

JOB DESCRIPTION QUESTIONNAIRE

DEPARTMENT: Health & Social Services

JOB TITLE: Social Worker

REPORTS TO: Senior Practitioner

JOB NUMBER: 11.703

TYPE: New

GRADE: 10

EVALUATION DATE: 18 March 2009

1. JOB PURPOSE

To provide a comprehensive assessment and protection service to the adult and children's at risk population in Jersey, and their carers, and to access resources so as to manage risk and meet identified needs.

To contribute to the delivery of the day to day working of social work services i.e. practice, guidelines and team development.

2. PRINCIPAL ACCOUNTABILITIES

- 2.1 To plan, organise and be responsible for case co-ordination, and implementation of care and protection plans on a day to day basis, working with service users and their families/carers in one or more social work specialist areas. These include children in need of care and protection, children with special needs, adults with learning disabilities, older people, people with a brain injury, those with a physical disability and those with a sensory impairment.
- 2.2 To protect, promote and monitor the safety and welfare of service users and carers by holistically assessing individual needs and developing and designing care and intervention plans, treating each person as a unique individual. Wherever possible to promote their individual views and wishes in order to support service users' rights to self determination and to control their lives and make informed choices about the services they receive. The Social Worker must balance this with an overriding duty of care and a duty to protect those who are at risk of being subject to abuse, mistreatment or self harm.
- 2.3 To establish and maintain the trust and confidence of service users and carers by communicating in an appropriate, open, accurate and straightforward way, clearly explaining service policies and the professional role and responsibilities of the social worker, including any statutory intervention which may prove necessary.
- 2.4 To challenge and report dangerous, abusive, discriminatory or exploitative behaviour or practice, including potential criminal offences, wherever this may be found.
- 2.5 To follow risk assessment policies and procedures at all times, actively identifying and managing potential and actual risk, particularly in relation to those who are assessed as

being the most vulnerable to risk of harm by self or others. The social worker must utilise statutory powers to ensure the client's protection and safety, when necessary. To ensure that specialist professional advice and guidance is sought in all appropriate cases, but especially in those where abuse, risk, or possible criminal offences are an issue.

- 2.6 To be responsible for upholding public trust and confidence in Health & Social Services in order to ensure that prompt referral of cases take place where social work intervention is required to protect or support vulnerable members of the community.
- 2.7 To maintain the highest standards of personal and professional conduct, adhering to the General Social Care Council code of conduct, States policies and procedures and relevant legislation; in order to ensure that members of the public and other professionals have confidence in the service.. To be accountable for the quality of their work and take responsibility for maintaining and improving knowledge and skills, in particular ensuring that the criteria for continuing professional registration are fulfilled.
- 2.8 To create and maintain clear and accurate records as required by established procedures and best practice, always bearing in mind that such documents may be disclosable for the purpose of Serious Case Reviews, external inquiry and inspection, and to the Royal Court in respect of civil applications made in the name of the Minister for Health and Social Services, or in criminal proceedings before the Magistrate's Court associated with the protection of vulnerable individuals.
- 2.9 To ensure that all information about service users is always treated in the strictest confidence in line with data protection, relevant disclosure and consent policies, and information sharing protocols and procedures.

DIMENSIONS

Financial

The social worker has no direct responsibility for budgets however in developing care plans the social worker is responsible for identifying the resources required to deliver various elements of each plan, and providing a cogent, evidence based case for their use, bearing in mind the need to responsibly utilise finite resources in the most cost effective and efficient way. The design and implementation of care and protection plans will require the social worker to access various budgets and resources via the presentation of a case to a Panel such as the Under 65s Care Packages Panel, the Adoption and Fostering Panel, the Children's Services Placement Panel or via case discussion with the senior social worker or line manager.

Staffing

On a case by case basis social workers will have responsibility for directing and supervising support workers allocated to the case. Support workers will work within a range of environments including the clients' own homes.

Social workers are, on occasion, responsible for supervising and supporting placements of student social workers whilst engaged in their professional training on the social work degree course and further post qualifying training.

