

Job Description

Position Title	Senior Social Worker (ACS)		
Location	Various throughout Devon		
Reporting to	Practice Manager / Deputy Team Manager		
Position Number(s)			
Grade	G		
Directorate/Section/School			
Effective date of JD	May 2015	JE Job Number	G.0561

Social Workers employed by Devon County Council demonstrate the standards of proficiency, conduct and CPD as required by HCPC.

Social Workers provide assessment and intervention to respond to the Service User needs in a timely manner and within statutory guidelines, Directorate policies, standards and guidelines. This includes:

- Assessment of need and eligibility;
- Planning and delivery of focused intervention to safeguard, promote, and protect positive outcomes whilst working to best practice;
- Promoting integrated agency approaches for the benefit of adults to ensure that adults continue to live independent lives and maximise their choice and control.

Social Workers must take a Person centred approach, which seeks to be inclusive, anti-discriminatory, and anti-oppressive. They must recognise the value and the human rights of all persons.

Manage and monitor a workload of complex, specialist and generic cases and organise work activities taking into account the need to prioritise tasks and responsibilities, ensuring statutory responsibilities are undertaken for adults including undertaking reviews, delivering within timescales and meeting Statutory responsibilities, national and local performance targets, best practice and adhering to the HCPC Proficiency Standards.

Undertake assessments including Mental Capacity and Best Interest Assessments. Gather information from adults, informal networks and other agencies to analyse summarise and evaluate the information to provide a holistic assessment of needs, balancing risk and protective factors. Produce outcome-focused plans with clear aims and objectives within the context of managing risk.

Use Care Act statutory guidance and DCC policy to make enquiries, manage risk, and support people to achieve the outcomes they wish where individuals are at risk or have experienced harm or neglect. Provide written and verbal reports which are concise, informative, and based on analysis of complex evidence, which will support legal proceedings.

On the basis of assessed needs and risks, devise, implement and review support plans, including the development and management of protection plans for all who require them, in line with protection procedures and financial implications.

Plan and commission a range of appropriate services and interventions to meet the needs of the service user, their informal network and carers within delegated levels of responsibility and in accordance with the required local and national policies, procedures, standards and current legislation. Relevant legislation constantly changes therefore the role holder will be required to adhere to current legislative requirements.

Chair multi agency meetings; determine, implement and review plans from meetings.

Maintain case records keeping them up to date and able to provide concise and accurate information about circumstances and plans within the limits of data protection. Make use of IT systems provided by the Service, complying with policy and relevant procedures.

Provide professional advice, mentoring and support to colleagues. Give advice, guidance, supervision and support to student Social Workers and non-qualified Social Work staff and Care Support staff. Also provide mentoring, as required, to newly qualified Social Workers.

Develop and maintain effective working relationships with other professionals within the directorate, and partner agencies to ensure integrated, holistic and multidisciplinary approach to the care management and safeguarding of service users.

Ensure that all necessary communications are made to relevant agencies, working together with them to promote best outcomes.

Under direction of Line Manager undertake specific pieces of work in relation to customer feedback or representations, complaints, multi-agency projects or service developments and make recommendations or action plans and implement these to improve service delivery.

Undertake Best Interest Assessments:

- Carry out best interest assessments as set out in statute
- Document and evidence best interest assessments as required, within the statutorily prescribed time frames
- Where required, identify and nominate a Representative for the relevant person
- Make recommendations for any proposed authorisations whether that authorisation is approved or declined
- Engage in yearly refresher/review training of best interests qualification
- Regularly update skills and knowledge through local and national networks

The post holder will have clear responsibilities for the safeguarding of adults and children and for operating in a manner consistent with Human Rights legislation and the HCPC Proficiency and Conduct Standards.

Support and take responsibility for management, teaching and assessment of social work students carrying out practice learning in Devon.

Prepare practice learning settings for the reception of students, ensure induction programmes are provided and continuously monitor the learning settings and the quality of the learning opportunities provided.

