

Role Title	Regional Fostering Assessment Social Worker
Job Family	Children's Services
Competency Level	Principal Officer/Manager
Pay Range / Scale	PO1-PO4
Purpose Local Community Fostering is a fostering recruitment and retention service delivered on behalf of LB Havering, LB Tower Hamlets, LB Redbridge and LB Waltham Forest. Our vision is to recruit and retain skilled and nurturing foster carers who can provide loving, stable homes to meet the needs of all children who require family-based care across our partnership. Reporting to the Regional Fostering Assessment Manager, Assessing Social Workers play a key role within the regional recruitment and assessment service, undertaking comprehensive fostering assessments and supporting prospective foster carers throughout their assessment journey. Through a series of home visits, interviews, checks and evidence-gathering activities, they evaluate applicants' capacity to provide safe, nurturing and stable care, including the suitability, strengths, vulnerabilities and support needs of the full household and wider support network. The role requires clear analysis of applicants' experiences, parenting capacity, safeguarding awareness, family relationships, identity, diversity, support arrangements and resilience against fostering standards and regulatory requirements. The role culminates in the production of a high-quality Form F assessment, containing a clear professional recommendation for consideration by the Fostering Panel and Agency Decision Maker.	
PO1 – PO3	
Job Specific Accountabilities:	End Results/ Outcomes
Conduct comprehensive, evidence-based fostering assessments of prospective foster carers. Plan, manage and complete assessments from allocation to panel within agreed timescales, including timely contact with applicants, structured home visits, interviews, checks and evidence gathering. Ensure assessments consider the applicant, all household members including children, significant adults involved in caring, and the wider support network.	Assessments are completed within timescale, meet statutory and regulatory requirements, and provide a clear evidence base for approval recommendations. Assessments demonstrate clear analysis, critical reflection and evidence-based professional judgement, distinguishing between fact, opinion and analysis and providing defensible recommendations. Applicants, household members and support networks are assessed holistically, including strengths, vulnerabilities, support needs and readiness to foster.

Demonstrate effective casework management and high-quality, analytical social work practice. Analyse applicants' parenting capacity, safeguarding awareness, safe caring practices, family relationships, identity, diversity, birth family contact and ability to meet children's needs. Demonstrate professional curiosity when gathering and analysing information, exploring discrepancies, testing evidence and seeking clarification where information is incomplete, contradictory or gives rise to concern. Evaluate references, statutory checks and agency information, triangulating these with evidence gathered throughout the assessment. Consider matching implications, likely placement suitability and any preparation, training or support required before and after approval. Produce high-quality Form F assessments that distinguish clearly between description, analysis and professional opinion.	Allocated assessments are managed independently and completed to the required standard, with supervision used appropriately. Reports provide balanced, evidence-based analysis of suitability, risk, support needs and recommendations for panel and the Agency Decision Maker.
Provide professional guidance to applicants throughout the assessment process. Prepare applicants for panel, present the assessment and recommendation, respond to questions and ensure applicants understand the outcome and any next steps. Identify preparation, training or support actions required for	Applicants receive clear guidance and feedback, and their views are reflected within the assessment. Panel receives a clear, well-evidenced assessment and recommendation, including relevant support and development needs.

