

JOB DESCRIPTION CHILDREN AND FAMILIES' PRACTITIONER

PEOPLE MANAGER	DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD
LOCATION	HYBRID VARIOUS LOCATIONS LONDON/ESSEX/KENT

- As the needs of the business can change rapidly this role will change accordingly, therefore this job description should be viewed as guidelines which are subject to change.
- It may be amended at any time following discussion between the People Manager and colleague and may be reviewed as part of the performance review process.
- The roleholder may be required to undertake other duties as reasonably required by their People Manager or any member of the OHS Leadership Team.
- All roles are subject to Enhanced DBS checks in addition to a range of other vetting checks as per the latest statutory safeguarding guidance.

OVERVIEW

- We are seeking an experienced and confident Children and Families Practitioner to join our Blended Provision and outreach team supporting pupils with Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs and their families.
- The post holder will deliver therapeutic, relational and flexible support for pupils who cannot currently access school buildings.
- The Children and Families Practitioner will work collaboratively with pupils, families and the wider multi-disciplinary team, including the Family Therapist / Psychotherapist, specialist teacher, safeguarding colleagues and other clinical professionals, to develop a shared understanding of the pupil's needs, relationships and experiences.
- The Children and Families Practitioner will provide practical and emotional support to pupils and families where complex needs, trauma, neurodiversity or SEMH needs are affecting education, wellbeing or family life.
- Build a consistent bridge between home, school, community and professional services, helping families understand, access and coordinate the support around them.
- Support emotional regulation, engagement, attendance, reintegration and positive transitions while keeping the pupil at the centre of planning.
- Work with families, teachers and clinical colleagues to provide coordinated, strengths-based support and clear outcomes.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

- Deliver home-based and community-based support sessions, adapting pace, environment, communication and expectations to meet the pupil's individual needs.
- Build safe, trusting and respectful relationships with pupils, families and professional networks, recognising their knowledge, strengths and lived experience.
- Provide practical and emotional support to families to reduce barriers to education, wellbeing and participation, while maintaining clear professional boundaries.
- Use trauma-informed and neurodiversity-affirming approaches, recognising the impact of trauma, stress, sensory needs, communication differences and neurodevelopmental needs on behaviour and engagement.
- Hold a Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) position and work closely with the DSLs across the schools.
- Record and act on concerns in real time and escalate to the appropriate Designated Safeguarding Lead; contribute to safeguarding triage and follow OHS safeguarding and child protection procedures.
- Help families navigate and access appropriate services and community resources, including SEND, health, mental health, social care, family help and voluntary/community provision, making referrals or signposting within agreed pathways.
- Identify changes in presentation, family circumstances or risk that may indicate escalating need, and act promptly through agreed safeguarding, clinical or management pathways.
- Complete or contribute to family-friendly assessments of strengths, needs, risks and protective factors, ensuring the pupil's voice and the family's goals are reflected.
- Attend and contribute to multi-agency meetings, reviews and Team Around the Child/Family processes as appropriate, providing clear, factual observations and agreed actions.
- Co-produce, implement and review clear support plans with pupils, families and relevant professionals, identifying achievable outcomes and reviewing progress regularly.
- Support families to develop confidence, routines, strategies and understanding that help their child to regulate, engage and make progress.
- Advocate for the pupil and family where appropriate, helping their views and needs to be understood in school, professional and multi-agency discussions.
- Deliver gradual exposure plans and support transitions into community hubs, OHS sites, and other next steps, with careful preparation and review.
- Work jointly with teachers and clinical colleagues to align therapeutic, educational and family support pathways and avoid fragmented plans or repeated assessments.
- Maintain accurate, timely and purposeful records of contacts, assessments, plans, attendance, engagement, progress, concerns, referrals and outcomes, in line with OHS systems and data protection requirements.
- Follow lone-working procedures, including pre-visit planning, risk assessment, dynamic risk assessment and agreed arrangements for home and community work.
- Maintain confidentiality and professional boundaries, understanding when information must be shared to safeguard a pupil and when advice should be sought from the appropriate professional.

- Use supervision and reflective practice to think about relationships, risk, boundaries, power, personal responses and the impact of working with trauma and high levels of family distress.
- Work collaboratively with commissioners and the professional network providing appropriate updates on engagement, outcomes and barriers to progress.
- Undertake training and professional development and contribute to service learning and continuous improvement.
- Know, support and adhere to the schools' policies and procedures, including those relating to safeguarding, health and safety, lone working, confidentiality and data protection.
- Comply with any reasonable request from leaders to undertake work of a similar level that is not specified in this job description.

OHS BEHAVIOURS

We expect all OHS colleagues to demonstrate the following behaviours at all times towards pupils, colleagues and families: accountable, adaptable, collaborative, communicative, creative, empathetic, proactive, resilient.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

SKILLS, TRAITS, KNOWLEDGE & UNDERSTANDING

- Experience working with children and young people with SEMH needs, Autism, ADHD, EBSA, trauma-related behaviours or other complex SEND.
- Experience of working with families where needs are complex, relationships may be strained, or engagement may initially be difficult.
- Strong relational skills and the ability to build trust without judgement, including with families who may have had difficult experiences of services.
- A strengths-based, child-centred and family-centred approach that balances empathy with appropriate challenge and professional boundaries.
- Understanding of trauma-informed practice, attachment, child development and the ways adversity can affect behaviour, relationships, regulation and access to education.
- Understanding of neurodiversity, including autism, ADHD and associated sensory, communication and executive functioning needs, and an ability to adapt practice accordingly.
- Ability to communicate clearly and accessibly with children, families and professionals, including where communication is affected by distress, additional needs or differing levels of understanding.
- Ability to work independently in home and community settings while knowing when to seek advice, escalate risk or involve other professionals.
- Ability to undertake purposeful direct work, contribute to holistic assessment and co-produce practical plans with families.
- Ability to advocate appropriately for children and families and to coordinate effectively across education, health, social care and community services.
- Strong written recording skills, including the ability to distinguish fact, observation, analysis and professional judgement.
- Ability to manage sensitive information appropriately and understand information-sharing and confidentiality requirements.
- Ability to recognise safeguarding concerns, including neglect, abuse, exploitation, domestic abuse, self-harm or significant changes in risk, and to respond and act in line with OHS safeguarding policy.
- Strong organisational skills including punctuality, reliability, caseload management and the ability to prioritise competing needs.
- Ability to remain calm and effective in high-pressure or emotionally demanding situations.
- Reflective practitioner who can use supervision, feedback and evidence-informed practice to develop professionally and maintain resilience.
- Commitment to inclusive, anti-discriminatory and culturally responsive practice and to listening to the child and family voice.

QUALIFICATIONS, TRAINING & EXPERIENCE

Education

- Relevant Level 3 or above qualification in childcare, education, youth work, health/social care or a related field, or equivalent demonstrable experience (desirable).

Experience

- Relevant experience working with children, young people and families with SEMH needs or associated SEND (essential).
- Experience of working directly with families and supporting relationships, routines, engagement or access to services (essential).
- Experience of holding a DSL or DDSL position within a safeguarding team (desirable).
- Experience delivering therapeutic, relational, strengths-based or family support interventions (desirable).
- Experience supporting reintegration, attendance, transitions or phased access to education (desirable).
- Training or qualifications related to SEMH, SEND, autism, ADHD, trauma-informed practice, safeguarding or family support (desirable).
- Willingness to undertake OHS safeguarding, lone-working, therapeutic and professional development training as required.
- Enhanced DBS clearance and satisfactory completion of all required safer recruitment and vetting checks.