Person specification:

Attribute	Essential	Desirable	Method of Assessment
Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Experience of supervising, supporting, encouraging and advising qualified and non-qualified staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ 	interview/assessment
Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Experience of work within a Social Care environment ◦ Experience of working in a multi agency environment ◦ Experience of working and reporting within a court environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ 	interview/assessment
Practical Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Ability to negotiate, challenge and manage conflict ◦ Ability to exercise individual judgement and consult where and when appropriate. ◦ Ability to be flexible, creative and use your initiative. ◦ Assessment skills including not being risk averse & protective factors ◦ Innovate and problem solve – open to change view in response to new evidence ◦ Time management and prioritisation skills ◦ Assertiveness in appropriate situations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ 	interview/assessment
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ High level of effective written and verbal communications. ◦ Ability to represent the council in a professional capacity. ◦ Take a person centred approach. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ 	interview/assessment
Personal Qualities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Person centred ◦ Ability to create effective working relationships with clients and other professionals. ◦ Ability to work independently on own initiative and as a Team Player. ◦ Uphold and demonstrate knowledge of HCPC standards of proficiency and conduct. ◦ Ability to develop self and others including mentoring students. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ 	◦
Strategic Thinking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Ability to contribute to service development ◦ Awareness of direction of Social Care and Health policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ 	◦
Technology / IT Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Basic awareness of IT systems including Microsoft Office, Internet and Email. ◦ Ability to record, evidence and communicate using technology. ◦ Application in relation to practice in the role 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ EDLC ◦ 	◦
Education and Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Continuing Professional Development to HCPC required standard. ◦ Best Interest Assessment qualified to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ In depth knowledge of Mental Capacity 	Sight of original certificate and registration

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	<p>practitioner level (or commitment to achieve in 2 years)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ BSC, BA, MA, DIPSW or CQSW or equivalent ◦ Registration with HCPC ◦ Knowledge of and understanding the legislative framework ◦ Knowledge and understanding of application of an evidence-base in practice. ◦ Graduate Certificate in Professional Practice or BIA qualification (as above). 	Act, Mental Health Act.etc	document require
Equal Opportunities	Devon County Council and its staff have a Statutory obligation to implement anti-discriminatory and equal opportunities when carrying out their duties		Demonstrate knowledge at Interview
Physical	Able to carry out the duties of the post with reasonable adjustments where necessary		OH1
Other relevant factors	<p>Commit and conform to DCC Customer Service Standards</p> <p>Applicants must hold a valid UK driving licence and have access to a car (exceptions may apply under the Equality Act 2010).</p>		

Health & Safety:

The purpose of this section of the JD is for the manager to identify the main H&S risks associated with the job with a view to making the job-holder aware of them. This list is not exhaustive and does not replace the Risk Assessment document.

The “Action to be taken” section should be completed and reviewed on an individual basis with job-holders.

Potential Hazards	Applicable to this job? (✓)	Action to be taken
Display Screen Equipment		
Electricity – fixed / portable		
Manual handling		
Verbal / physical abuse		
Work equipment		
Fire		
Environmental		
Isolation / lone-working		
Slips, trips & falls		
Chemical		
Working with Vulnerable persons		
Premises related		
Transport risks		
Working at heights		
Other		

**Structure chart – to be sent in by the manager as additional information with
the job description and person specification**

Structure under review. TBC June 2015.

1. Supervision and Management:

Senior Social Workers will provide a level of professional supervision and development for less experienced Social Workers and trainees in accordance to the HCPC requirements for continuous professional development and the needs for HCPC registration. In addition the role holder will provide feedback for performance appraisals for non qualified staff as required to the line manager. The role holder will supervise Social Work students whilst on work placement and mentor newly qualified Social Workers. Active participation will be required during supervision to encourage Continuous Professional Development, some line Managers will not be Social Work professionals leaving the development and recognition of training needs to the role holder.

2. Creativity and Innovation:

The role holder will be responsible for complex case work and work with other colleagues, informal networks, carers and partner agencies particularly where there is potential for future changes in support. Each case is unique and will require careful assessment and complex problem solving around a number of creative solutions. Solutions must be within the constraints of varied and sometimes conflicting legislation, national and local policy. They must be robust and defensible if challenged in court or multi agency meetings.

Social Workers must provide services that people are entitled to but also preserve the limited budgets that are at their disposal. Frequently conflict is experienced with Service Users and their informal networks that requires a good assessment so justification can be made to create an intervention that meet's the needs, prevents escalation of problems, and allows the service user to feel valued and have dignity and at the same time respond to unpredictable circumstances and outcomes.

