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|  | JOB DESCRIPTION | FormJD1 |
| JOB TITLE: Advocacy and Participation Worker | **POST NUMBER:** 1100CPP |
| **REPORTS TO** (Job Title):  | Children’s Rights Manager |
| **DEPARTMENT:** Children’s Trust Unit  | GRADE: 8 |
| **JE REF:** | 3246 / B00515 | PANEL DATE: | 17/06/2014 |
| **1.** | **MAIN PURPOSE OF JOB** The Advocacy and Participation Worker empowers and enables children and young people to have a voice by providing advocacy and facilitating the participation of children and young people who are looked after by City of York. The main purpose of the job is to provide a skilled, independent and confidential advocacy service to children and young people who are either subject to safeguarding services, looked after or wanting to make a complaint against the City of York Council. It’s secondary function is to facilitate opportunities for looked after children and young people to influence broader service planning and development across the Council. |
| **2.** | **CORE RESPONSIBILITIES, TASKS & DUTIES:** |
|  | 1 | To provide advocacy to children and young people who wish to make a complaint against the City of York Council, ensuring that their point of view is heard and to assist them in seeking satisfactory resolution to any issues raised. |
|  | 2 | To provide advocacy to children and young people subject to child protection plans who wish to make representations in decision-making forums. |
|  | 3 | To provide advocacy to children and young people looked after by the City of York Council, who wish to raise concerns about their care or make representations in decision-making forums. |
|  | 4 | To work with the Children’s Rights Manager to develop participation opportunities for looked after children and young people. |
|  | 5 | To facilitate groups and projects undertaking participation and consultation with looked after children and young people, to ascertain their views about service provision, policy and practice. This may include servicing York’s Children in Care Council, facilitating focus groups, taking part in the organisation of consultation events and supporting young people to play an active part in staff recruitment and training.  |
|  | 6 | To provide monitoring information to the Children’s Rights Manager as required. This information is vital to improve the overall system and highlight key messages from children and young people. |
|  | 7 | To take responsibility for own professional development through participating in regular supervision and personal development reviews and attending relevant training as agreed with line manager. |
| **3.** | **SUPERVISION / MANAGEMENT OF PEOPLE**This post does not hold any supervisory or managerial responsibilities. |
| **4.** | **CREATIVITY & INNOVATION**Working with children and young people (5-18 years) who are vulnerable, difficult to engage or have been harmed, requires considerable creativity and sensitivity because of their emotional needs. The work involves helping a children or young people to express their views when decisions are being made about them or advocating on behalf of young people in an attempt to resolve a particular issue they have identified. Given the nature of the subject matter this work must be carried out with a great degree of sensitivity. Creative and innovative methods of engagement should be considered to create an environment where children and young people feel comfortable discussing sensitive topics.Effective communication between vulnerable children and young people, their carers, families, professionals, council officers and elected members, requires an innovative and flexible approach using a number of methods, taking into account the preferences of children and young people who may be hard to engage. |
| **5.** | **CONTACTS & RELATIONSHIPS**This post operates within a multi-agency context and the post holder will have contact with colleagues from a range of service areas, within Children’s Services and across the Council, and external agencies. They must be able to build and maintain relationships with children and young people and engage effectively with children and young people on difficult and sensitive issues. Regularly advocating on behalf of children and young people, often dealing with complex and contentious issues which require a great deal of tact and sensitivity. The post holder is expected to build strong relationships and advocate on behalf of children and young people aged from 5-18 year, both on an individual and group basis. This will involved working with teams across the council including social workers, foster carers, residential staff and other care providers, often dealing with complex and contentious issues which require a great deal of tact and sensitivity.  |
| **6.** | **DECISIONS – discretion & consequences****Discretion:** The post holder is responsible for working with children and young people (5-18 years) who are vulnerable, difficult to engage or have been harmed, requiring considerable creativity and sensitivity because of their emotional needs. They are also responsible for helping and supporting children and young people to participate in influencing broader service developments.**Consequences:** If children and young people are not properly engaged the rights of some of the most vulnerable children and young people may be harmed. Their voices will not be heard resulting in poor outcomes for the children and young people affected as well as reputational risk to the council. The children’s rights agenda is high on the government’s priorities and advocacy and participation is an integral part of achieving good quality services for children.  |
| **7.** | **RESOURCES – financial & equipment***(Not budget, and not including desktop equipment.)* Description Value |
| **8.** | **WORK ENVIRONMENT – work demands, physical demands, working conditions & work context****Work demands** Advocacy and participation work takes place in many different settings, such as homes, offices, foster homes and residential homes. The nature of the work requires the post holder to plan their own workload against service priorities and timescales, while prioritising the needs of individual children. The post holder will regularly work out of ‘office hours’, including evenings and weekends / lone working to undertake this and the work may involve travelling out of authority to meet children and to attend meetings.**Physical demands**Mixed work demands. The post holder will be required to spend a significant proportion of their time meeting children and young people out of the office.**Work conditions**Mixed work conditions, part of the time is office based but predominantly attending meetings or consultations in the service user’s location including a home environment where they can occasionally be exposed to unpleasant conditions such as smoke, dirt, extremes of temperature and aggressive animals.**Work context**Some meetings / situations can be difficult and emotive and may at times involve risks of verbal or physical aggression. The post holder spends a significant amount of time in one to one meetings with vulnerable children and young people, who may at times be distressed and act unpredictably. |
| **9.** | **KNOWLEDGE & SKILLS****Essential*** Good written and verbal communication skills.
* Experience of working directly with children and young people.
* Ability to work in partnership with other professionals involved with children and young people.
* Understanding of the role and purpose of advocacy for children and young people.
* Understanding of children and young people’s participation in decision-making.
* Ability to challenge discrimination on any grounds, including age, gender, disability, ethnicity, religion, or sexuality.
* Knowledge of the principles underpinning children’s rights and participation, including the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.
* Understanding of confidentiality and safeguarding issues in relation to advocacy.
* Ability to work well alone and as part of a team.

**Desirable*** Experience of working with children and young people in an advice, advocacy or counselling capacity.
* Experience of facilitating group work with children and young people.
* Experience of working with looked after children and young people.
* Specialist skills in communicating with disabled children with communication needs.
* Knowledge of the legislative framework underpinning child care practice and service provision, including the Children Act 1989 and associated guidance relating to looked after children.

**Ability to converse and provide advice and guidance to members of the public, in spoken English, to Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) - level C1** - Effective operational proficiency or advanced - Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously, almost effortlessly. Only a conceptually difficult subject can hinder a natural, smooth flow of language.This post requires the post holder to undertake an enhanced – child workforce (with barred list check) criminal record check via the Disclosure and Barring Service. |
| **10.** | **Position of Job in Organisation Structure**Job reports to: Children’s Rights ManagerTHIS JOBOther jobs at this level: None |