**Dudley Children’s Services**

**Social Worker**

**Career Progression Application Pack**

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1. **Social Work Career Progression Criteria and Guidance**

This guidance has been developed to support staff to understand the Career Progression Pathway in Dudley, from qualification to established experience.

The Social Worker should discuss their intention to apply for progression with their Line Manager during Supervision and Annual Review (appraisal). This conversation and the Manager’s decision should be formally recorded. The request for progression will be considered if Managers are in support of the application, and the following criteria is met:

**Progression Criteria**

A Social Worker will continue to demonstrate and evidence continued professional development (CPD) activities by:

* Undertaking the Stage 1: Practice Education Training **or**;
* Contributing to wider service planning and practice development through attending Practitioner Circles, Solution Circles, delivering workshops / training.

All Social Workers are expected to:

* Continue to develop their practice as required by Social Work England and demonstrate commitment to completing regular training and learning opportunities.
* Provide a high quality and effective Social Work service to respond to the needs of children, young people and their families / carers in a timely manner and within statutory guidelines, Directorate policies, standards and procedures.
* Use the safeguarding procedures to investigate and manage risk where individuals have suffered or are likely to suffer significant harm.
* Manage a workload of complex, specialist and generic casework and organise work activities considering the need to prioritise tasks and responsibilities.
* Undertake interviews, assessments, observations and gather information from children, young people, carers and families and formulate plans to meet assessed needs.
* Produce high quality reports and assessments, always prioritising the voice and needs of children and young people.

**Progression to Senior Social Worker**

To meet the criteria, the Social Worker should be:

* Permanently employed;
* Qualified for 30 months or more;
* Independently carrying a full case load as locally agreed;
* Continue to evidence capability against the Social Work Post Qualifying Standards (Knowledge and Skills Statement for Child and Family Practitioners) and the seventh layer of the Professional Capabilities Framework (Experienced Social Worker);
* Have demonstrable experience of undertaking statutory work including work with children in need of protection, children in care, care proceedings, and managing complex work;
* Is not subject to performance management, disciplinary, or sickness absence procedures.

A Senior Social Worker will continue to demonstrate and evidence CPD activities by completing one or more of the following:

* Undertaking the Stage 1 or Stage 2 Practice Education Training, or other development and leadership courses available;
* Contributing to wider service planning and practice development through attending Practitioner Circles, Solution Circles, delivering workshops / training or any other defined work to support service development.

A Senior Social Worker will therefore be expected to:

* Develop knowledge in a specialist area of practice and contribute this knowledge to develop others. This will be discussed and agreed at Panel.
* Continue to develop their practice as required by Social Work England and demonstrate commitment to completing regular training, learning opportunities, and development of specialist areas of practice;
* Be a role model for excellent practice and support the development of others, including students and less experienced Social Workers contributing to a culture of continuous learning;
* Support others to develop effective workload management skills to manage and prioritise work, deputising as needed and directed in the manager’s absence;
* Assess and support the work of Social Work Students and newly qualified Social Workers;
* Promote best practice in Dudley, working with Managers in a solution-focused, relational way to continually improve practice and service delivery for children and their families;
* Demonstrate and model effective relationship-based high challenge, high support behaviour and practice;
* Demonstrate the ability to interpret and use current legislation, guidance and thresholds to make timely decisions and support others in their analysis and decision-making;
* Produce high quality assessments, plans and reports that are child focused, informed by and illustrate children’s voices.

1. **Referral to Career Progression Panel**

Where it is confirmed in Supervision / the Annual Review that a Social Worker meets the Career Progression criteria, the Team Manager will notify the Centre for Professional Practice. The Social Worker will then complete the Career Progression Application Form, the Supporting Evidence Form, and a Practice Observation. The Practice Observation should relate to a piece of direct work with children or families that is undertaken in person, unless there is an exceptional reason to prevent this being arranged. Please speak to CPP if there are any queries, or any support is needed.

All applications should sent to Dudley’s Centre for Professional Practice at their internal email address ([CPP@dudley.gov.uk](mailto:CPP@dudley.gov.uk)), **no later than 2 weeks before the next panel date.**

Once panel has received the Applications, CPP will confirm the criteria is met, and applicants and their Managers will be provided with a time to attend panel.

