



achieving
for children



IFA Senior Practitioner (Placement Matching)

Scale point: 35-38 | Based in Kingston | Fixed Term | Full time

About the service

The fostering service has recently become an Independent Fostering Agency split into two branches but with a number of centralised functions. The service is currently growing and received a good rating from Ofsted back in September 2019. Operational Area 1 is based in Kingston and Operational Area 2 is based in Maidenhead. The main office base for this role will be at the Guildhall, Kingston. This role will be responsible to the Head of Fostering Service but working closely with the Heads of Placement Commissioning in both branches.

About the role

This role will enable AfC's IFA to maximise the use of our in house foster carers and have an effective placement matching process in both branches. The postholder will have responsibility for all in house placement finding and matching. They will work to maximise fostering capacity by reducing the number of in house carers who are either on hold or have less children placed than they are approved for. The post will lead on developing reciprocal arrangements with neighbouring local authorities where in house carers have vacancies that cannot be filled with children from Richmond, Kingston or Windsor and Maidenhead. They will develop and oversee a step down programme where we identify children in residential that could be placed with in house foster carers. The postholder will be supervised by the Head of the Fostering Service but work closely with the Heads of Placement Commissioning and their teams. They will oversee that placement searches and matching considers both in house and external IFA carers simultaneously to achieve the best match whilst maximising the use of AfC's in house foster carers. They will supervise up to two Placements Officers focusing on in house placement finding and matching in the two operational areas. They will support the Fostering Branch Managers to ensure all placement matching is fully compliant with legislative and regulatory requirements and support colleagues to deliver the best possible service for children and young people and for current and prospective foster carers.

About you: our role specification

Qualifications

- Educated to degree level with appropriate professional Social Work qualification (CSS/CQSW or DipSw, MA SW, BA Hons SW)
- Active Social Work England registration and proven evidence of continuing professional development.

Skills and experience

- Experience of applying in practice, the principles of child care legislation in relation to children looked after and fostering.
- Demonstrable negotiating and project management skills.
- Experience of placement finding, matching and monitoring.
- Strong analytical, and planning skills for assessing, and reviewing children and young people's needs, and planning packages of care across a range of cases; able to explain professional reasoning judgements, and decision making.
- Experience of applying critical reflection and analysis to increasingly complex cases.
- Experienced in assessment & appropriate management of risk; ensuring tailored plans are created that deliver safe and outcome focused care.
- Demonstrable knowledge and understanding of Children Act 1989 and 2004; including awareness of current national policy drivers affecting children's social care, and new evidenced based research.
- Knowledge of theory and practice of care assessment, planning, detailed knowledge of relevant legislation and its application; acquired through professional qualification in social work plus a minimum of 2 years supervised experience in relevant field.
- Experience of keeping and maintaining records (in accordance with local policy) and producing accurate reports, presentations, written updates to a range of stakeholders.

Personal attributes

- A passion for Achieving for Children's vision, mission and values (trust, value, respect) to support children and young people to live safe, happy, healthy and successful lives.
- Able to use a range of digital hardware or software to support your work effectively i.e. microsoft or Google software.
- Strong organisational abilities including: time management, creative-thinking, problem-solving and multitasking.
- Able to work flexibly and independently with limited management oversight.
- Personal determination, drive, energy and ambition to achieve challenging objectives, celebrate success and deliver excellent outcomes for children using a strength based approach.
- Commitment to resource-sharing and collaborative working within Achieving for Children and across organisational boundaries in the best interests of children and families.
- Good communication and interpersonal skills that are open, honest, persuasive and pragmatic, including excellent negotiation and influencing skills.
- Creativity and strategic thinking skills, including the ability to improve services, develop new ways of working, and find appropriate solutions to complex issues.
- Commitment to an organisational culture and the development of services that value equality and diversity.

The post holder will be expected to undertake other duties commensurate with the grade of the post, including deputising or working flexibly across the week to meet the business demands. This job profile is provided for guidance only.

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