As well as the instant response expected at times the Social Worker will be expected to work with situations where client and families have long standing patterns of behaviour that are unhelpful in resolving issues and the only way that circumstances can change is the application of imagination and innovation. The purpose of this is not to only to improve the lives of service users but also to make best use of County Council resources.

3. Links with other officers, Service users or Members of the Public:

The post holder has daily responsibility for communicating and joint decision making with multi agency professionals, appropriate persons and organisations to achieve best outcomes for clients and carers. Working jointly with other agencies, professionals, service providers and promoting an integrated approach to care planning with a commitment to working in a multi disciplinary team to the highest possible standards.

Presenting reports to multi agency meetings and potentially through to court proceedings.

Daily contacts through case handling include a variety of internal directorates (Brokers, Client Finance Services, Contracts Unit), and external agencies including:

- Health Professionals
- Local Authority Housing Associations
- Service Users
- Other Local Authorities
- Benefits Agencies
- Independent Living Funds
- Statutory Agencies, e.g. Police, Probation Service
- Private and Voluntary organisations e.g. Dom Care providers

4. Levels of Responsibility:

The role holder will have delegated responsibility to make immediate decisions to safeguard clients from harm and manage the overall risk to a service user, although in usual circumstances these decisions would be taken in conjunction with a senior manager and other agencies.

The role holder will provide a professional lead for Social Workers while they are undertaking complex cases, providing support and advice.

The role holder will need to comprehend national and local policy. Generally will act on their own initiative within these parameters, and need to be aware when joint decision making is required.

The role holder will make decisions with the support and supervision of line managers:

- the assessment of the client
- safeguarding
- legal interventions
- clients at risk of significant harm
- clients in the care of the authority

Carers provide support, advice, guidance, assessment as per the Carers Recognition Act.

The post holder makes recommendations to practice managers and senior managers regarding the allocation of resources to provide a service and makes recommendation within legal context on behalf of Devon County Council.

5. Effects of Decisions:

Decisions will be made based on evidence, best and reflective practice linking theory to practice. This will include eligibility for services, mental capacity, best interest, and best value options. Decisions made by the post holder will be of a serious and significant nature often having far reaching long term consequences for the service user.

Such decisions could include whether to initiate protection investigations, multi disciplinary meetings. Decisions/recommendations may involve incurring significant costs and expenditure of DCC resources.

Social Workers must work in partnership with service users and other agencies in order to achieve positive outcomes and consequences for the service user. Decisions have a significant effect on individuals, and also on organisations e.g. Safeguarding Adults decisions can mean the difference between the commercial success and the closure of a care establishment.

Decision consequences are required to balance the risk of the service user, their own capacity to make decisions, the operational risk to the authority, and the service users Human Rights, consequences could leave the service user in the potential situation of continued domestic abuse, as they can make their own decision to remain in the current environment.

Decisions can mean the difference between (for example):

- A service user being eligible for support via Devon County Council or not;
- A service user continuing to live independently or not;
- A service user being discharged from hospital or not;
- A service user being protected from harm/abuse or not;
- A service user being separated from their family or not;
- A service user/carer being able to claim appropriate state benefits or not;
- In the context of being a Best Interest Assessor, Social Workers will make recommendations regarding authorisation of deprivation of liberty in both community and care provision settings.

6. Resources:

In conjunction with the Practice or Team Manager, and or senior managers the role holder will arrange and commit resources of the County council in line with the scheme of delegated responsibility. Such resources could be actual monies, taking direct payments, use of contracts and or direct use of DCC resources e.g. Specialist referrals. Additional resources will be accessed on a needs basis under stipulated eligibility criteria (Care Act 2014)

7. Work Demands:

The post holder will work to agreed deadlines and time-scales imposed by legislation and Devon County Council policies and manage their workloads to enable performance targets to be achieved by the authority.

Emergency requests can result in reprioritising of workloads and changing deadlines of a short term nature. Longer term deadlines can be affected by court cases and changes in case conference dates.

Conflicting priorities will occur due to the fluctuating complexity / changing needs of the client group. Priorities will also change because of organisational and financial

demands. Delayed Discharge Act, Carers Act and the very high cost of carer packages conflict the demands on the service.

