**Dudley Children’s Services**

**Social Work Career Progression Application Pack**



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5. **Social Work Career Progression Criteria and Guidance**

This guidance has been developed to support Social Workers to understand the process of career progression in Dudley, and what they need to do to when wishing to progress.

**Career Progression**

The Social Worker should notify their Team Manager of their intent to apply for progression. This will be raised and recorded formally through supervision. A request for progression will be considered if managers are in support of progression and the following criteria is met:

**Progression Criteria**

***Progression from Grade 8 to Grade 9 (main grade Social Worker)***

**That the Social Worker:**

* Is permanently employed;
* Has been qualified for at least 2 years as a social worker;
* Is independently carrying a full case load as locally agreed;
* Provides a high quality and effective social work service to respond to the needs of children, young people and their families/carers in a timely manner and within statutory guidelines, Directorate policies, standards and procedures;
* Has undertaken statutory work including Child Protection/ Looked After Children **OR** has demonstrated a sufficient level of competence within Family Support Settings;
* Uses the safeguarding procedures to investigate and manage risk where individuals have suffered or are likely to suffer significant harm;
* Manages a workload of complex, specialist and generic cases and organise work activities considering the need to prioritise tasks and responsibilities;
* Undertakes interviews, assessments, observations and gathers information from service users, children, young people, carers and families and formulate plans to meet assessed needs;
* Continues to develop their practice as required by Social Work England and demonstrates commitment to completing regular training and learning opportunities;
* Is not subject to capability, disciplinary or sickness absence procedures.

***Progression from Grade 9 to Grade 10 (Senior Social Worker)***

**That the Social Worker:**

* Is permanently employed;
* Has been qualified a minimum of 2 and a half years;
* Independently carries a full case load as locally agreed;
* Has demonstrable experience of undertaking statutory work including Children Protection/ Looked After Children **OR** Has demonstrated a considerable level of competence within Family Support Settings;
* Manages a complex caseload and their time effectively in order to work within timescales and meet all statutory duties;
* Is able to evidence continued learning from training and development opportunities which is embedded into their practice;
* Plays a leading role in practice development in the team and helps sustain a learning culture;
* Demonstrates evidence of working flexibly and responding to the changing needs of the service;
* Acts as a social work role model, setting expectations for others and contributes to the public face of the organisation;
* Contributes to organisational developments;
* Provides supervision/support to colleagues as requested. Supports others to manage and prioritise work – deputising as needed and directed in managers absence;
* Assesses and supports the work of social work students and newly qualified social workers;
* Models and helps others with effective workload management skills, promoting well-being for team and colleagues;
* Promotes up to date expectations about practice norms, identifying and working alongside managers to help resolve poor practice issues.
* Demonstrates and model the effective and positive use of power and authority, whilst recognising and providing guidance to others as to how it may be used oppressively;
* Demonstrates the ability to interpret and use current legislation, guidance and thresholds in order to make timely decisions and support others in their analysis and decision making;
* Develops knowledge in one or more specialist areas of practice. Expands knowledge to inform the connections between this and other settings or areas of practice;
* Continues to develop their practice as required by Social Work England and demonstrates commitment to completing regular training and learning opportunities.
* Is not subject to capability, disciplinary or sickness absence procedures.

***It is possible that a social worker can progress from Grade 8 to Grade 10 in evidencing the related criteria and if agreed at Career Progression Panel.***

**Referral to Career Progression Panel**

Where it is confirmed that a Social Worker meets the career progression criteria, the Social Worker and Team Manager will notify the Centre for Professional Practice. They will then complete the application form, KSS supporting evidence, and a direct observation of practice. Support can be accessed from the Centre for Professional Practice.

All applications must be fully completed and sent to the Centre for Professional Practice internal email address CPP@dudley.gov.uk **no later than 2 weeks before the next panel date.**

Once panel has received career progression applications, social workers will be provided with a time to attend panel.

**Career Progression Panel and Outcome**

The Panel will be chaired by the Head of Service for Safeguarding and Review along with a Service Manager, a representative from Dudley’s Centre for Professional Practice, and if possible, a representative from the Children in Care Council.