Relevant Statistics

Social workers will typically carry case responsibility for an active caseload of between 20 and 30 service users, the number of cases held being dependent upon level of need, complexity and level of risk. In each of these cases there will be an identified social work

care plan which they are responsible for initiating, reviewing and re-assessing whenever appropriate. This care/protection plan normally includes contributions from a number of external services, co-ordinated, monitored and reviewed by the social worker to ensure the effectiveness and the prompt implementation of any necessary changes. These care plans can include contributions from a number of external agencies, examples of which include residential care homes, police, schools and nursery representatives, Education Welfare Officers, Registration and Inspection, psychology services, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, Family Nursing and Home Care, Shelter Trust, Social Security, Housing etc.

Each social worker will carry a mixed caseload with a percentage of highly complex cases. A complex case 'in crisis' can involve the worker in up to 20 hrs per week of work examples include: Court report, directions hearing and full proceedings in a children's care case; an adult protection investigation which involves the worker in undertaking interviews, working with the Police on investigations, re-locating individuals to facilitate their safety, and appropriate follow up work – onward referral, counselling, etc

Individual services receive approximately 3 to 5 new referrals each day and there are considerably more 'contacts/enquiries' from members of the public and partner agencies seeking information, advice and guidance. Each referral will require a formal assessment from a qualified social worker that assesses and categorises levels of risk and need.

Impact on the Organisation/Dept./Section

Social work is a high profile professional discipline with a distinctive part to play in promoting and securing the wellbeing of children, adults, families and communities. It operates within a framework of legislation, States and Health and Social Services policies, procedures and best practice frameworks but also involves a considerable degree of professional autonomy in decision making. Its underlying principles are based upon a commitment to seeking to enable every child and adult to fulfil their potential, achieve and maintain independence and self-direction, make choices, take control of their own lives and support arrangements, and exercise their civil and human rights. It looks at people's lives and circumstances in the round, and works with them to personalise social care responses. Its approaches and working methods aim to promote empowerment and creativity.

Social workers collaborate with other social care, health, education and related services to ensure people receive integrated support, the social worker frequently occupying the key worker/co-ordination role in the development and implementation of care and protection planning.

4. KNOWLEDGE AND SKILL

It is an essential requirement that the post holder possesses a professional qualification in Social Work (Degree or Diploma in Social Work), and has a minimum of 2 years post qualifying social work experience. Newly qualified social workers can be appointed on a lower grade.

Social workers must be registered with the appropriate UK professional governing body i.e. the General Social Care Council and locally, must also register under the Health Care (Registration) (Jersey) Law 1995.

The social work role has two key characteristics. On the one hand it involves risk assessment and decision making, and a monitoring and policing role which can result in major change to people's lives. On the other it involves the provision of help and support aimed at facilitating continuing independence and self determination. Social workers

require very broad based skills and an extensive knowledge base, drawn from relevant academic disciplines, and informed by the experience and expertise of people using services developed through research and tested in practice.

Social workers must possess a proven ability to work autonomously, be highly motivated and conscientious, exhibiting the capacity for independent, responsible professional decision making whilst contributing to and working as part of a multi-disciplinary process. They must have experience and confidence in prioritising and managing a diverse caseload based upon urgency, level of need and risk.

Social workers will possess, or be expected to develop additional skills relevant to their particular specialist responsibilities and the needs of the client groups with whom they work. This will include, for example, a knowledge and understanding of the needs of older people and people with disabilities, child development, attachment and loss, etc. They will be expected to possess or pursue Post Qualification Awards in child care or adult social work, whilst also seeking relevant specialist training such as Achieving Best Evidence (for those involved in child protection work), adult protection training, working with Autism, working with sensory impairment, intensive behavioural support, etc.

Social workers must be able to demonstrate substantial personal and social skills.

Because the social work role is reliant upon effective inter-professional and inter-agency communication and co-operation and the building of effective professional relationships with child and adult clients it is essential that social workers possess positive and constructive attitude to colleagues, service users and carers. They must possess excellent communication skills, including an ability to effectively communicate at all levels with a wide range of individuals some of whom may have difficulties or disabilities which impact upon their ability to easily engage and communicate.

5. ORGANISATION CHART (as per attached)

The team manager is the senior case manager and has overall operational responsibility for the delivery of effective assessment, care planning and review services. However, both formal supervision and day to day informal supervision and support of social workers is undertaken by senior practitioners, who are themselves supported in the same way by their team manager.