The role of Duty Social Worker provides a level of uncertainty relating to the nature of calls received, actions required to be undertaken and the unpredictability as the service users will generally be unknown to the role holder and reactions unpredictable. During the role of Duty Social Worker the regular role can be undertaken but will be subject to immediate interruptions and change of direction.

The post holder will work with people in emotionally charged situations and will be required to make immediate decisions without reference to supervisors to achieve the safety and wellbeing of all people concerned.

8. Physical Demands:

Health and safety risk assessments will be made to protect the individual. Demands will occasionally require working outside of normal office hours. The role holder will be required to travel according to the needs of the job with reasonable adjustments, if required according to the Equality Act. Devon has diverse geography and post holders will be required to travel across the county as and when the role requires.

9. Working Conditions:

This post is office based but the role holder will be expected to visit clients in their homes to undertake assessments. Visits may be required to other establishments and this will often be the first face-to-face point of contact. Working with Service Users in their own homes may expose the role holder to unpleasant conditions e.g. smoke filled, unhygienic pets and a potential risk to their own health and safety.

The role holder may have the opportunity to undertaking some home working but will adhere to the relevant home working policies as determined by Devon County Council.

10. Work Context:

The post holder will be expected to meet with service users, carers and other members of the public normally at their home and will often be their first face-to-face point of contact. This will increase the potential risk of violence and aggression, and any health and safety issues as they are often perceived as the bearer of bad news.

Due to the different areas of work, Safeguarding, Joint Agency –the post holder will demonstrate awareness of hazards and risks when visiting clients outside of an office setting and make use of appropriate risk management tools/procedures to ensure personal safety and the safety of colleagues, clients and the council.

Make complex decisions, and identify risk affecting clients within the Statutory Framework, HCPC code of ethics, and the organisational, responsibility of the local authority.

To incorporate the directorate policies relating to equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory practice into everyday working practice and to challenge discrimination and prejudice wherever this occurs.

11. Knowledge and Skills:

Required Qualification to practice as a Social Worker that is recognised by the health and care professions Council (hcpc). Completion of the post-qualifying Assessed and Supported first Year in practice, which requires proven professional development. The postholder must achieve the Best Interest Assessor Qualification recognised by Devon County Council, and must complete refresher/updates as required to maintain fitness to practice as a best Interest Assessor. The role holder will develop an ethos of continual professional development and reflective practice. The postholder will offer guidance, mentoring and in some instances supervision to colleagues.

Registration with HCPC is required and continual professional development is a prerequisite of continual membership of the HCPC.

Have proven experience in a Social Care setting which enables the role holder to demonstrate an advanced and detailed knowledge of the roles and responsibilities of statutory and voluntary agencies in order to work in a multi agency environment.

The role holder will demonstrate an advanced and detailed knowledge of safeguarding processes and investigations, in line with achieving best evidence.

Social Workers will demonstrate experience, professional social work skills, values and theoretical knowledge when operating with or advising staff. Able to demonstrate skills, sensitivity and understanding when making complex decisions affecting the service, the safety, well being and quality of life of adults, their informal networks and carers. Capable of reviewing and reallocating services based on priorities and need.

Demonstrates a full range of service planning skills, excellent presentation, report writing, interpersonal skills. Have the ability to use a range of communication skills to present and share information with other professionals. Demonstrate the ability to work closely, creatively and in partnership with statutory and voluntary agencies to achieve partnerships which develop/improve service provision.

Has a developed knowledge of Social Care policies and procedures, and makes themselves continually aware of new, and amended legislation and National Guidance including (This is not an exhaustive list):

- Mental Capacity Act
- Mental Health Act
- Human Rights Act
- 2010 Equality Act
- HCPC standards

- Valuing People Paper
- Care Act 2014

Ability to manage and resolve conflict situations and services users distress which results in challenge to traditional service provision.

Job GLPC profile – to be completed by the J.E team

SMP	C&I	C&R	D.D	D.C	Res	WDM	PDM	WCN	WCT	K&S	Score

Signatures:

Job Description agreed by:

**Line/Originating
Manager:**_____

Date:_____

**Head of Service/Head
teacher**_____

Date:_____