The panel will take place on a quarterly basis (January, April, July and October) and a maximum of five social workers can attend each panel.

Further guidance relating to evidencing readiness to progress are set out in the Knowledge and Skills Statement for Child and Family Practitioners.



The panel will ask the applicant questions to seek assurance that the social worker has evidenced the required knowledge and skills within the statement, engaged with continued professional development activities, and used restorative approaches in their practice. There will also be the setting of short, medium, and long term targets, which will be reviewed at the next panel. The decision of the panel in respect to these will be whether evidence has been provided or not. Outcomes of the observation will be shared and discussed within the panel.

If the social worker presents the required evidence, at the required standard, the panel will endorse the application and the progression will be awarded. If the Social Worker has not provided sufficient evidence, support and guidance will be provided to assist and reapplications can be explored at future panels.

The relevant Head of Service will be informed of the outcome of the panel who will notify the social worker within **one working day.** Progression changes in pay will begin one month post the progression panel date.

**If you are a Team Manager wishing to make a referral to Career Progression Panel or have any questions please contact – Ruth Kernarne, Advanced Social Work Practitioner, Dudley’s Centre for Professional Practice.**

**Ruth.Kernarne@dudley.gov.uk**

1. **Social Work Career Progression Panel Application**

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| **Name** |  |
| **Current role and pay grade** |  |
| **How long have you been qualified as a Social Worker?** |  |
| **How long have you been employed by Dudley?** |  |
| **Team Manager’s Name** |  |
| **Brief history of your post-qualifying experience as a Social Worker, with reference to continued professional development.** |
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| **Team Manager’s Summary and Recommendations - reasons and supporting evidence for recommendations for Career Progression;** *Please include comments on the Social Worker’s time keeping, attendance at work, commitment to continued professional development, and quality of practice. This can include casework examples.* |
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| **Is the Social Worker subject to any disciplinary or absence management procedures?** **Yes ⃝ No ⃝**  |
| If yes please provide details: |
| **Manager’s Signature:** |  |
| **Social Worker’s Signature:** |  |

1. **Social Work Career Progression KSS Supporting Evidence Form**

The supporting evidence is to be completed by the Social Worker, providing evidence against the Post Qualifying Knowledge and Skills Statement for Child and Family Practitioners (2018). Evidence should be included from a wide range of sources and be cross referenced with case examples of how you have applied these skills in your practice. Each section should be no more than **500** words.

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| 1. Relationships and effective direct work

