



HILLINGDON

LONDON

Job Profile

JOB TITLE:	Lead Child Protection Practitioner
GRADE:	POD
POST NO:	Multiple
JOB TIER:	
DBS CHECK:	Enhanced
DIRECTORATE:	Children Services
SERVICE:	Children Services
REPORTING STRUCTURE	[refer to Appendix 1 for Org Chart]
Reports to:	Service Manager
Direct Reports:	There are no direct reports however there maybe a need to cover for TM on occasions
Indirect Reports:	up to 6

ROLE PURPOSE:

An essential part of the Multi-Agency Child Protection Team (MACPT), ensuring agreed team plans and performance targets are delivered and that a culture of 'putting our residents first' is maintained.

Exercising the local authorities statutory duty on child protection as set out in Working Together 2023 and the supervision of social workers within the team.

Main purpose of role

The Lead Child Protection Practitioner will be based within the Multi-Agency Child Protection Team (MACPT), which will be colocated and office-based with multi-agency partners. The MACPT will be an independent central team accessible to the whole of children's services, overseeing all cases with child protection concerns, both intra- and extra-familial harm. The service will operate between 7 a.m. and 10 p.m. Monday through Friday, mirroring the Met Police Child Protection Referrals Desk.

The role of the Multi-Agency Child Protection Team will be to consult on, initiate and undertake child protection investigations to assess whether a child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm. Where the threshold of significant harm is met, the team will manage the child protection function and the child protection conference process and support legal proceedings. The team will forensically analyse the multi-agency information, including that provided by Family Help, to support their assessment and decision-making. Children's Services will be represented in the Multi-Agency Child Protection Team by the Lead Child Protection Practitioner, who will act as a decision-maker on behalf of the local authority in terms of triggering statutory responsibilities under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and as set out in Working Together 2023.

The Lead Child Protection Practitioner, a role synonymous with Child Protection expertise, will be held by an individual with at least 2 years of recent front-line child protection experience in practice and education. This post holder will not only be an expert but also possess the authority, confidence, and experience to make autonomous decisions in challenging and complex family situations. They will be responsible for producing high-quality reports that reflect their social work expertise and can stand alone as an expert assessment in various forums, including initial child protection conferences and the Court arena.

The Lead Child Protection Practitioner will contribute to decisions on the threshold to trigger a strategy discussion, initiate a Child Protection Section 47 investigation, progress a case to an Initial Child Protection conference and chair the conference. Where necessary, the post holder will take decisive action when needed to protect a child from abuse, neglect and exploitation. To do this, the post holder will be skilled, experienced and have the right expertise to collate, analyse and distil complex information in a changing context.

The Lead Child Protection Practitioner will partner with the Family Help Lead Practitioner, who will continue to provide support to the family throughout the case and remain responsible for updating the Family Help assessment, driving through the care plan and co-ordinating the team around the family, of which the Lead Child Protection Practitioner would have joined.

The Lead Child Protection Practitioner will actively engage with the parents and family network around the child, working closely with the Family Networks service. They will strive to ensure that parents and family networks understand and can engage purposefully with enquiries and plans. When appropriate,

the Lead Child Protection Practitioner will ensure cases progress to a family network meeting, encouraging parents and families to express what support would help them to reduce significant harm, before being considered for a child protection conference.

When the Multi-Agency Child Protection Team agrees that the threshold for significant harm has reduced and children are not subject to a Child Protection Plan, the Lead Child Protection Practitioner will step away from the team around the family.

The Lead Child Protection Practitioner will report to and be supervised by a qualified social work Service/Team manager.

Job Description

1. Resident & Community Contribution

- To demonstrate understanding of the Council's *Customer Care Standards* and ensure that these standards are met in order to deliver the Council vision of 'putting our residents first'.

2. People Management

- This role has supervisory responsibility for alternatively qualified Practitioners
- To be responsible for maintaining a safe and healthy working environment in line with Health & Safety at Work Act (1974).

