

Independent Reviewing Officer - Service Quality Team

Salary: Band 12 £50,787 - £54,999 (Pro rata for part time)

Hours: 24 Hours per week (0.65 FTE)

Contract: Permanent

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. It is also committed to promoting quality childcare across the City that works 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.

Why come to work in Portsmouth?

Following our Ofsted inspection in May 2023, Portsmouth City Council Children's Services was judged to be 'Good'. We are now striving to become 'Outstanding' and are committed to promoting a 'think family' approach to safeguarding and reunification in Portsmouth. We want families to bring up their own children, where support may be required to keep families together, we want to work *with* families to do this in the most helpful way possible and when it is necessary for children to come into our care we want to reduce the number of days that this is for and reunify children whenever it is safe and in their best interest to do so. This is why Portsmouth City Council continues to provide significant investment in social work with children, young people and their families to make this a reality. We are working collaboratively with our local Adult Services to build a team of Adult Service's practitioners who will be co-located with our Children's Locality Social Work Teams to focus on tackling the 'trilogy of risk' with parents in order to address their assessed mental health, substance misuse and domestic abuse needs and circumstances.

We are embarking on the next stage of our ambitious and innovative 'Stronger Futures' strategy to transform the way we deliver the best outcomes with local families, by continuing to improve towards 'outstanding' and achieving financial sustainability. Our strategy focuses on achieving excellent early help, excellent family practice and excellent care.

The service promotes a dynamic learning culture where staff and service users are encouraged and supported to influence and shape our service design and delivery model. We are committed to transparent and timely interventions and aspire for outstanding practice. There are lots of opportunities to become one of the architects of the Portsmouth Family Safeguarding and Reunification Model of approach.

The Service

The Children & Families Service Quality Team provide support, scrutiny and oversight for our children on Child Protection Plans and the Children we Care for. The Service consists of Child Protection Advisors, Independent Reviewing Officers and Independent Visitors.

The Role of the Independent Reviewing Officer

- The Independent Reviewing Officer is a key role in quality assuring the care planning process and interventions for children. The role offers independent oversight and monitoring of children and young people's plans and interventions, to ensure there is high quality, timely and effective multi agency work being undertaken that will address need and achieve positive outcomes. The Independent Reviewing Officer should be confident to provide constructive professional feedback to promote good practice and to ensure that children's care plans are progressed with pace.
- The Independent Reviewing Officer adheres to the guidance outlined in the IRO Handbook. There is a requirement that children are consulted prior to their review. Children are encouraged to participate fully and even chair their review where possible. The IRO has an essential role in advocating for children and young people, escalating concerns and challenging on their behalf.
- The Independent Reviewing Officers use restorative practice to work in a positive way with children, families and carers to ensure that they are able to fully contribute to the development of the Care Planning.

What would you be doing?

- You would hold a dual role with mix of children subject to child protection planning and children that we care for. This will include chairing Child Protection conferences and Children We Care For review meetings.
- You will chair child protection conferences ensuring they are restorative in approach, with robust analysis and challenge. You will have a key role in ensuring that child protection plans are coproduced with families, SMART and clearly set out what will be offered to reduce harm and the outcomes to be achieved.
- You will be responsible for scrutinising and monitoring the progression of plans, addressing drift where necessary and to ensure they are delivered with pace. Where necessary, you will escalate concerns to ensure child safety.
- As an IRO for children that we care for, you will fulfil all the functions of the role as set out in the IRO Handbook. This includes chairing review meetings, developing relationships and consulting with children, young people, parents and significant others, having oversight of the care planning process including promotion of good quality care plans for all children. You will provide oversight between reviews to ensure that plans are progressed and permanence is achieved.

- The IROs work as a team to manage the workload and provide professional support and advice to operational teams and multi-agency partners.
- As part of the Children & Families Social Care and Safeguarding management team you will be involved in business planning and working with other agencies in the city.
- The IROs make a significant contribution to the Quality Assurance Framework within Children's Social Care, and IRO's are involved in undertaking a variety of audit activity, sometimes on a multi-agency basis.
- Working in partnership with service users, carers and a wide range of staff from our own and other organisations is key to all of our work and an essential role in this post.

Who are we looking for?

You need to:

1. Be a registered social worker and have substantial post qualifying experience of statutory child care social work - this should include some management experience.
2. Previous IRO experience would be advantageous
3. Have the skills and ability to develop relationships with children and young people and promote their engagement and participation in their meetings.
4. Be experienced in chairing multiagency meetings that are inclusive of children, young people and family members and are managed effectively.
5. Be able to identify, challenge and escalate issues that hinder the progression of children's plans.
6. A key element of this role will be the crucial need to work closely with all those involved and to maintain independence and objectivity.
7. Be able to write concise and good quality reports in a timely manner, edit minutes and record decisions on the electronic recording system. Relevant training and development opportunities will be available. We write a letter to each child following reviews and you will need to be able to write to children in a manner that is sensitive and appropriate to their age and understanding.
8. Be a good communicator, building working relationships and liaising with people at all levels. The ability to converse at ease with customers and provide advice in accurate spoken English is essential for the post.
9. Be able to work on your own and as part of a larger team which works to national standards, regulations, performance indicators and local procedures.
10. Be a person with excellent organisation and prioritisation skills as you will be planning, organising, and managing your workload in a busy, complex environment with specific deadlines and requirements.

11. Be flexible in your hours of work and available to travel within the City and further afield, as there will be some travel to locations throughout the UK for reviews. Some overnight stays may be required for this. Full driving licence will be required.
12. Be able to use basic IT packages including electronic diaries and Word. Training will be given concerning in-house specific IT systems and processes.
13. Be prepared to contribute to the training and development of other Portsmouth City Council staff and, if required, those from other organisations, for example by facilitating learning sets.

Additional information:

If you have any questions, or would like an informal discussion about the role, please call Jenny Brennan, Service Leader for SQT, on 02392 606432

General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

As part of any recruitment process, Portsmouth City Council collects and processes personal data relating to job applicants. Portsmouth City Council is committed to being transparent about how it collects and uses that data and to meeting its data protection obligations under the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

Completing and sending an application in for a vacancy is your consent for us to process your data for the purpose of recruitment. Your data is not used in any other way and you can withdraw your consent at any point in the recruitment process and we will destroy or delete your information.

For more detailed information on what we collect, how we use, store, delete data and your rights you can access a privacy statement on our Job board.