1. **Social Work Apprenticeship Programmes**

For members of staff who wish to access the Social Work Apprenticeship Programme (this may include but is not restricted to staff from SEND, Business Support, Family Solutions, and Young Person Advisors), a discussion should be held with the Line Manager during Supervision and the Annual Review (appraisal). This conversation and the Manager’s decision should be formally recorded. The request will be considered if Managers are in support of the application.

The member of staff should submit the Career Progression Application Form, with their Manager’s endorsement. A Panel consisting of the Principal Social Worker, CPP Team Manager, and respective Head of Service will be arranged when the application is received.

Alongside the candidate’s suitability, the Panel will consider and discuss the course commitment, the timing of the next Apprenticeship Programme, and post-employment plans.

The member of staff will be notified of the outcome of Panel within **3 working days.**

1. **Return to Social Work**

For members of staff who hold a Social Work qualification and wish to return to the profession, a discussion should be held with the Line Manager during Supervision and the Annual Review (appraisal). This conversation and the Manager’s decision should be formally recorded. The request will be considered if Managers are in support of the application.

The member of staff should submit the Career Progression Application Form, with their Manager’s endorsement. A Panel consisting of the Principal Social Worker, CPP Team Manager, and respective Head of Service will be arranged when an application is received. Alongside the candidate’s suitability, the Panel will consider and discuss the course commitment and post-employment plans.

The member of staff will be notified of the outcome of Panel within **3 working days.**

1. **Career Progression Panel and Outcome**

Career Progression Panel will be chaired by the Principal Social Worker with the CPP Service Manager, a representative from Dudley’s Centre for Professional Practice, and if possible, a representative from the Children in Care Council.  The panel will take place on a quarterly basis.

Based on the information contained in their application, the panel will ask questions to evidence the member of staff has met the requirements for progression. If progression is agreed, the outcome will be confirmed on the same day, with short - medium and long-term targets.

The relevant Head of Service will be informed of the outcome of the panel, and the pay grade change will be effective from the date of panel.

Further guidance relating to evidencing readiness to progress is set out in Social Work Post Qualifying Standards.



**If you are a Team Manager wishing to make a referral to Career Progression Panel, or have any questions, please contact CPP at** [**CPP@dudley.gov.uk**](mailto:CPP@dudley.gov.uk)

**Appendix A**

**Career Progression Panel Application**

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| **Name** | |  |
| **Current role and pay grade** | |  |
| **Are you applying as a:**   * **Qualified Social Worker?** * **Previously qualified Social Worker wishing to return to the profession?** * **Member of staff applying to qualify as a Social Worker?**   **Please note qualification dates / date of last registration.** | |  |
| **How long have you been employed by Dudley?** | |  |
| **Line Manager’s Name** | |  |
| **Brief description of current role, any relevant previous work experience with children and families, and reference to continued professional development. Please also note any previous qualifications.**  **Outline why you are ready to progress / wish to train to become a Social Worker.** | | |
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| **If you have previously been a qualified Social Worker and wish to return to the profession, please outline your previous employment details and reasons for returning.** | | |
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| **Manager’s Summary and Recommendations - reasons and supporting evidence for recommendations for progression;**  Please include comments relating to time keeping, attendance at work, commitment to continued professional development, and quality of practice. This can include case work examples. | | |
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| **Is the member of staff subject to any disciplinary or absence management procedures?**  **Yes No** | | |
| If **yes,** please provide details: | | |
| **Manager’s Signature** |  | |
| **Applicant’s Signature:** |  | |

**Appendix B**

**Supporting Evidence Form**

The supporting evidence is to be completed by the Social Worker, providing evidence against the Social Work Post Qualifying Standards. Evidence should be included from a wide range of sources and cross-referenced with examples of how you have applied these skills in practice. Each section should be no more than **500** words.