3. Operational Service Delivery

- The Lead Child Protection Practitioner will be based within the Multi-Agency Child Protection Team (MACPT), which will be colocated and office-based with multi-agency partners. The MACPT will be an independent central team accessible to the whole of children's services, overseeing all cases with child protection concerns, both intra- and extra-familial harm. The service will operate during some unsociable hour, Monday through Friday, potentially mirroring the Met Police Child Protection Referrals Desk.
- The role of the Multi-Agency Child Protection Team will be to consult on, initiate and undertake child protection investigations to assess whether a child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm. Where the threshold of significant harm is met, the team will manage the child protection function and the child protection conference process and support legal proceedings. The team will forensically analyse the multi-agency information, including that provided by Family Help, to support their assessment and decision-making.
- The post holder will act on behalf of the local authority in the Multi-Agency Child Protection Team, ensuring any decisions and actions taken are consistent and within the Council's legal responsibilities towards the child. They will perform Statutory functions as set out in the Children Act 1989, 2004, and Working Together 2023, specifically regarding Child Protection as defined under section 47 of the Children Act 1989.
- The post holder will have an applied understanding of what constitutes a child suffering actual or likely significant harm. To consider the severity, duration and frequency of any abuse, degree of threat, coercion, or cruelty, the significance of others in the child's world, including all adults and children in contact with the child (this can include those within the immediate and wider family and those in contexts beyond the family, including online), and the cumulative impact of adverse events.
- The post holder will know the limits and strengths of their personal expertise and agency remit. They will work collaboratively and proactively with multi-agency practitioners to build an accurate and comprehensive understanding of a child's daily life and family. They will consider a wide range of evidence from multiple sources to establish the likelihood of

significant harm and ongoing risks. They will respect the opinions, knowledge, and skills of multi-agency colleagues and engage constructively in their challenges.

- The post holder will have the skills to share their thinking and proposed recommendations with other practitioners who hold relevant information. Insight into the child and adults involved with the child is crucial. Your comments, challenges, and joint deliberations before making a final decision about the likelihood of significant harm are influential and empower you to make a difference.
- The post holder will convene and chair strategy discussions, lead and undertake the child protection investigation (section 47 enquiries) where the threshold has been met in line with section 3 of Working Together 2023.
- The post holder will be responsible for deciding what action to take and how to proceed following the child protection investigation, ensuring decisions are made based on the multi-agency discussions and informed by the voice of the child.
- The post holder will maintain oversight of the child protection process and ensure that a conference is required within statutory timescales.
- The post holder will chair multi-agency, multidisciplinary child protection conferences, remaining independent of the case's operational or line management responsibilities.
- The post holder will share and analyse in an inter-agency conference the information which has been obtained about the child's developmental needs, and the parents' capacity to respond to these needs to ensure the child's safety and promote the child's health and development within the context of the wider family and environment.
- The post holder will consider the evidence presented to a conference, make judgements about the likelihood of a child suffering significant harm in future and decide whether the child is at continuing risk of significant harm
- The post holder will ensure the conference systematically elicits and records the views of each agency present or invited and the opinions of the parents and the child/ren, as appropriate. This is to ensure that the decision-making process considers all agencies' views at the conference and can typically occur with parents present.
- The decision on whether the child will be considered for a child protection conference will be made subject to a child protection plan, giving independent consideration to the professionals' views at the meeting.
- The post holder will determine and record which category of abuse or neglect the child being considered at a child protection conference has suffered or is likely to suffer. The category must indicate the primary concerns present when the child became the subject of a child protection plan.
- The post holder will ensure the child protection conference formulates a safe and suitable outline of the child protection plan in as much detail as possible. It identifies a multi-agency core group to develop and monitor the implementation of the child protection plan.

- The post holder will ensure a complete and correct record of the discussion and decisions of the child protection conference, including any dissent. The conference chair is accountable for this record's content and its timely distribution.
- The post holder will remain the allocated Lead Child Protection Practitioner for the child. Oversee the delivery of the child protection plan by Family Help, ensuring child protection review conferences are held promptly.
- The post holder will work alongside the Lead Family Help Practitioner where there is an existing relationship with a family, providing child protection expertise.
- To work flexibly to ensure there is always a Children's Services Lead Child Protection Practitioner in the MACPT.
- The working week is 36 hours. Cover will be divided between the team on a rota basis to cover the unsociable hours.
- The team will be flexible in agreeing on the allocation of these weeks. When a mutual agreement can not be reached, cover will be decided on a rota basis.