Social workers have responsibility for the oversight and management of the work of support workers who are actively involved in cases they hold. The number involved will be dependent upon the characteristics of the social worker's caseload at any one time.

On occasion social workers support and supervise student social workers on placement for their professional degree training within the department.

6. COMMUNICATION / CONTACTS

Social workers require the ability to communicate effectively with a wide range of clients their families and carers, some of whom may have communication, psychological or behavioural difficulties or disabilities which make the forming of effective, open and helpful relationships challenging.

Critical and important contacts that are essential to the successful completion of the social worker's role include staff in the following States Departments:

Medicine, including Older People's Services

Mental Health Services including the Psychology Service and the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service and the Drug and Alcohol Service
Occupational Therapy Services
Physiotherapy Services
Child Development Centre

Probation Service
Prison Service including Young Offenders Institute
States of Jersey Police Service, in particular the Public Protection Unit and Community Policing Service.
Social Security including Workwise and Income Support
Housing including Supported Housing Group
Family Nursing and Home Care, including Home Care, Health Visitors and District Nurses
Education Sport and Culture, including primary and secondary schools, nursery provision, Education Welfare Service, Educational Psychology Service, Special educational provision, Youth Service and Adult Education.

Important external contacts include:

GP Practices
The Refuge
The Bridge
Brig-y-Don Children's Home
NSPCC Pathways Project
Jersey Association for Youth and Friendship (JAYF)
Parish authorities
Jersey Care Federation
The Shelter Trust
Age Concern
Headway
Jersey Carers Association Incorporated
Jersey Homeless Outreach Group
Independent Residential and Nursing Homes
Age Concern
Les Amis Inc
Jersey Mencap
Citizen's Advice Bureau
Jersey Focus on Mental Health, including the mental health self-advocacy service
Learning Disabilities self-advocacy services
Wide range of independent sector private and charitable provider organisations

7. SUPERVISION RECEIVED AND WORK PLANNING

Patterns and priorities of work are set through annual performance review and the development of training and work plans which become part of the team plan. Team Plans are agreed with the Directorate Manager and the Social Service senior management team at the beginning of each year and monitored on a regular basis through Business Planning Days and service management team meetings.

Case management, the identification and review of tasks, and the agreement of trajectories of work on individual cases is provided through regular formal supervision. Supervision sessions are scheduled for an hour and a half once a month. These sessions detail, agree and record tasks for the forthcoming period to be undertaken in relation to

cases held. Work priorities are set on the basis of risk and complexity/level of need and the urgency with which services are required.

However, social work intervention is a dynamic process which frequently takes place in a number of settings out of office where there is no immediate access to management advice and support. Much contact is conducted in the service users own home. This means that though the broad parameters of the approach to be taken with the individual or family will be agreed in supervision, the reality faced by the social worker when undertaking a home visit might well be other than expected. Circumstances may have changed considerably, resulting in, for example, a heightened level of risk, or a deterioration in the well being of a child or older person, a newly expressed antipathy to a previously agreed plan, or an outburst of verbally or physically aggressive behaviour.

This means that social workers require the capacity to 'think on their feet' in a professional and balanced way, even when faced with challenging behaviours or circumstances, taking any necessary immediate action to secure the service user's safety and welfare, or to respond appropriately to new developments. Social workers are expected to promptly report and discuss substantial changes on their caseload with their supervisor.

8. WORKING PROCEDURES AND SCOPE

POLICY FRAMEWORKS/STANDARDS

The post holder is individually responsible for the day to day management of their case load, prioritising their daily activity according to agreed policies and procedures and actions agreed in formal supervision. On a daily basis the social worker must take into account any case developments which indicate changes in circumstances that might suggest the need for an urgent home visit or other intervention to establish if the risk level has changed. It is the responsibility of the social worker to constantly monitor both the continuing welfare of the service user, and the implementation of agreed work plans.

