



Job Title: Head of Service – Family Help and Care and Families, Quality and Commissioning

Job Ref:

Job type: Full-time 35 hours

Closing date:

Contract Type: Permanent

Salary: SMG 3

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.

INTRODUCTION

Lewisham is recruiting to head of service posts in our newly established Family Help and Care Division and our Families, Quality and Commissioning Division. These services are part of our Children and Young People Directorate and provide help and support to children and families from our family hubs through to statutory child protection and children looked after services.

It's an exciting time to join Lewisham as we are at the forefront of social work reform as a Wave 2 Families First for Children Pathfinder local authority. These posts are part of our reform programme and the redesign of how we deliver services to children and families in our borough. Lewisham will be taking a lead role in supporting other local authorities to embed the reforms as part of the wider DfE national roll out. We are very proud of what we have achieved in the first year as a Pathfinder authority.

What's the role?

We are looking for inspirational, creative and ambitious social work leaders who want to join us and be part of leading local and national reform to social work practice with children and families. If you are an experienced head of service or looking to take the next step in your career then we would love to hear from you. All four roles are in statutory social work services providing help and protection to children and young people in our borough.

We are recruiting to four head of service posts:

Head of Families First for Children Contact Point

This post is based in Families, Quality and Commissioning and will have a lead role in the development of our Families First Contact Point (FFCP). The



FFCP is being expanded to include a wider range of partner agencies to provide a seamless service for families to access help. The FFCP will provide a Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) function and ensure that children who need protection or a family help response are promptly directed to the right services. This is an exciting role which will provide the postholder with the opportunity to be at the forefront of reshaping social work practice for children in our communities.

Head of Family Help x 2

These roles are based in our Family Help and Care service. Our Family Help services are being redesigned to provide a wide range of support to families including adult mental health, domestic abuse and substance misuse. We are developing specialist teams such as adolescent family help and a newborn team. The head of service for Family Help will play a key role in the redesign and development of these services working with the wider partnership and lead the evolution of our practice with families and children. The postholder will be able to work effectively with partners and be creative and ambitious for children in our borough. You will be energised by the opportunity to lead a new service and have impact on a national level on social work practice.

Head of Multi-Agency Child Protection Teams (MACPT)

This role is based in our Family Help and Care service. The head of service for the MACPT will drive our practice in all aspects of child protection work. The post holder will be skilled at working with partners, creating cohesive teams that intervene decisively when needed to protect children. We have ambitious plans to redesign how we hold child protection conferences and Public Law Outline meetings in line with our approach to Family Group Decision Making and the post holder will have a sound understanding of current child protection legislation and practice. You will have knowledge and skill in relation to quality assurance of practice and be experienced in managing court work.

About You

The Head of Service posts provide strategic leadership and are responsible for the quality of performance and practice in the operational area. Each post has 2 - 4 direct reports and overall responsibility for the staff group and budget in their area.

We are seeking candidates who are qualified social workers with a thorough technical knowledge of the requirements of *Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)*, the Pan London Child Protection Procedures and other relevant statutory guidance. You will evidence a good understanding of the DfE Families First for Children programme of reform.

You will demonstrate a track record of practice improvement and an in depth understanding of the Signs of Safety practice framework. You will have experience in senior management which includes managing complex frontline operational practice. You will be ambitious for children and families and be able to lead the workforce to deliver effective services to improve the lives of

children and young people. You will have experience of managing a sizeable budget and demonstrate an understanding of the current context of delivering local authority social work services.

What's in it for you?

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

In Lewisham, 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.

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 holiday allowance
- 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 outside 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. Staff are expected to be in the office 3 days a week on average.

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)

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

The Council has a dedicated employment support service, [Lewisham Works](#), 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.

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

Let's stay connected, follow us on social media:

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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.

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

Salary: SMG 3 £77, 157 - £83, 448

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.