**Progression Process F - G Grade Social Worker**

**Guidance Notes for the Application Process**

**Introduction**

This guidance sets out the eligibility criteria, process, and requirements for F Grade Social Workers wishing to progress to Senior Social Worker (Grade G). It is an evidence-based approach by which internal candidates can demonstrate their competence and practice experience along with endorsement from their Team Manager, Service Manager and Head of Service.

F-G Progression is an integral part of the career progression model for Social Workers in Sandwell Children’s Trust. In addition to moving to a higher pay grade, F-G Progression may be a springboard for further career progression into management or particular specialisms (see Appendix A).

F-G Progression is facilitated by the Social Work Academy and consists of a written application and a practice discussion at a F-G progression panel. Panels usually take place on the 2nd or 3rd Friday of each month, but this can be flexible in certain circumstances e.g. if a candidate does not work on a Friday.

**Eligibility Criteria**

In order to be eligible for progression to G Grade, the candidate will need to:

* Be a permanent member of staff;
* Be currently employed in an F Grade Social Worker post;
* Have at least 18 months - 2 years post-qualifying experience as a F-Grade Social Worker i.e. at least 6-12 months experience post ASYE *(There is some flexibility as it is recognised that there will be some individual differences in readiness post ASYE depending on the Social Worker’s circumstances and stage of development)*;
* Have the agreement of their line manager that they should apply for progression and their manager’s commitment to supporting their application.

**Approach**

The process aims to provide candidates with the opportunity to evidence their professional practice through a written statement, endorsed by management, and a competency-based practice discussion that will:

* Enable the candidate to discuss their relevant experience and practice.
* Give the candidate the opportunity to reflect on their career aspirations and further professional development.
* Determine if the candidate is ready for progression or if a development plan is required to achieve the necessary level of practice.

**The F-G Progression Process**

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| Stage 1: | Application for a Senior Social Worker (Grade G) role is discussed with the line manager i.e. through Supervision and Appraisal. If agreed the F-G Progression Application Form is requested from the Social Work Academy [SW\_Academy@sandwell.gov.uk](mailto:SW_Academy@sandwell.gov.uk)  *NB If it is decided that further learning and development is needed before an application is made, the social worker and line manager will work together to identify CPD needs and learning and development opportunities.* |
| Stage 2: | The candidate completes their written statement on the application form and submits this to their line manager for their supporting statement and signature (to be completed within 10 working days). The application form is then submitted to the Service Manager. |
| Stage 3: | The Service Manager provides a brief reference and their signature to endorse the application (to be completed within 10 working days). The application form is then submitted to the Head of Service. |
| Stage 4: | The Head of Service provides a brief reference and their signature to endorse the application (to be completed within 10 working days).  *NB Should either the Service Manager or Head of Service not endorse the application, they will discuss this with the line manager and candidate and make recommendations for further learning and development needs and opportunities.* |
| Stage 5: | The application is submitted to the Social Work Academy (SWA) Team who will arrange a slot at the next monthly F-G progression panel. The discussion questions will be sent to the candidate in advance of the panel to support their preparation. |
| Stage 6: | The practice discussion panel takes place with the Head of Practice & Social Work Innovation/PSW and a Head of Service from the Operational Service (other than the Candidate’s own HoS). |
| Stage 7: | Outcome: *Progression Approved* – Candidate is informed, and the completed Application Form is submitted to HR by the SWA to verify progression. |
| OR: | Outcome: *Progression not Approved/Deferred* – Support given to Social Worker from SWA and line manager to provide additional evidence or work towards resubmission. |

***Please see Appendix B for a Process Map***

**The discussion questions for the panel are included as *Appendix C***

**Support Available for the candidate**

* If the applicant has a disability or specific needs and requires any reasonable adjustments to be made at any stage of the progression process, these should be discussed with the line manager.
* If it is decided that the social worker is not yet ready to progress, the line manager will support them to identify appropriate learning and development opportunities.
* The Progression Panel will give feedback to the candidate, identifying good practice and areas for further development, and make recommendations for next steps.
* Should the application *not* be approved, or is deferred, the Social Work Academy (SWA) Team and the Line Manager will work with the candidate towards resubmission at a later date.

**Guidance: Things to Consider:**

Handy Hints for social workers looking to progress to G Grade:

* Get a broad range of practice examples from a different and diverse range of children and families, and the circumstances.
* Think about moving to a different type of team to get more experience.
* Reflect on your practice – how is your intervention making a difference, be confident in talking about your practice.
* Actively seek feedback about your practice – from children, families, your manager, and partners.
* Actively seek to work with more complex situations for children and families.
* Start supporting your Team Meetings with research and practice.
* Take out less experienced practitioners and SWs with you to observe your practice.
* Start thinking about student placements and becoming a Practice Educator.
* Actively seek out CPD opportunities to enhance and support your career (and link to SWE).

Handy Hints for line managers supporting progression:

* Actively encourage your SW to reflect on their practice, and the impact of their interventions.
* Give your SW plenty of feedback – including strengths and respectful challenge.
* Give your SW a broad range of children and families (and carers) in different and diverse circumstances.
* Your SW might need to move teams to get more depth to their practice – help and support them with this.
* Encourage learning opportunities for your SW to help grow and support the team with less experienced SW and Practitioner and working with Students.
* Actively discuss and plan the SWs career with them – what do they want to achieve, how will they get there, what are your expectations, what are the milestones, how do you both know that these are being achieved.
* Be honest – is your SW ready or not?
  + If they are ready actively encourage an application and request Panel date.
  + If they are not ready – what else do they need to achieve, and how will you support them.



**Appendix A**

**SW Progression to SSW (F-G) – Process Map**

**Appendix B**

**Application**

SW completes written statement and line manager completes supporting statement (within 10 working days)

Service Manager completes statement in support of the application (within 10 working days)

Completed Application Form submitted to SWA and next Progression Panel date and time slot identified

HoS completes statement in support of the application (within 10 working days)

Application Form obtained from SWA and forthcoming panel dates requested

*If Agreed*

SW discusses progression with line manager (in Supervision & Appraisal)

*If not Agreed by HoS*

*If not Agreed by SM*

HoS/SM feedback to line manager and SW

SW progresses to SSW HR is informed and implement progression

*Outcome: Progression Agreed*

*If not Agreed*

**Panel**

SW attends Practice Discussion Panel with PSW/HoS

Line manager and SW identify further learning and development needs and opportunities

SWA & line manager work with SW to identify further learning and development needs and opportunities

*Outcome: Progression Not Agreed*

**F-G Progression Panel Discussion Questions**

**Appendix C**

**These are the questions that your panel discussion will be based around. These will be also be sent to you on submission of your application and prior to the panel.**

1. Can you give us an example of a complex child and family you have led on, where you have had to exercise professional judgement? Explain why this was challenging and the process and intervention you went through in making your decision? What was the impact on the child?
2. Please give us an example of how you have secured and developed the support of other services or professionals to support and protect a child in their family?
3. We recognise that social work can be extremely challenging in a number of ways: complex family/organisation dynamics; serious hostility and conflicts of interest; multiple risk factors. Can you tell us what are your strategies for dealing with challenging workloads and the impact of your decisions?
4. What are your aspirations for future career progression?