Examples are:

i) Children's social worker notified of child presenting to A&E with a broken arm where early paediatric investigation has concerns over whether it could be a 'non-accidental injury'. The social worker on duty discusses the circumstances with their duty senior and is instructed to hold a strategy discussion with police colleagues. The outcome of the discussion is the identification of the need for a more detailed medical examination and direct discussions by the social worker and police colleagues with the parents over how the injuries occurred.

ii) A man in his sixties referred to the adult social work team by his wife expressing her increasing concerns about the gentleman's wellbeing and her concern that he was being held against his will by others in the household. Duty social worker consulted with senior, checks initiated with police and GP and emergency back up bed was arranged in case it was required. Social worker and police did joint visit, social worker decided that the gentleman required a period of respite away from his existing accommodation.

iii) A social worker attends with police colleagues at a domestic violence incident in a family home where there are three children under 10yrs of age. The father has removed himself from the family home but home conditions given rise to high levels of concern and there is no guarantee that the father will not return. Negotiations with Mum and enquiries with the wider family establish that the children can move to their grandmother's house as an interim arrangement. The social worker seeks legal advice and negotiates a contract with the children's mother pending further enquiries and the commissioning of follow up work by support services.

The social worker is expected to discuss any information with their line manager to establish the most appropriate course of action. This will include such information as expressions of concern from partner agencies, a possible incident of harm, substantial changes in a family's circumstances or make up, the departure or illness of a carer, etc.

The post holder will be expected to take responsible, professional decisions 'in the field' to promptly respond to new information arising, particularly the emergence of heightened levels of risk, or incidents of actual harm.

Skilled social work often avoids the need for compulsory action, and enables children or adults to remain safely in their homes. It supports people to find their own solutions, possibly change their behaviour, navigate the system of public services and personalise their choices.

Given that social workers are often in contact with service users when they are at their most vulnerable and distressed, there is considerable political interest in the way in which they work, and the specific actions they may take. It is therefore necessary on occasion for social workers, supported by their line manager, to address political and representative organisation concerns and challenges.

9. CHANGE STATEMENT / NEW POST

The post of social work (previously referred to as Child Care Officer) has not been evaluated since the 1980s. In the intervening period many changes have occurred in terms of the environment within which social workers undertake their work, in the complexity of the content of their role, and in the degree of public and political interest in their role.

In the late 1990s the Children's Service (at the time the responsibility of the then Education Committee) was transferred to the newly created Health and Social Services Committee. It was joined by a very small Adult Social Work Team (comprising 2 qualified social workers plus 1 assistant) and by the emerging Special Needs Service in order to create Social Services. Since that time the social work elements have grown considerably, in the case of Adult Social Work, from 3 to 12 social workers. The number of social workers in the Children's Service has similarly risen, from approximately 14 in the late 90s to 36 now.

In line with the recommendations of major UK enquiries into the deaths of children as a result of abuse, and the growing recognition of the abuse of older people, child and adult protection services have been developed, with social workers taking the investigation, assessment and action planning role. The growth in the numbers of older people has also led to increased demand for social workers who can assess needs, and identify appropriate placements for those people who can no longer live in their own homes. People with a variety of disabilities or debilitating conditions are also enabled to live longer lives, but often require complex packages of support designed and co-ordinated by social workers.

New legislation has been introduced in the relevant period, notably the Children (Jersey) Law 2002, which has brought in its wake ever more complex demands upon social workers in terms of administrative and court process requirements, evidential proof and quality of professional analysis and opinion. Increased interest in cases involving vulnerable children and adults has resulted in a much more demanding court environment in terms of challenge to social workers from private and public law practitioners.

In 2003 social work became a registered profession, thus imposing a personal responsibility upon each and every social worker to adhere to professional standards and a published code of conduct. The professional governing body, the General Social Care

Council, was established to ensure a robust governance framework was in place to address the need for the highest levels of professional conduct. This was felt to be essential in light of the unique degree to which social workers enter the lives of vulnerable people, and the way in which their assessments and decisions can affect those lives forever. Registration has brought with it personal professional accountability whereby failure to adhere to the requirements bringing the very real risk of de-registration.

In January 2006 the Health Care (Registration) (Jersey) Law 1995 was revised to include a requirement for annual local registration upon social workers. At the same time legal 'protection of title' was conferred upon social work, making it illegal for anyone to be employed as a social worker if they are not registered with the GSCC and locally.

At the same time as social workers have embraced higher levels of personal professional accountability, the profession has been under increasing public and political scrutiny as a result of high profile cases and enquiries both nationally and locally, placing them and their work under almost constant political, public and media scrutiny and analysis.