Build effective relationships with children, young people and families, which form the bedrock of all support and child protection responses. Be both authoritative and empathic and work in partnership with children, families and professionals, enabling full participation in assessment, planning, review and decision making. Ensure child protection is always privileged.Provide support based on best evidence, which is tailored to meet individual child and family needs, and which addresses relevant and significant risks. Secure access to services, negotiating and challenging other professionals and organisations to provide the help required. Ensure children and families, including children in public care, receive the support to which they are entitled.Support children and families in transition, including children and young people moving to and between placements, those returning home, those being adopted or moving through to independence. Help children to separate from, and sustain, multiple relationships recognising the impact of loss and change. |
| Source of evidence: |
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| 2. CommunicationCommunicate clearly and sensitively with children of different ages and abilities, their families and in a range of settings and circumstances. Use methods based on best evidence. Create immediate rapport with people not previously known which facilitates engagement and motivation to participate in child protection enquiries, assessments and services.Act respectfully even when people are angry, hostile and resistant to change. Manage tensions between parents, carers and family members, in ways that show persistence, determination and professional confidence.Listen to the views, wishes and feelings of children and families and help parents and carers understand the ways in which their children communicate through their behaviour. Help them to understand how they might communicate more effectively with their children.Promote speech, language and communication support, identifying those children and adults who are experiencing difficulties expressing themselves. Produce written case notes and reports, which are well argued, focused, and jargon free. Present a clear analysis and a sound rationale for actions as well as any conclusions reached, so that all parties are well informed. |
| Source of evidence: |
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| 3. Child Development Observe and talk to children in their environment including at home, at school, with parents, carers, friends and peers to help understand the physical and emotional world in which the child lives, including the quality of child and parent/carer interaction and other key relationships. Establish the pattern of development for the child, promote optimal child development and be alert to signs that may indicate that the child is not meeting key developmental milestones, has been harmed or is at risk of harm.Take account of typical age-related physical, cognitive, social, emotional and behavioural development over time, accepting that normative developmental tasks are different for each child depending on the interaction for that child between health, environmental and genetic factors. Assess the influence of cultural and social factors on child development, the effect of different parenting styles, and the effect of loss, change and uncertainty in the development of resilience.Explore the extent to which behavioural and emotional development may also be a result of communication difficulties, ill health or disability, adjusting practice to take account of these differences. Seek further advice from relevant professionals to fully understand a child’s development and behaviour. |
| Source of evidence: |
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| 4. Adult mental health, substance misuse, domestic abuse, physical ill health and disabilityIdentify the impact of adult mental ill health, substance misuse, domestic abuse, physical ill health and disability on family functioning and social circumstances and in particular the effect on children, including those who are young carers. Access the help and assistance of other professionals in the identification and prevention of adult social need and risk, including mental health and learning disability assessment.Coordinate emergency and routine services and synthesise multi-disciplinary judgements as part of ongoing social work assessment. Use a range of strategies to help families facing these difficulties.Identify concerning adult behaviours that may indicate risk or increasing risk to children. Assess the likely impact on, and inter-relationship between, parenting and child development. Recognise and act upon escalating social needs and risks, helping to ensure that vulnerable adults are safeguarded and that a child is protected, and their best interests always prioritised. |
| Source of evidence: |
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| 5. Abuse and neglect of childrenExchange information with partner agencies about children and adults where there is concern about the safety and welfare of children. Triangulate evidence to ensure robust conclusions are drawn. Recognise harm and the risk indicators of different forms of harm to children relating to sexual, physical, emotional abuse and neglect. Take into account the long-term effects of cumulative harm, particularly in relation to early indicators of neglect.Consider the possibility of child sexual exploitation, grooming (on and offline), female genital mutilation and enforced marriage and the range of adult behaviours which pose a risk to children, recognising too the potential for children to be perpetrators of abuse.Lead the investigation of allegations of significant harm to children in consultation with other professionals and practice supervisors. Draw one’s own conclusions about the likelihood of, for example, sexual abuse or non-accidental injury having occurred and the extent to which any injury is consistent with the explanation offered. Commission a second professional opinion and take legal advice where necessary. |
| Source of evidence: |