applicants and relevant members of their support network.	
Apply safeguarding legislation and professional judgement within assessment of households. Identify, analyse and clearly articulate risks, protective factors and any safeguarding concerns within assessments and recommendations. Liaise with relevant agencies, including police, health, education and referees, to gather, test and analyse required information.	Safeguarding risks and protective factors are clearly evidenced and inform the assessment recommendation. Practice complies with relevant safeguarding policies, procedures and statutory requirements.
Promote the regional fostering service and it's partners by interacting with the public in a personable and informative manner.	Positive engagement supports the recruitment of prospective foster carers. The fostering service is promoted effectively and maintains a positive reputation within the community.
Develop and maintain high support, high challenge relationships with stakeholders, local authority partners and other internal and external teams to drive up standards and improve the life chances of children with care experience.	Effective partnership working supports recruitment, assessment and approval activities. Information is shared appropriately to support timely and informed decision making. Recruitment and approval processes are coordinated effectively to achieve service objectives.
Support with the delivery of foster carer training to prepare them for the role of fostering. This may also include the development of training materials as well as delivery.	Foster carers receive relevant learning and development opportunities that prepare them for the fostering role. Training materials are developed, reviewed and updated to reflect current legislation, policy and best practice. Foster carers demonstrate increased knowledge, skills and confidence to meet the needs of children and young people. Attendance, participation and feedback are accurately recorded and used to inform continuous improvement. Training contributes to the effective preparation, development and retention of foster carers.

Subject to service need, facilitate and support both virtual and community-based recruitment events to generate interest and maintain contact with prospective applicants.	Positive relationships are developed with prospective enquirers, community groups and networks to increase awareness of fostering opportunities. Enquiries generated through events and outreach activities are recorded, progressed and followed up in accordance with service procedures and timescales.
Subject to service need, manage public enquiries about fostering, delivering excellent customer-focused service in line with statutory guidelines.	Accurate information and advice are provided in accordance with statutory guidance, policy and procedures. Positive customer experiences support engagement with the fostering service and encourage progression through the recruitment process.
Perform administration, tracking, and facilitation tasks as necessary to support the recruitment process.	Applicant records and database information are maintained accurately, securely and in accordance with data protection requirements. Applicants receive timely support, guidance and training throughout the recruitment and assessment process.
Actively engage in professional supervision, reflective practice and Continuing Professional Development to maintain and enhance professional competence, analytical assessment skills and knowledge of fostering legislation, research and best practice.	Supervision is used effectively to support critical reflection, professional judgement and continual improvement in practice. Learning from supervision, audit, feedback, research and training is evidenced within assessments and professional decision-making. Professional knowledge, skills and practice remain current, supporting high-quality assessment work and compliance with Social Work England professional standards.
PO4	
Job Specific Accountabilities:	
Conduct more complex or specialist fostering assessments and manage a higher volume of assessment work. Work in partnership with children's social workers and fostering colleagues to ensure assessment recommendations support appropriate matching and placement planning.	Complex assessments are completed to a high standard, within timescale, and provide clear analysis of suitability, risk, matching considerations and support needs.

Demonstrate knowledge of the relevant theories and models and incorporate these into professional practice	A critical knowledge of the range of social work-related theories and models and this is demonstrated in professional practice A minimum of 2 years post qualification experience can be evidenced, including working with a high number of complex cases concurrently A resilient and agile approach is taken to work effectively in a challenging and fast paced environment
Support other social workers, practice leads and team managers to identify and implement improvements/ efficiencies to processes and practice and contribute to the positive direction of the service Provide mentoring, informal coaching and practice support to less experienced assessing social workers and other team members (including Fostering Advisors), contributing to quality assurance and the development of high standards of assessment practice across the service.	Areas of poor practice are identified and the appropriate remedial action is taken An advanced knowledge of the relevant legislation can be clearly demonstrated The relationship between legislative change (current and future) and the implications for social work practice are well understood Inclusive and anti-oppressive practice is modelled, and any issues of concern are challenged
Proactively identify opportunities to contribute to practice expectations and develop/ enhance the professional practice of others	Knowledge is shared with others through the relevant meetings, forums etc Research is used to inform practice and expert professional knowledge is shared (formally and informally) through the relevant events, networks, and forums Less experienced social work staff are effectively mentored and supported A vibrant learning culture is promoted and sustained
Generic Accountabilities	End Results/ Outcomes
Provide advice and make recommendations based on up-to-date knowledge and analysis / evaluation of information. Manage escalated or complex customer issues within the relevant area.	Expert advice, information, interpretation, and support are provided on the full range of technical / professional issues within the area of responsibility. Issues are managed through to a satisfactory conclusion. Risk to the Council is minimised.
Contribute to the development of service plans to meet strategic business goals.	Strategic and operational input is provided to wider business planning and development. Customer needs are identified.

