and Relationships:

The post holder will be required to negotiate and liaise with a diverse range of professional and voluntary agencies and members of the public, including children and young people.

They will be required to access responses from other professionals and maintain good professional credibility and positive working relationships with external agencies and colleagues, focussed on ensuring children and young people are safeguarded and achieving good outcomes.

Creativity and Innovation:

The post holder will have responsibility for keeping up-to-date with changing government requirements, departmental procedures, protocols and government guidelines.

They will have responsibility to update and maintain an information bank of all relevant local resources in the community/Swindon for use by selves and colleagues.

Post holders will need to be aware of and participate in new developments, voluntary organisation and multiagency initiatives.

Identify needs and resources in the community and notify managers of unmet needs when enquiries indicate this, and enable families to access community resources where identified.

Participate in learning and development as required and in accordance with the appraisal processes.

Job Specific Competencies:

The Advise and Information role requires close communication with the duty social worker /manager on receiving a referral which indicates there are concerns for a child(ren) which requires a social work decision as to the nature and timeliness of the service response.

This post supports the roles of the duty social worker and manager to provide a responsive high quality 'front of house' service. The screening role requires sound judgement of eligibility criteria and careful interpretation of thresholds and the post holder is the first port of call in ensuring that decisions are based on accurate information gathering.

In accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998, post holders must take reasonable care to ensure that personal data is not disclosed outside Council procedures, or use personal data held on others for their own purposes. In accordance with the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, ensure requests for non-personal information are dealt with in accordance with the Council's written procedures.

In accordance with the provisions of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 the post holder must take reasonable care so as not to endanger themselves or other persons whilst at work. Post holders must also co-operate with the Council to enable it to comply with its statutory duties for health and safety.

Post holders must ensure you undertake responsibilities relating to your position as detailed within your Directorate Health and Safety Policy.

Employee Signature:

Print Name:

Date

Line Manager's Signature

Print Name:

Date: