

Lead Adolescent Protection Practitioner (Advanced Social Worker)

Salary: Band 11, £47,18 to £51,356 per annum

Contract: Permanent

Hours: Full time - 37 hours per week

Portsmouth Local Authority is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, and young people, and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment, to improve outcomes for children.

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's Board safer recruitment procedures.

Portsmouth City Council

At Portsmouth City Council we value social work, and we continue to invest in our staff and services, drawing on a wide range of skills, sharing expertise with our partner agencies and valuing development and improving practice. We are members of Research in Practice.

As a unitary authority, Portsmouth is able to be flexible and nimble in its strategic and operational delivery to benefit our children and families.

The Service

We have exciting opportunities for a qualified experienced social worker to join our Adolescent Service based in Portsmouth City Council.

The successful candidate will sit in the multi-agency Adolescent Service within the new Family Help model providing expert leadership and oversight in safeguarding practice. The primary responsibility will be to ensure that when a child is at risk of significant harm, there is clear accountability, decisive action, and high-quality planning. For adolescents, this means leading responses to complex risks that often occur outside the home, such as criminal or sexual exploitation, radicalisation, and periods of going missing, while recognising how these intersect with family dynamics and trauma.

Working within the Adolescent Service successful candidate will ensure that adolescent safeguarding is contextual, trauma-informed, and rooted in strong relationships. They will guide Section 47 investigations, set clear thresholds, and provide specialist advice to practitioners and partners, ensuring that interventions address both the immediate risk and

the wider environment influencing the young person's safety. By bridging Family Help and statutory child protection, the experienced social worker will guarantee that the adolescents receive coordinated, proportionate support that prioritises their voice, resilience, and long-term wellbeing.

You will be supported in your practice by your Service and Team Leaders, your peers and our Stronger Futures Academy. You will be offered Restorative Practice and Motivational Interviewing training in your first year of employment and we have a comprehensive continuing professional development pathway to meet the standards of Social Work England.

Key Responsibilities

- Lead child protection enquiries (Section 47) for adolescents identified as at risk of exploitation or harm outside the home.
- Provide professional oversight and decision-making in alignment with statutory responsibilities and the Child Protection Lead framework.
- Champion a child-first, relationship-based approach, ensuring adolescents' voices inform all plans and interventions.
- Work collaboratively with Social Workers and Family Help practitioners to deliver coordinated, proportionate responses.
- Lead on contextual safeguarding practice, including mapping peer networks, locations, and community influences to identify patterns of risk and inform safety planning.
- Support partners in understanding contextual risks such as criminal or sexual exploitation, radicalisation, and missing episodes, and advise on effective safeguarding strategies.
- Ensure thresholds are applied consistently and that safeguarding plans are clear, robust, and trauma informed.
- Drive practice that strengthens protective factors, builds resilience, and promotes sustainable change for families.
- Develop and implement creative, child-centred safety plans that utilize contextual safeguarding approaches to address risks within the child's environment and increase overall safety.
- Contribute to service development by embedding best practice and supporting workforce learning around adolescent safeguarding.

Who is the person?

You will be an experienced and confident social worker who places adolescents at the heart of every decision. You will work collaboratively and restoratively, building trust with families and partners while providing clear, decisive leadership in complex child protection situations. You will bring expertise in contextual safeguarding, leading mapping of peer networks and community risks, and you will apply trauma-informed, relationship-based practice to drive sustainable change. You will demonstrate resilience, reflection, and strong values, combining

high support with high challenge to empower young people and strengthen protective factors across families and communities.

You will:

- Have a Diploma or Degree in social work and be registered with Social Work England, and you will also have completed your ASYE and have at least 2 years of child protection experience
- Expertise in adolescent safeguarding, including contextual safeguarding and exploitation risks. Demonstrate understanding of the issues which relate to children and their families.
- Be an excellent communicator who is equally comfortable speaking with children and other professionals from external partners and agencies.
- Strong leadership and decision-making skills, with experience of leading complex investigations.
- Ability to work collaboratively across agencies and influence practice at an operational level.
- Skilled in restorative, relationship-based approaches and trauma informed practice.
- Have excellent analytical skills to aid you in your assessment of children's needs.
- Be someone who enjoys a busy atmosphere who can cope with competing demands and be resilient enough to manage the stresses (with support) that come from this.
- Have the motivation and integrity to achieve outstanding outcomes for children.
- Understand anti-oppressive practice and the legislative framework around this and be restorative in your thinking.
- Be people-focused, centring the child and parent, empowering them to make informed choices and respecting their needs and wishes in equal measure.
- Value diversity and being inclusive, and work with people in a way that respects and acknowledges difference.
- Be a collaborative person who wants to be part of a mutually supportive team.
- Be computer literate, and comfortable using MS word, Outlook and databases.
- Have skills in diplomacy and tact, able to empathise with and be respectful of service users.
- Be able to consolidate learning in working practice.
- Practice expertly in complex situations, managing higher levels of risk, balancing support, and challenge (Experienced Social Worker)
- Have substantial post-qualifying, relevant experience including child protection and Court experience (Experienced Social Worker).
- Take responsibility for the continuing professional development of self and others (Experienced Social Worker)
- Commit to having a student and undertaking training to support this (Experienced Social Worker).

Values and Approach

- Commitment to placing young people at the centre of all planning and decision-making.
- High support and high challenge ethos, promoting empowerment and sustainable change.
- Collaborative, transparent, and accountable practice aligned with social work reform principles.

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.