4. Service Planning & Development.

- Maintain knowledge of the current Team Plan and understanding of own contribution in order to ensure delivery of this plan.
- Continuously review and evaluate the effectiveness of child protection policies and procedures.
- Develop and implement new strategies to address emerging child protection issues.
- Ensure that you are up-to-date with the latest research and developments in child protection practice.
- Engage with stakeholders, including children and families, to gather feedback and incorporate their perspectives into service planning.

5. Financial & Resource Management

- To take responsibility for the effective management of the allocated department / team budget.
- To demonstrate cost-consciousness and identify any cost effective changes to own way of working.
- To ensure all purchasing and procurement is conducted in line with the corporate guidelines with appropriate use of the Council's financial systems.

- To ensure that all workforce expenditure is compliant with corporate guidance and that any temporary resource is purchased through the Council's agency contracts.
- To ensure robust oversight, scrutiny, and challenge of any financial decisions beyond what can be agreed by the service, internal resources panels will be utilised.

6. Service Improvement

- To identify and suggest any improvements to current ways of working in order to deliver a more efficient and effective service for customers.
- To participate in regular team meetings and share best practices and innovative approaches to child protection.
- To conduct regular reviews of child protection cases to identify trends and areas for improvement.
- To collaborate with external agencies and partners to enhance the quality and effectiveness of child protection services.
- To initiate and lead pilot projects aimed at testing new methodologies and frameworks in child protection.
- To engage in continuous professional development and encourage a culture of learning within the team.

7. Contacts

- Primary contact will be with other officers within the Council, and service users / residents and their representative bodies. To include who the contacts are and nature of interaction.
- The Lead Child Protection Practitioner will actively engage with the parents and family network around the child, working closely with the Family Networks service. They will strive to ensure that parents and family networks understand and can engage purposefully with enquiries and plans.

8. Additional Responsibilities

- Complete other reasonable tasks in order to fulfil role purpose or as instructed by management.
- You may be required to undertake periods of on call which are related to your role
- To work flexibly to ensure there is always a Children's Services Lead Child Protection Practitioner in the MACPT.

9. Key Performance Indicators

- KPIs will be developed, through the Appraisal process encompassing current council and service area priorities.
- The post holder is responsible to contribute to all KPI's relating to the team performance, the effectiveness and efficiency of delivery, and to support all other KPIs as identified jointly between the position holder and line manager.

Person Specification

This person specification will be used for recruitment to this vacancy in LBH. It will form the basis of the application form, and candidates will be also assessed against aspects of this person specification at interview.

1. QUALIFICATIONS	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE
	✓	✓
Recognised Social Work qualification (i.e. CQSW, DipSW, CSS or CCETSW approved equivalent, BA Hons Social Work or other relevant degree in Social Work.	✓	
Social work qualification and registered with SW England	✓	
Evidence of continued professional development and post qualification activity, including research, practice educating, delivering training etc.	✓	
Accredited management qualification or equivalent experience		✓
Significant recent operational experience of working within a front-line statutory child protection setting for a minimum of 3 years.	✓	
Experience supervising and managing staff and social work students (practice teaching).	✓	
Appropriate post-qualifying and practice assessor qualification.	✓	
2. STATUTORY or ROLE SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE
	✓	✓
Ability to prepare complex court reports and care planning, attend and give evidence, and support colleagues in court.	✓	
Ability to communicate effectively in a manner that is clear, fluent, concise and jargon free and in a courteous, calm and professional manner, both written and verbally.	✓	
Demonstrates high level analytical and critical thinking skills	✓	
Demonstrates sound judgement in the absence of clear guidelines, seeking advice as necessary	✓	
Ability to analyse information/evidence, assess options and draw appropriate conclusions/make decisions	✓	