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| 1. Relationships and effective direct work   Build effective relationships with children, young people and families, which form the bedrock of all support and child protection responses. Be both authoritative and empathic and work in partnership with children, families and professionals, enabling full participation in assessment, planning, review and decision making. Ensure child protection is always privileged.  Provide support based on best evidence, which is tailored to meet individual child and family needs, and which addresses relevant and significant risks. Secure access to services, negotiating and challenging other professionals and organisations to provide the help required. Ensure children and families, including children in public care, receive the support to which they are entitled.  Support children and families in transition, including children and young people moving to and between placements, those returning home, those being adopted or moving through to independence. Help children to separate from, and sustain, multiple relationships recognising the impact of loss and change. |
| Sources of evidence: |
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| 2. Communication  Communicate clearly and sensitively with children of different ages and abilities, their families and in a range of settings and circumstances. Use methods based on best evidence. Create immediate rapport with people not previously known which facilitates engagement and motivation to participate in child protection enquiries, assessments and services.  Act respectfully even when people are angry, hostile and resistant to change. Manage tensions between parents, carers and family members, in ways that show persistence, determination and professional confidence.  Listen to the views, wishes and feelings of children and families and help parents and carers understand the ways in which their children communicate through their behaviour. Help them to understand how they might communicate more effectively with their children.  Promote speech, language and communication support, identifying those children and adults who are experiencing difficulties expressing themselves. Produce written case notes and reports, which are well argued, focused, and jargon free. Present a clear analysis and a sound rationale for actions as well as any conclusions reached, so that all parties are well informed. |
| Sources of evidence: |
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| 3. Child Development  Observe and talk to children in their environment including at home, at school, with parents, carers, friends and peers to help understand the physical and emotional world in which the child lives, including the quality of child and parent/carer interaction and other key relationships. Establish the pattern of development for the child, promote optimal child development and be alert to signs that may indicate that the child is not meeting key developmental milestones, has been harmed or is at risk of harm.  Take account of typical age-related physical, cognitive, social, emotional and behavioural development over time, accepting that normative developmental tasks are different for each child depending on the interaction for that child between health, environmental and genetic factors. Assess the influence of cultural and social factors on child development, the effect of different parenting styles, and the effect of loss, change and uncertainty in the development of resilience.  Explore the extent to which behavioural and emotional development may also be a result of communication difficulties, ill health or disability, adjusting practice to take account of these differences. Seek further advice from relevant professionals to fully understand a child’s development and behaviour. |
| Sources of evidence: |
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| 4. Adult mental health, substance misuse, domestic abuse, physical ill health and disability  Identify the impact of adult mental ill health, substance misuse, domestic abuse, physical ill health and disability on family functioning and social circumstances and in particular the effect on children, including those who are young carers. Access the help and assistance of other professionals in the identification and prevention of adult social need and risk, including mental health and learning disability assessment.  Coordinate emergency and routine services and synthesise multi-disciplinary judgements as part of ongoing social work assessment. Use a range of strategies to help families facing these difficulties.  Identify concerning adult behaviours that may indicate risk or increasing risk to children. Assess the likely impact on, and inter-relationship between, parenting and child development. Recognise and act upon escalating social needs and risks, helping to ensure that vulnerable adults are safeguarded and that a child is protected, and their best interests always prioritised. |
| Sources of evidence: |
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| 5. Abuse and neglect of children  Exchange information with partner agencies about children and adults where there is concern about the safety and welfare of children. Triangulate evidence to ensure robust conclusions are drawn. Recognise harm and the risk indicators of different forms of harm to children relating to sexual, physical, emotional abuse and neglect. Take into account the long-term effects of cumulative harm, particularly in relation to early indicators of neglect.  Consider the possibility of child sexual exploitation, grooming (on and offline), female genital mutilation and enforced marriage and the range of adult behaviours which pose a risk to children, recognising too the potential for children to be perpetrators of abuse.  Lead the investigation of allegations of significant harm to children in consultation with other professionals and practice supervisors. Draw one’s own conclusions about the likelihood of, for example, sexual abuse or non-accidental injury having occurred and the extent to which any injury is consistent with the explanation offered. Commission a second professional opinion and take legal advice where necessary. |
| Sources of evidence: |

