



Service Leader - Central Family Help

Salary: Band 13 - £60,906 to £68,200 Per annum

Hours: Full Time (37 hours per week)

Contract: Permanent

Location: Civic Offices, Portsmouth

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

This role requires a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check at Standard/Enhanced level which will be required prior to any offer of employment and this post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

Why Work for Portsmouth City Council?

Following our **July 2026 Ofsted Inspection**, Portsmouth Children's Services has been rated Outstanding in all 4 areas of the inspection receiving positive recognition for the progress made in strengthening services for children and families and our commitment to continuous improvement. Inspectors recognised a workforce that is committed to children and families, provided strong leadership, and a culture focused on achieving better outcomes for children and families.

We are now building on this progress through the implementation of the **Family Help Model**, bringing together targeted early help, family support and social work expertise into a seamless and relationship-based service. Our ambition is to ensure families receive the right help at the right time through one coordinated and restorative system of support.

At Portsmouth, we believe that children thrive within their families and communities whenever it is safe for them to do so. We work alongside families to build on strengths, mobilise family networks, reduce risk, and create sustainable change. Where statutory intervention is required, we ensure children receive timely protection while maintaining a relentless focus on improving outcomes and achieving permanence.

We are committed to:

- Delivering relationship-based and strengths-led practice.
- Embedding the Family Help model across all services.



- Working collaboratively with families and network members to create lasting solutions.
- Promoting restorative practice and family-led decision making.
- Integrating practitioners from across children's and adults' services to provide coordinated support.
- Creating a learning culture where staff are supported to develop, innovate and achieve excellent practice.

This is an exciting opportunity to help shape the future of Family Help in Portsmouth and lead practice that improves children's lives.

The Service

Central Family Help provides integrated support, intervention and statutory social work services for children, young people and families.

The service delivers:

- Family Help assessments and interventions.
- Child in Need planning and support.
- Child Protection planning and intervention.
- Pre-proceedings (Public Law Outline) work.
- Children We Care For planning where appropriate.
- Family network and family-led planning approaches.
- Multi-agency safeguarding responses.
- Partnership working with education, health, police, housing, voluntary sector and community services.

The service operates through a multi-disciplinary model, bringing together practitioners and professionals to provide coordinated support that promotes safety, stability, resilience and wellbeing.

What Is This Role?

The Service Leader will provide strategic and operational leadership to Central Family Help teams, ensuring children and families receive high-quality, timely and effective support and safeguarding intervention.

The Service Leader will lead Team Leaders and practitioners in Family Help and ensure that:

- Children are safeguarded and receive effective support that improves outcomes.
- Family Help principles are embedded across practice.
- Children and families experience coordinated, relationship-based interventions.



- Family networks are identified, strengthened and involved in planning wherever appropriate.
- Practice is strengths-based, trauma-informed and focused on sustainable change.
- Services perform effectively against local and national performance expectations.
- Practice quality is consistently monitored and improved through robust quality assurance and learning activities.
- Statutory duties and regulatory requirements are met.
- Resources are used effectively to achieve the best possible outcomes for children.

The Service Leader will provide leadership oversight for children supported through Child in Need, Child Protection, Public Law Outline and associated Family Help pathways.

The role will require effective partnership working across children's services, adult services, health, education, police, housing and community organisations to ensure coordinated responses to family need and risk.

The Service Leader will support the implementation and continuous development of Portsmouth's Family Help Model and contribute to wider transformation activity arising from national children's social care reforms and the Families First Partnership Programme.

The Service Leader will demonstrate visible leadership, promote reflective practice and create the conditions for staff to deliver consistently high-quality services.

Key Responsibilities

Practice Leadership

- Lead and champion the Family Help model and restorative approach.
- Ensure children and families receive timely, proportionate and effective interventions.
- Support high-quality assessment, planning and direct work with children and families.
- Promote meaningful participation of children, young people and family networks in decision making.
- Ensure permanence planning is timely and family-led wherever possible.
- Lead response to complex safeguarding concerns and provide oversight of significant decision making.
- Promote evidence-informed and trauma-informed practice.

Quality Assurance and Improvement

- Maintain oversight of practice quality across the service.
- Analyse performance, audit activity and feedback from children, families and partners.



- Drive continuous improvement and learning from audits, inspections, complaints, reviews and quality assurance activity.
- Embed learning from the July 2026 Ofsted inspection and subsequent improvement programmes.
- Ensure practice is compliant with statutory guidance, local procedures and professional standards.

Workforce Leadership

- Lead, motivate and develop Team Leaders and practitioners.
- Promote a positive learning culture that supports reflection, challenge and professional curiosity.
- Ensure effective supervision, appraisal and workforce development arrangements.
- Support staff wellbeing, retention and recruitment.
- Develop future leaders through coaching, mentoring and succession planning.

Partnership and System Leadership

- Develop effective partnerships across agencies and sectors.
- Represent the service within strategic and operational forums.
- Promote collaborative practice and shared accountability for outcomes.
- Support the development of integrated and multi-disciplinary ways of working.

Performance and Resources

- Manage service performance, budgets and resources effectively.
- Ensure resources are targeted to achieve the greatest impact for children and families.
- Monitor delivery against key performance indicators and improvement plans.
- Provide assurance to senior leaders regarding service performance, risk and quality.

Who is the Person?

We are seeking an experienced and inspirational social work leader who is passionate about improving outcomes for children and families.

You will have a recognised professional qualification in social work, excellent organisational and communication skills, and take pride in everything you do. You will be curious and creative and above all have a 'can do' attitude. You will be able to work as part of a team and ensure that front-line practice contributes to strategic priorities.

You need to:

1. Have a Social Work Diploma/Degree/MSc (or equivalent) and be registered with Social Work England.

2. Be a confident and competent leader, manager and supervisor and be able to model the values and behaviours that are consistent with delivering our vision.
3. Have an ability to bring together different disciplines and organisations and work towards a common aim and service improvement.
4. Take an active role in contributing to the development of an integrated model and address any challenges that arise as part of the change management process.
5. Support the organisation/partnership through a period of culture change and broker arrangements with key stakeholders to promote understanding and partnership responsibilities.
6. Be a collaborative leader to help develop multi-agency practice so that all stakeholders understanding the need to modify practice approaches and transform the service.
7. Have the ability to use statutory procedures and local standards/processes to inform good practice and service delivery.
8. Have demonstrable experience of performance management and a proven ability to deliver results in respect of improving services and assuring the quality of practice.
9. Have the ability to enable and promote learning and development, through providing advice, guidance and support, by facilitating action learning sets, restorative meetings, reflective practice sessions, supervision and/or training etc.
10. Be able to demonstrate an appropriate use of authority and to be able to support, challenge and scrutinise professional practice to improve outcome for families.
11. Be able to take responsibility for self-directed learning and evidence effective professional growth and development by being evidence and research informed and knowing what works and what good looks like.
12. Be able to contribute to staff development through coaching and mentoring.
13. Be able to manage stress and assist others in developing strategies for prioritising work and balancing competing demands/pressures to promote wellness in work.
14. Have good organisational and communication skills, including an excellent standard of written and spoken English, plus strong IT and analytical practice and performance skills.
15. Demonstrate a healthy professional curiosity and generosity of spirit to ensure that vulnerable people receive support and intervention to be safe, well, valued and respected.
16. Have a good working knowledge and experience of promoting anti-discriminatory practice and addressing equality of opportunity issues.
17. Be clear about information sharing standards, expectations regarding informed consent and the legislation that underpins this.
18. Engage with service users, partners, staff and senior leaders/elected members in a manner that is clear, open, honest and helpful.



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.

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