Able to work flexibly to meet the needs of the service including out of hours work as required	✓	
Sound knowledge of legislation and relevant guidance.	✓	
Ability to advise and consult team members on casework issues, make clear casework decisions and execute them.	✓	
Progressive knowledge of current research and evidence-based practice, particularly about child protection.	✓	
Ability to be office-based and collocated as part of a multi-disciplinary team.	✓	
3. EXPERIENCE	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE
	✓	✓
Social Work experience with children and families, including:	✓	
3 or more years' experience in social work within statutory social care services	✓	
Experience of delivering a Council's statutory duties with regard to social care	✓	
Strong knowledge of social care legislation, policies, and best practices.	✓	
Relevant experience Assessment work in a children and families setting, including Leading on child protection and Court work.	✓	
Working to a duty system.		
Significant and substantial experience of prioritising and planning team tasks and activities	✓	
Relevant experience in staff and/or student supervision or mentoring	✓	
Experience in supporting a team with guidance, advice and clear direction when required	✓	
Providing advice to team members on a variety of Child Protection cases.	✓	
Experience in making autonomous decisions in Child Protection	✓	
Successful experience of implementing organisational change by identifying issues/ barriers, generating solutions, and planning and developing how these will be implemented in a cross-function, cross-organisation environment.		✓
4. KNOWLEDGE & SKILLS	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE
	✓	✓

Knowledge of the statutory social care legislation, policies and processes.	✓	
Understanding safeguarding principles and procedures	✓	
Knowledge of the legal framework in which children services are operating and ability to represent the service	✓	
Ability to manage complex cases and assist colleagues in carrying out statutory requirements as appropriate, such as managing duty systems.	✓	
Ability to undertake professional duties to comply with statutory responsibilities within the framework of the Council's Policies and Procedures, Working Together 2023, London Procedures and the Children Act 1989.	✓	
Working knowledge of all areas covered by main tasks attained through qualification or CPD.	✓	
Ability to develop strategies to support children at risk of harm and to take appropriate action to formulate plans for intervention.	✓	
Ability to formulate, oversee and review child protection plans.	✓	
Knowledge and understanding of equality and diversity issues	✓	
An understanding of Quality Assurance frameworks and how they can be implemented and reviewed.	✓	
Supervise the work of qualified staff and support staff as determined by the team manager and with accountability to the team manager. This will include staff induction, professional development, and evaluation for supervisees.	✓	
Ability to work flexibly to meet the required service hours	✓	
Ability to work as part of a team to develop and promote good practice, monitor and evaluate one's own work and contribute to the evaluation of the practice of others.		✓

The council has a set of values which guides us in our behaviours at work. All council employees must demonstrate as an essential requirement for the job. These are:-

Respect	We appreciate what makes us different and include everyone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We recognise that we all have unique talents, skills and experiences. • We provide a professional service to our residents and colleagues and lead by example. • We celebrate diversity and ensure our working practices are inclusive.
Collaborative	We believe in the power of working together	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We work collaboratively as one council. • We promote creativity and innovation to improve outcomes for all. • We recognise the strength of sharing knowledge and experience.

Efficient	We deliver the best possible outcome by carefully managing our resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are empowered to deliver the most efficient outcome. • We harness new technology and tools to deliver our services efficiently. • We look after our finances and maximise value for money for residents.
Integrity	There is no gap between what we say and do.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We choose what is right over what is easy. • We trust and support each other to get the job done. • We are responsible and accountable for our actions, both good and bad.
Open & Honest	We are transparent in the actions and decisions we take.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We provide a safe space to have truthful discussions in a positive way. • We encourage constructive feedback without fear of judgement.

GUIDANCE NOTES

- The job description is a broad list of responsibilities and outcomes. It is not a list of tasks.
- Some grades are nationally prescribed, and the job evaluation scheme does not apply to these posts i.e. Soulbury, Youth and Community Workers and Teachers.
- The person specification describes the skills, knowledge, qualifications and specific conditions required to undertake the role.
- This person specification will be used for recruitment to the post. It will form the basis of the application form, and candidates will be also assessed against aspects of this person specification at interview.
- Person specification criteria must be objective, relevant and measurable for applicants to be assessed on merit.
- Asking for time-linked experience must be justifiable as it could be age discriminatory. The quality of the experience is often more relevant than the quantity.

Appendix 1

Organisational Chart

Copy of Organisational Chart showing reporting lines of role