	Services meet legislative and policy requirements.
Ensure compliance with childcare legislation, including the Children Act 1989, Fostering and Adoption Act 2002, National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services, and Fostering Services Regulations.	Social work practice complies with the relevant legislation, regulations and practice standards (Fostering Minimum Standards, Safeguarding and Fostering Legislation and Care Planning Regulations etc)
Research developments in relevant area. Collate process and analyse information / data. Translate outputs into advisory reports / documents / actions as appropriate.	Relevant information / data are managed efficiently and accurately. Accurate and relevant information / reports / documentation are produced. Trends and issues are identified and prioritised. Statutory and procedural obligations are fulfilled. Management decision making is supported.
Lead on the development, implementation, maintenance and management of systems, policies, procedures and / or standards within area of responsibility.	Changes to systems, policies and / or procedures are identified and recommended. All updates, amendments, developments are tested and approved prior to delivery. Customers receive prompt, accurate policy / procedural updates. Service standards are improved.
Work closely with others to support/Manage the development and delivery of improvements in processes and procedures.	Identifies gaps in service provision/highlight policy issues and makes recommendations to resolve the issues. Agreed improvements are developed, delivered and evaluated. Issues and recommendations are brought to the attention of senior managers. Benchmark against best practice authorities and center of excellence.
Prepare and present a full range of reports (both standard and non-standard) covering area of responsibility.	Reports are prepared, distributed / presented to the appropriate committee/ to the required standards and timescales. Evidence based recommendations are made.
Manage a portfolio of Projects and Reviews.	Projects are delivered to agreed specification, timescales and budgets.

Lead on specific projects as required.	Change initiatives are successfully integrated and implemented across all impacted service areas. Value for money is achieved. Ongoing savings secured.
Co-operate with and support colleagues.	Colleagues are supported. Required information is provided.
Act in accordance with all policies and procedures which apply to the job and understand the reasons for this.	All policies and procedures are complied with.
Carry out all duties and responsibilities with reasonable care for the health and safety of self and others and report any potential hazards or unsafe practices to line manager.	Work is carried out in a way that is safe and without risks to health.

Nature of Contacts

Typically involves direct contact with foster carers, children and young people, all relevant household members, social workers, practice leads, team managers and other senior colleagues across the authority, and external agencies/organisations providing advice.

Work directly with colleagues (internal and external), panel members, other providers and external agencies to gather, analyse and exchange information and co-ordinate actions.

Develop sensitivity, persuasiveness, and negotiation and assertiveness skills to communicate with diverse audiences in emotive circumstances. Interact with people at all levels confidently, sensitively, and diplomatically.

Provide specialist advice, guidance, and support on issues within area of responsibility; develop and maintain joint working and promote the Council position.

Consult with stakeholders to identify requirements. Communicate changes in policy and working practice to contacts.

Procedural Context

The role is undertaken within the framework of fostering legislation, national guidance (e.g. National Minimum Standards / Quality Standards) and safeguarding requirements, ensuring all practice is compliant and informed by current statutory guidance.

It requires the consistent application of professional judgement to assess risk, capacity and overall suitability of prospective foster carers, drawing on a range of evidence and analysis.

The recommendations and decisions made within this role have a direct impact on foster carer approvals and, consequently, on the placement options available to children, influencing their safety, stability and long-term outcomes.