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| 6. Child and family assessmentCarry out in-depth and ongoing family assessment of social need and risk to children, with particular emphasis on parental capacity and capability to change. Use professional curiosity and authority while maintaining a position of partnership, involving all key family members, including fathers. Acknowledge any conflict between parental and children’s interests, prioritising the protection of children as set out in legislation.Use child observation skills, genograms, encompass, chronologies and other evidence-based tools ensuring active child and family participation in the process. Incorporate the contributions that other professional disciplines make to social work assessments.Hold an empathic position about difficult social circumstances experienced by children and families, taking account of the relationship between poverty and social deprivation, and the effect of stress on family functioning, providing help and support. Take into account individual child and family history and how this might affect the ability of adults and children to engage with services.Recognise and address behaviour that may indicate resistance to change, ambivalent or selective cooperation with services, and recognise when there is a need for immediate action, and what other steps can be taken to protect children. |
| Source of evidence: |
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| 7. Analysis, decision-making, planning and reviewEstablish the seriousness that different risks present and any harm already suffered by a child, balanced with family strengths and potential solutions. Set out the best options for resolving difficulties facing the family and each child, considering the risk of future harm and its consequences and the likelihood of successful change.Prioritise children’s need for emotional warmth, stability and sense of belonging, particularly those in public care, as well as identity development, health and education, ensuring active participation and positive engagement of the child and family. Test multiple hypotheses about what is happening in families and to children, using evidence and professional judgement to reach timely conclusions. Challenge any prevailing professional conclusions in the light of new evidence or practice reflection.Make realistic, child centred, plans within a review timeline, which will manage and reduce identified risks and meet the needs of the child. Ensure sufficient multi-disciplinary input into the process at all stages. Apply twin and triple track planning to minimise chances of drift or delay, being alert to the effectiveness or otherwise of current support plans. |
| Source of evidence*:* |
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| 8. The law and the family and youth justice systemsNavigate the family and youth justice systems in England using legal powers and duties to support families, to protect children and to look after children in the public care system, including the regulatory frameworks that support the full range of permanence options. Participate in decisions about whether to make an application to the family court, the order to be applied for, and the preparation and presentation of evidence.Seek advice and second opinion as required in relation to the wide range of legal issues which frequently face children and families involved with statutory services including immigration, housing, welfare benefits, mental health and learning disability assessment, education and support for children with learning difficulties.Use the law, regulatory and statutory guidance to inform practice decisions. Take into account the complex relationship between professional ethics, the application of the law and the impact of social policy on both. |
| Source of evidence: |
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| 9. The role of supervisionRecognise one’s own professional limitations and how and when to seek advice from a range of sources, including practice supervisors, senior practice leaders and other clinical practitioners from a range of disciplines such as psychiatry, paediatrics and psychology. Discuss, debate, reflect upon and test hypotheses about what is happening within families, and with children. Explore the potential for bias in decision-making and resolve tensions emerging from, for example, ethical dilemmas, conflicting information or differing professional positions. Identify which methods will be of help for a specific child or family and the limitations of different approaches. Make use of the best evidence from research to inform the complex judgements and decisions needed to support families and protect children.Reflect on the emotional experience of working relationships with parents, carers and children, and consciously identify where personal triggers are affecting the quality of analysis or help. Identify strategies to build professional resilience and management of self. |
| Source of evidence*:* |
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| 10. Organisational contextOperate successfully in a wide range of organisational contexts complying with the checks and balances within local and national systems which are a condition of employment. Maintain personal and professional credibility through effective working relationships with peers, managers and leaders both within the profession, throughout multi-agency partnerships and public bodies, including the family courts.Act in ways that protect the reputation of the employer organisation and the social work profession, whilst always privileging the best interests of children. Manage the specific set of organisational tasks relating to lead responsibility for children with the support of an appropriately qualified supervisor and use of the multi-agency support network.Contribute to the organisation’s role as corporate parent to children in public care, encouraging and advocating for organisational focus, resource and support so that children and young people can thrive and enjoy their childhood and move into independence with confidence in and ambition for their futures. |
| Source of evidence*:* |
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1. **Social Work Career Progression Observation of Practice Form**

The Team Manager should complete a direct observation of the applying Social Worker’s practice, to be submitted along with the application and KSS supporting evidence.

**Social Worker:**

**Observer and Role:**

**Date:**

**To be completed by the observer after the observation**

**Rate the practice observed: select recommended grading**

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| **Rating** | **Quality of Observed Practice** | **Score of Observation** |
| **1** | **Inadequate**  |  |
| **2** | **Requires improvement** |  |
| **3** | **Good** |  |
| **4** | **Outstanding** |  |

**Please note: the observed practice must score 3 or above for the purposes of career progression.**

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| **Holistic assessment of the candidate’s capability demonstrated in the observation of practice (up to 500 words). *Please link your comments to the Knowledge and Skills Statement for Child and Family Practitioners.***  |
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| **Action plan following the direct observation (if applicable)*****Have areas of development/learning needs been identified that should be addressed in the social worker’s annual review/supervision as a short term / medium term / long term target? What actions need to be taken to address these, and when will progress be reviewed? Are there any other outstanding issues?*** |
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| **Feedback from parents/carer/child/young person (must be included)** |
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| **Observer’s signature** |  |
| **Date** |  |