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| 6. Child and family assessment  Carry out in-depth and ongoing family assessment of social need and risk to children, with particular emphasis on parental capacity and capability to change. Use professional curiosity and authority while maintaining a position of partnership, involving all key family members, including fathers. Acknowledge any conflict between parental and children’s interests, prioritising the protection of children as set out in legislation.  Use child observation skills, genograms, encompass, chronologies and other evidence-based tools ensuring active child and family participation in the process. Incorporate the contributions that other professional disciplines make to social work assessments.  Hold an empathic position about difficult social circumstances experienced by children and families, taking account of the relationship between poverty and social deprivation, and the effect of stress on family functioning, providing help and support. Take into account individual child and family history and how this might affect the ability of adults and children to engage with services.  Recognise and address behaviour that may indicate resistance to change, ambivalent or selective cooperation with services, and recognise when there is a need for immediate action, and what other steps can be taken to protect children. |
| Sources of evidence: |
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| 7. Analysis, decision-making, planning and review  Establish the seriousness that different risks present and any harm already suffered by a child, balanced with family strengths and potential solutions. Set out the best options for resolving difficulties facing the family and each child, considering the risk of future harm and its consequences and the likelihood of successful change.  Prioritise children’s need for emotional warmth, stability and sense of belonging, particularly those in public care, as well as identity development, health and education, ensuring active participation and positive engagement of the child and family. Test multiple hypotheses about what is happening in families and to children, using evidence and professional judgement to reach timely conclusions. Challenge any prevailing professional conclusions in the light of new evidence or practice reflection.  Make realistic, child centred, plans within a review timeline, which will manage and reduce identified risks and meet the needs of the child. Ensure sufficient multi-disciplinary input into the process at all stages. Apply twin and triple track planning to minimise chances of drift or delay, being alert to the effectiveness or otherwise of current support plans. |
| Sources of evidence*:* |
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| 8. The law and the family and youth justice systems  Navigate the family and youth justice systems in England using legal powers and duties to support families, to protect children and to look after children in the public care system, including the regulatory frameworks that support the full range of permanence options. Participate in decisions about whether to make an application to the family court, the order to be applied for, and the preparation and presentation of evidence.  Seek advice and second opinion as required in relation to the wide range of legal issues which frequently face children and families involved with statutory services including immigration, housing, welfare benefits, mental health and learning disability assessment, education and support for children with learning difficulties.  Use the law, regulatory and statutory guidance to inform practice decisions. Take into account the complex relationship between professional ethics, the application of the law and the impact of social policy on both. |
| Sources of evidence: |
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| 9. The role of supervision  Recognise one’s own professional limitations and how and when to seek advice from a range of sources, including practice supervisors, senior practice leaders and other clinical practitioners from a range of disciplines such as psychiatry, paediatrics and psychology. Discuss, debate, reflect upon and test hypotheses about what is happening within families, and with children.  Explore the potential for bias in decision-making and resolve tensions emerging from, for example, ethical dilemmas, conflicting information or differing professional positions. Identify which methods will be of help for a specific child or family and the limitations of different approaches. Make use of the best evidence from research to inform the complex judgements and decisions needed to support families and protect children.  Reflect on the emotional experience of working relationships with parents, carers and children, and consciously identify where personal triggers are affecting the quality of analysis or help. Identify strategies to build professional resilience and management of self. |
| Sources of evidence*:* |
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| 10. Organisational context  Operate successfully in a wide range of organisational contexts complying with the checks and balances within local and national systems which are a condition of employment. Maintain personal and professional credibility through effective working relationships with peers, managers and leaders both within the profession, throughout multi-agency partnerships and public bodies, including the family courts.  Act in ways that protect the reputation of the employer organisation and the social work profession, whilst always privileging the best interests of children. Manage the specific set of organisational tasks relating to lead responsibility for children with the support of an appropriately qualified supervisor and use of the multi-agency support network.  Contribute to the organisation’s role as corporate parent to children in public care, encouraging and advocating for organisational focus, resource and support so that children and young people can thrive and enjoy their childhood and move into independence with confidence in and ambition for their futures. |
| Sources of evidence*:* |
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**Appendix C**

**Practice Observation Form**

**Date:**

**Name of Social Worker:**

**Name of Observer and Role:**

**Type of practice observed (ie home visit, direct work session):**

**To be completed by the observer after the observation**

**Rate the practice observed:** select the recommended grading

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Rating** | **Quality of Observed Practice** | **Score of Observation** |
| 1 | Inadequate |  |
| 2 | Requires improvement |  |
| 3 | Good |  |
| 4 | Outstanding |  |

**Please note: the observed practice should score 3 or above for the purposes of career progression.**

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| **Holistic assessment of the candidate’s capability demonstrated in the observation of practice (up to 500 words).**  *Please link your comments to Post Qualifying Social Work Standards.* |
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| **Action plan following the direct observation (if applicable)**  *Have areas of development / learning needs been identified that should be addressed in the Social Worker’s Annual Review / Supervision as a short term / medium term / long term target?*  *What actions need to be taken to address these, and when will progress be reviewed? Are there any other outstanding issues?* |
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| **Feedback from parents / carer / child / young person** |
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| **Observer’s signature** |  |
| **Date** |  |