Key Facts and Figures

- Reports to: Regional Fostering Assessment Manager
- Budget Responsibilities: None
- Supervisory Responsibilities: None

Resourcing

Budget Responsibilities: No

Supervisory Responsibilities: Yes (as and when required)

Knowledge, Skills and Experience (PO1–PO3)

- Relevant professional social work qualification and current Social Work England registration.
- Knowledge of child development, attachment, developmental trauma, adverse childhood experiences and the capacity to assess applicants' ability to provide therapeutic, nurturing and reparative care to children with complex needs.
- Knowledge of fostering legislation, National Minimum Standards, Fostering Services Regulations and statutory guidance relating to the recruitment, assessment and approval of foster carers.
- Commitment to continuous professional development, reflective practice and professional supervision, maintaining up-to-date knowledge of legislation, research, policy and evidence-informed practice.
- Ability to undertake strengths-based, anti-discriminatory and culturally competent assessments, recognising and challenging personal bias, discrimination and inequality.
- Experience of undertaking comprehensive fostering assessments, including completing high-quality Form F assessments, analysing complex life experiences and family dynamics, and presenting balanced, evidence-based recommendations to Fostering Panel.
- Ability to use professional curiosity, supervision, consultation and reflective practice to test evidence, challenge assumptions, explore complex family dynamics and strengthen professional judgement.
- Ability to gather, analyse and synthesise information from interviews, observations, statutory checks, references and professional reports to form sound professional judgements regarding suitability to foster.
- Ability to build purposeful and effective relationships with prospective foster carers while maintaining professional boundaries, using empathy, professional curiosity and respectful challenge to explore sensitive and complex issues.
- Experience of undertaking holistic assessments that evaluate applicants' motivation, parenting capacity, attachment experiences, family relationships, support networks, resilience, health, lifestyle and ability to meet the needs of children who have experienced trauma and adversity.

- Ability to engage sensitively and effectively with all household members, including birth children and significant adults, ensuring their views, experiences and potential contribution to fostering are appropriately considered within the assessment.
- Ability to assess risk, protective factors and support needs, balancing strengths and vulnerabilities to produce clear, defensible and evidence-based recommendations.
- Ability to critically analyse complex family histories and significant life events, evaluating their impact on applicants' capacity to provide safe, stable and therapeutic care for children.
- Ability to explain, evidence and record professional reasoning, analysis and recommendations in a clear, concise and well-structured manner suitable for scrutiny by Fostering Panels, Agency Decision Makers and regulators.
- Ability to work effectively within a multi-agency environment, developing collaborative relationships with colleagues, partner agencies and professionals to support robust assessment and decision-making.
- Ability to work autonomously and manage competing priorities, maintaining quality and accuracy whilst meeting statutory and service timescales.
- Understanding of confidentiality, GDPR and information governance requirements and their application to fostering assessment and social care practice.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills, with the ability to communicate sensitively and effectively with applicants, children, families and professionals.
- Competent in the use of ICT systems and digital recording tools to support assessment, case recording and report writing.
- Willingness and ability to travel across the Local Community Fostering partnership area as required.

Knowledge, Skills and Experience (PO4)

- Any other, additional PQ qualification related to social work
- Significant post qualification professional experience (minimum of 2 years) working in a social work setting, as a qualified social worker
- Advanced and expert level of the relevant legislation, NMS, statutory guidance etc in the area of social work practice
- Ability to offer expert opinion in the team, and to other professionals and organisations
- Ability to chair meetings, deputise when required and offer expert support at case meetings
- Advanced ICT skills
- Ability to understand and take account of differentials in power, and use authority appropriately
- Experience of undertaking the relevant assessments, developing support plans etc
- Experience of providing support and guidance to other social work professionals
- Strong engagement in Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

Indicative Qualifications

Professional registration with Social Work England (SWE)

- Relevant professional social work qualification and current Social Work England registration with at least two years experience in Social Work.
- Enhanced DBS check
- Significant post-qualification experience in relevant assessment work, including Form F Assessments.
- Evidence of Continuous Professional Development

The above profile is intended to describe the general nature and level of work performed by employees in this role. It is not intended to be a detailed list of all duties and responsibilities which may be required. This role profile will be supplemented and further defined by annual objectives, which will be developed in conjunction with the post holder. It will be subject to regular review and the Council reserves the right to amend or add to the accountabilities listed.