

Job description

Post title:	Adoption Social Worker
Service area:	Adopt London North, Regional Adoption Agency (RAA)
Grade:	P03
Reports to:	Adoption Team Manager
Your team:	Adoption Support / Family Finding / Recruitment & Assessment
Number of supervisees:	N/A

Our ambition

We're determined to make Islington fairer. To create a place where everyone, whatever their background, has the opportunity to reach their potential and enjoy a good quality of life.

We also have an ambitious goal – to be the best council in the country – with every employee clear about the part they play and inspired, focused and supported to give their very best.

We want to build an organisation where employees feel valued, inspired and empowered to help us achieve our goals and provide the best services possible to our residents.

Our values and behaviours

'Be Islington' is about setting a clear challenge about what it means to be an Islington employee and sets the standard for every new recruit.

We ask our employees to 'Be Islington' – playing their part in working together for a fairer borough and to always be collaborative, be ambitious, be resourceful, and be empowering ('CARE').

Our commitment to challenging inequality

We are committed to tackling inequality, racism and injustice and creating a fairer borough for all. In order to do this, we need to set the example by being a fair employer and creating a workplace environment, which is free from discrimination, racism and inequality. Our approach needs to be proactive, consistently learning to create a fairer workplace and foster a culture, which empowers all staff to challenge inequality.

Fairness is at the heart of what we do. We want to celebrate and embrace our differences by:

- Ensuring our workforce is representative of the people we work on behalf of, our residents
- Creating equitable working environments and diverse teams
- Understanding our residents in order to design and deliver services that help tackle inequality and improve life chances for our residents
- Getting to know people and their differences
- Interpreting issues and concerns from a cultural perspective and address situations or problems from the points-of-view of multiple cultures
- Supporting people with long-term health conditions and/or disabilities

- Recognising the value of flexible working to support staff where possible

Work style

This role includes office-based working and working from home, as well as undertaking visits to clients in their homes or in public places.

On occasion you will be required to work outside of usual hours – for example weekend training or social activities for adoptive families, or assessment meetings in the evening.

Primary job function

Our overarching vision is that, through adoption, children and young people across North London who have been adopted or are in need of adoption can overcome difficulties and can form secure relationships through their childhood and into their adulthood.

As an adoption social worker in the RAA you will work primarily within one of the three RAA teams, with flexibility to fulfil duties across the teams, or move teams, as required by service need.

Duties and responsibilities

Manage the specific set of tasks relating to statutory roles in adoption to recruit and assesses adoptive parents, identify suitable adoptive families for children, and to provide a range of adoption support services, with the support of an appropriately qualified supervisor.

To develop a culture of trauma-informed practice that helps to improve the quality of relationships with children and young people and their families, through Motivational Practice.

To work closely and productively as an enthusiastic and committed team member with colleagues across the RAA including undertaking joint working, sharing skills and experience and participating in group supervision.

To participate in the monitoring, evaluation and development of services provided by the RAA, including involvement in team and service meetings, and working groups as relevant.

Duties and responsibilities specific to team role

Recruitment & Assessment

- a) Participate in activities to support the recruitment and selection of high quality adoptive parents.
- b) Undertake evidence based assessments of prospective adoptive parents and use information gathered to provide analytical reports within statutory timescales.
- c) Prepare and deliver training programmes for prospective adopters. Compile written feedback of the outcome of the training to inform further development needs of the individual participant and the service.

Family Finding

- a) As required to be fully involved in carrying out high quality permanence planning for children in relation to adoption.
- b) To family find for children in need of adoptive placements using all available methods in partnership with responsible social workers from the partner boroughs.
- c) To provide expert mentoring and advice to the child's social worker in relation to the adoption process and planning for placement, and to provide advice to staff undertaking direct work with children prior to adoption.
- d) Co-ordinate with colleagues and external agencies, regarding the matching and placing of children with families for adoption.

Adoption Support

- a) Prepare and deliver training programmes for adoptive families post order. Compile written feedback of the outcome of the training to inform further development needs of the individual participant and the service.
- b) Prepare, review and support arrangements that meet the needs of adoptive families, birth families and adoptive adults.
- c) To support adopters to access additional support through in house provision or through the Adoption Support Fund as required.
- d) To identify with adopters their training, development and support needs in order to develop their skills and potential.
- e) To assist adoptive and birth families with the facilitation of contact between the child / young person and their birth family, where this has been agreed as in the best interests of the child / young person.

