



Advanced Social Worker (Therapeutic Fostering Hub) Fostering Support Team

Salary: Band 11, £47,181 to £51,356 per annum

Hours: 37 hours per week

Reports to: Team Leader, Fostering Support

Portsmouth City Council is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

DBS Disclosure at Enhanced level will be required prior to any offer of employment and this post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

Every post is subject to PCC and Portsmouth Safeguarding Children Partnership safer recruitment procedures.

Why come to work at Portsmouth?

The Children, Families & Education Service provides social work/care support and intervention with children, young people and their parents/carers, including Children We Care For. We are restorative in our approach and work closely with partner agencies to build strong relationships between practitioners and families. Judged 'Good' by Ofsted in 2023 (with 'Outstanding' in *"the experiences and progress of children who need help and protection"*), we are committed to workforce development and improving outcomes for children and families.

What is the role?

This Advanced Social Worker post holds a lead specialism within the Therapeutic Fostering Hub, providing high-level professional oversight, reflective supervision and practice leadership to Therapeutic Foster Carers caring for children with complex emotional, behavioural and trauma-related needs.

The hub model comprises of solo Specialist Therapeutic Foster Carers (including carers providing short-breaks and carers providing short-term bridging placements) supported by a dedicated "team around the foster home".

Working alongside the Hub Team Leader, Child Psychologist and Family Support Workers, the postholder will help deliver a therapeutic, trauma-informed fostering model that promotes placement stability and improves outcomes for children.

A core purpose of the hub is to support step-across for children currently in external children's homes and to reduce reliance on expensive short-term emergency provision through planned bridging placements.

Key responsibilities

Therapeutic fostering practice and carer support

- Provide regular, reflective, trauma-informed supervision to Therapeutic Foster Carers, supporting therapeutic parenting and attachment-informed approaches.

- Work closely with the Child Psychologist to support formulation-informed care, practical strategies and shared understanding of behaviours rooted in trauma and developmental needs.
- Support carer resilience and retention by promoting emotionally containing practice, planning for short-breaks, and de-escalation strategies to sustain placements.
- Provide out-of-hours advice and support to hub carers in line with service arrangements/rota, to strengthen stability and prevent escalation into emergency provision.

Matching, transitions and step-across planning

- Lead and support matching and transition planning for children moving into hub placements, including step-across from external children's homes.
- Provide oversight and coordination for bridging placements, supporting children to transition successfully to longer-term foster care arrangements.
- Ensure robust planning around readiness, risk, education, contact, and multi-agency coordination to enable safe, sustainable moves.

Safeguarding, risk and quality assurance

- Provide professional oversight of safeguarding concerns and standards of care within the Therapeutic Fostering Hub, ensuring risks are managed and escalated appropriately.
- Chair/lead (as required) stability meetings and other professional forums to strengthen support plans, reduce breakdown risk, and promote shared accountability.
- Maintain high-quality recording, analysis and decision-making in line with statutory duties, PCC expectations and data protection requirements.

Practice leadership and workforce development

- Play a leading role in practice development, promote and sustain a learning culture, and mentor less experienced staff.
- Deliver formal professional reflective supervision and provide guidance and advice to less experienced qualified staff (as required).
- Contribute to the development and delivery of training for carers and staff, aligned to trauma-informed, therapeutic approaches.
- Where required, take the role of practice educator (or train as a practice educator) for students.

Service development, monitoring and evaluation

- Contribute to hub development by tracking outcomes and feedback, including placement stability, child wellbeing indicators, and progress of step-down/bridging pathways.
- Support the hub's evaluation approach through accurate data, learning reviews and practice insights to inform future service development.

Operational flexibility

- While the primary purpose of the role is hub oversight and support, where required to meet service need the postholder may complete occasional fostering assessments or quality assurance activity to support capacity and timeliness.

Who is the person?

Essential:

- Have a social work qualification (degree, diploma or equivalent) and be registered with Social Work England.
- Have significant experience in children and families social work, and strong relevant experience in fostering / children we care for / placements.
- Have a strong understanding of trauma, attachment and the needs of children we care for and foster carers.
- Understand relevant legislation and be able to apply this confidently in practice.
- Be practising at an Experienced Social Worker level with evidence of strong professional judgement and reflective supervision capability.
- Have a commitment to undertake relevant continued professional development.
- Have a full UK driving licence or be able to show that you are taking lessons, as you will be visiting various locations across Portsmouth and further afield.

Desirable:

- Experience of therapeutic fostering / specialist placement support / step-across pathways for children in residential care.
- Experience working in a multidisciplinary model with psychological/clinical input.
- Experience of service development and outcomes reporting in fostering/placements contexts.

You will need to demonstrate that you have the Right to Work in the UK. No post will be offered without it.

General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

Portsmouth City Council is the Data Controller of any personal information you provide when applying for a job. It will only be used in connection with the recruitment process and will not be kept for longer than necessary. For more detailed information you can access the Data Protection Privacy Notice on our careers portal.