General duties and responsibilities

Relationships and effective direct work

- a) Build effective relationships with children, young people, families or carers to decide the best way to keep them safe, bring about change and improve outcomes ensuring that child protection is always prioritised. Observe and talk to children, young people and their families/carers within their environment to help understand their physical and emotional world.
- b) Provide support using best evidence to address identified needs, significant risk and to support children and young people to thrive in their adoptive placements.
- c) Work with a range of professionals, helping them understand the child and young person's needs and ensuring that these are met in different contexts.

- d) Build key relationships with social workers, reviewing officers and others in partner local authorities to work collaboratively to ensure that children being placed for adoption and their adoptive families experience the best possible social work support.
- e) To provide supervision and support to adoptive parents, individually, in families, facilitating groups and training.

Communication

- f) To communicate clearly and sensitively with children and families/carers and other professionals within differing contexts, taking into account diversity and the need to tailor communication styles. To engage and motivate people to participate in support services.
- g) To listen to the wishes and feelings of children and young people and support parents, carers and other professionals to understand behaviour and improve outcomes within a range of contexts.
- h) Produce written cases notes and reports which are well argued, focused and jargon-free with sound analysis and rationale for actions.
- i) Monitor own caseload activity on a monthly basis to ensure that any statistical information required is provided.

Child Development

- a) Have an understanding and knowledge of child development milestones, and how they can be impacted on by trauma. With this knowledge to be able to seek additional professional advice when needed in order effectively understand, challenge and advocate on behalf of children with their parents, carers and the professional network.

Adult mental ill health, substance misuse, domestic abuse, physical ill health and disability

- a) To have a clear and empathic understanding of how the above issues impact on the parent-child relationship and child development. To use this understanding to develop a holistic view of a child's current and likely future needs. To work collaboratively with parents and the wider network to help children make sense of their history.
- b) To work effectively with adoptive parents through periods of stress to ensure that the child is well cared for, reducing disruption and promoting permanence.

Abuse and neglect in children and young people

- a) To have an awareness and curiosity of what the indicators of abuse and neglect are in an adoptive placement and to use this to collate multi-agency information and where necessary confidently lead investigations to protect children.

Assessments

- a) To complete thorough, child-focussed and ongoing assessments, which recognise strengths, vulnerabilities as well as attitude to change. To ensure that assessments bring out clearly the voice of the child and demonstrate an empathic view of how family and wider circumstances impact on children's ability to develop to their full potential.

- b) To use supervisory and adult learning skills to assess the potential of carers to meet children's needs. To work in partnership with carers to help them make sense of the assessment process.

Analysis, decision-making, planning and review

- j) Analyse plans regularly to ensure the support provided is making a difference to reduce risk and adjust the plan accordingly, including the views of children, young people, parents, carers and the professional network.
- k) Demonstrate accountability for the support being provided by producing written case notes and reports which are reasoned, purposeful and jargon-free. Present a clear analysis and a sound rationale for actions and decisions made, so that all parties are well informed.

The law and the family, and youth justice systems

- l) Use the law, regulatory and statutory guidance to inform practice. Demonstrate ability to participate in decision-making to ensure children and kept safe, utilising the legal powers, duties and resources available.
- m) To present professional opinion and assessment in court in order to provide high quality and evidence-based advice on matters relating to adoption.

Role of supervision

- n) Use individual and group supervision reflectively to discuss, debate and test hypotheses when examining your cases. You will explore multiple perspectives and presenting issues, linked to underlying risks or needs. Utilise supervision to develop your practice skills, build confidence and reflect on your own development.
- o) To provide supervision and support to carers under the regulatory requirements in partnership, helping them to develop their practice skills, build confidence and reflect on their own development
- p) Have an up to date knowledge of relevant research and developments within adoption and other related areas of children's social care.

Organisational context

- q) Operate successfully in a wide range of organisational contexts complying with the checks and balances within local and national systems.
- r) Maintain effective working relationships with peers, managers and leaders both within the profession, throughout multi-agency partnerships and public bodies, including the family courts.
- s) Encourage and advocate for organisational focus, resource and support for the children and young people you work with.
- t) To facilitate planned training and preparation of carers on specific agreed Saturdays in the year and attend agreed recruitment events which may be out of office hours.

- u) Provide expert consultation, advice and guidance on matters relating to adoption for other social work teams, including in partner boroughs.

Person specification

You should demonstrate on your application form how you meet the essential criteria. Please ensure that you address each of the criteria as this will be assessed to determine your suitability for the post.

Essential criteria

Qualifications

Essential criteria	Criteria description	Assessed by
1	SWE recognised social work qualification.	Application

Experience & Skills

Essential criteria	Criteria description	Assessed by
2	Good understanding of relevant legislation, regulation, safeguarding practices and research on what works to improve outcomes for children and families. Understanding of the relevant statutory guidance and National Minimum Standards.	Application/Interview
3	Relationship and effective direct work Demonstrated evidence of building purposeful relationships balancing empathy and authority. You will show experience of direct work, working with the impact of trauma and ensuring safeguarding is always prioritised. Demonstrate an ability to facilitate direct work with adoptive parents, individually, facilitating groups and delivering training.	Interview/Test
4	Communication (oral) Demonstrate evidence of communicating and listening with children and families/carers taking into account diversity and the need to tailor communication style to engage and motivate people to participate in support services. To demonstrate an ability to supervise	Interview/Test

Essential criteria	Criteria description	Assessed by
	others in partnership within the regulatory requirements.	
5	<p>Communication (written) Produce written cases notes and reports that are well argued, focused and jargon free with sound analysis and rationale for actions.</p>	Application
6	<p>Child Development Demonstrate ability to engage children in their environment, understand the world in which they live and the quality of their key relationships; to recognise signs that the child may not be meeting developmental milestones, has been harmed or is at risk of harm; to utilise research and evidenced-based approaches to actively inform casework. To promote stable and permanent outcomes for children, enabling carers to prepare and plan for caring for children long term, making use of all relevant services.</p>	Interview
7	<p>Adult mental ill health, substance misuse, domestic abuse, physical ill health and disability To demonstrate the ability to assess the impact of secondary trauma on carers and families caring for children and young people and an ability to enable carers to maintain caring through periods of stress.</p>	Interview
8	<p>Abuse and neglect in children Demonstrate the ability to assess the impact of cumulative trauma and be clear about concerns. Demonstrate the ability to facilitate the development of others to provide attuned care to children affected by abuse and neglect.</p>	Interview
9	<p>Assessments Demonstrated ability to collaboratively carry out multi-agency, in-depth and ongoing assessments of social need and risk to children with particular emphasis on capacity for change, leading to effective planning to address the impact of trauma, where the voice of the child is given precedence. An ability to assess and review the potential of applicants to offer attuned care to children and</p>	Application/Interview

Essential criteria	Criteria description	Assessed by
	<p>young people and to prepare them effectively to meet the needs of children.</p> <p>An ability to propose matching and selection of placements, with timescales as required and identify support needs and ensure support is provided.</p>	
10	<p>Analysis, decision making, planning and review</p> <p>Evidence of being able to identify thresholds within the continuum of risks and needs. Ability to make clear recommendations about how to enable change to address risk and need based on evidence and professional judgement.</p> <p>Collaborate with the child, family or carers to set out clear goals about what needs to change and when. Evidence of drawing the relevant people into the plan, including family's own support network, ensuring plans are purposeful and support children to reach their potential.</p> <p>To evidence the suitability of an applicant to care for looked after children through assessment and review.</p>	Application/Interview/Test
11	<p>The law and the family, and youth justice systems</p> <p>To work in partnership with colleagues to provide appropriate evidence for Court. To ensure all relevant information is available for Independent Panels including the Independent review mechanism.</p>	Application
12	<p>Role of supervision</p> <p>Demonstrated ability to make effective use of reflective and discussion opportunities to enhance your professional practice. Awareness of your own emotional response to the work and the ability to identify strategies to ensure a high quality of service.</p> <p>Demonstrate an ability to provide effective supervision and support of foster carers under regulatory requirements, helping carers become aware of their own emotional response to the care and to identify strategies to ensure a high quality service.</p>	Application/Interview

Essential criteria	Criteria description	Assessed by
13	<p>Organisational context</p> <p>Demonstrated high organisational skills and ability to prioritise workload in order to meet the requirements of the organisation and national systems.</p> <p>Advocate for the children and young people you work with to receive organisational focus, resource and support from internal and external agencies.</p> <p>To advocate for good practice in the partnership between carers and internal and external agencies, ensuring carers are treated fairly.</p>	Application/Interview/Test

Special requirements of the post

Essential criteria	Criteria description	Assessed by
14	This role requires registration and good standing with Social Work England (SWE) and satisfactory enhanced clearance from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).	Application

Our accreditations

Our accreditations include: the Healthy Workplace award, Timewise, London Living Wage Employer, Disability Confident Committed, The Mayor's Good Work Standard, Stonewall Diversity Champion, and Time to Change.

