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|  | JOB DESCRIPTION | FormJD1 |
| JOB TITLE: Children’s Rights Manager | **POST NUMBER:**  1100CPQ |
| **REPORTS TO** (Job Title):  | Service Manager, Children’s Trust |
| **DEPARTMENT:** Children’s Trust Unit  | GRADE: 10 |
| **JE REF:** | 3245 B00514 | PANEL DATE: | 070114 |
| **1.** | **MAIN PURPOSE OF JOB** The Children’s Rights Manager (CRM) manages the Children’s Rights and Advocacy Service and promotes the rights and participation of children and young people who are looked after by the City of York Council. The main purpose of the job is to;* Provide management oversight of the advocacy service for vulnerable children and young people accessing a service from the City of York Council, in particular managing and allocating referrals and coordinating and supervising a team of advocates .
* Co-ordinate opportunities for looked after children and young people, and care leavers, to influence broader service planning and development across the Council.
* Support the City of York Council’s elected members and officers in the exercise of their function as corporate parents to looked after children and young people, as required by the Children Act 2004
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| **2.** | **CORE RESPONSIBILITIES, TASKS & DUTIES:** |
|  | 1 | To manage and co-ordinate delivery of an advocacy service providing independent advice, support and advocacy to vulnerable children and young people, in particular those who are looked after, subject to child protection plans or wanting to make a complaint against the Council, as required by the Children Act 1989 Regulation 26A (2004). |
|  | 2 | To reform the Children’s Rights and Advocacy Service to meet increasing demands and incorporate advocacy provision for a wider group of children and young people, in particular those subject to child protection plans.  |
|  | 3 | To manage a small staff team of Volunteer Advocates, Sessional Workers and an Advocacy and Participation Worker.  |
|  | 4 | To undertake initial consultations with children and young people about their requirement for advocacy, to allocate an appropriate worker to undertake this and provide ongoing managerial oversight. To ensure that concerns are raised on behalf of young people with individual social care staff, foster carers, residential workers and senior managers to assist in the informal resolution of problems, and that independent legal advice is obtained for children and young people if needed. |
|  | 5 | To be accountable for managing the section budget within agreed and established cash limits. |
|  | 6 | To ensure the Council is meeting its statutory obligation in relation to Independent Visitors for looked after children and young people, as required by the Children Act 1989. In particular, work jointly with the Volunteer Lead in developing the recruitment and training of Independent Visitors and contribute to the managerial oversight via attending regular steering group meetings. |
|  | 7 | To co-ordinate projects undertaking regular participation and consultation with looked after children and young people to ascertain their views about service provision, policy and practice, and provide supervision and support to group facilitators undertaking this work. |
|  | 8 | To work in partnership with Independent Reviewing Officers to improve and develop the quality of children and young peoples’ participation in their reviews and planning meetings, in response to the requirements of the Children Act 2008, and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. |
|  | 9 | To make regular visits to children’s homes and foster placements and to support children’s participation within the range of placement settings. |
|  | 10 | To promote the Council’s corporate parenting strategy and delivery of the council’s’ pledge to Looked After Children, developing effective working relationships with all relevant agencies, including schools, health providers and voluntary sector providers of services to looked after children |
|  | 11 | To ensure that elected members with responsibility for children’s services are kept informed about local and national developments in respect of children’s rights. |
|  | 12 | To service and oversee the coordination of meetings and service planning for York’s Children in Care Council, the Show Me that I Matter panel. |
|  | 13 | To promote, support and/or represent York’s looked after children and young people in a variety of local, regional and national consultative settings and decision making forums. |
|  | 14 | To work jointly with colleagues across the Children’s Trust Unit to develop integrated services for looked after children and ensure their effective participation in service planning across the city, as required by the governments Every Child Matters initiative |
|  | 15 | To publicise the service to children and young people, including developing, servicing and targeting specific service related information, such as publicity leaflets, newsletters, webpage and help lines. |
|  | 16 | To promote an awareness of children’s rights and publicise the service within the Council, including contributing to training programmes for local authority staff and occasional attendance / presentations at staff and management meetings. |
|  | 17 | To report to senior managers and the Assistant Director Children’s Specialist Services, on standards of practice and service quality in respect of children and young peoples’ rights and involvement, and contribute to the improvement of the service. |
|  | 18 | To be familiar with, and advise service managers on key developments affecting the Children’s Rights and advocacy agenda at local, regional and national levels. |
|  | 19 | To keep up to date with appropriate information, service developments and issues within Children’s Social Care and the wider children’s services network, including attending regional and national meetings/conferences.  |
|  | 20 | On behalf of City of York Council, maintain membership of national children’s rights organisations, e.g. Children’s Rights Alliance for England. |
|  | 21 | 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**Direct reports* 1 Advocacy and Participation Worker
* 2-5 Sessional Advocates
* 7-14 Volunteer Advocates

CRM will have overall responsibility for the planning, co-ordination and management of advocacy and participation services, including the design and implementation of service policies and procedures. This will involve case allocation and overall management responsibility for a group of staff (between 3-6 paid staff and 7-14 volunteers), being responsible for their training, supervision and development needs and ensuring the provision of a high quality service. Providing regular case supervision, monitoring complex pieces of work and provide direction and decision making leadership. The role also involves co-ordinating projects targeting the participation and consultation of looked after children and young people and providing guidance and supervision to facilitators of this work. |
| **4.** | **CREATIVITY & INNOVATION**The CRM post requires a high degree of creativity, and the ability to adapt and innovate according to circumstances, in the following ways:* Working to promote a rights agenda with a wide age range of children and young people (8-18 years) who are vulnerable, difficult to engage or have been harmed, requires considerable creativity and sensitivity because of their emotional needs.
* Creativity is required in applying imaginative solutions to the wide range of issues raised by children and young people. Resolutions can range from negotiations with senior managers, to effecting changes within service delivery or arranging independent legal representation.
* The CRM works alone in a variety of settings, with individuals (adults and children), groups, professionals, council officers and elected members. He/she needs the ability to creatively adapt their work in the light of presenting circumstances, which may include a degree of misunderstanding or challenge from others, or be taking place in a politically sensitive setting.
* The CRM uses an innovative and imaginative approach in planning local responses to national initiatives, to ensure that the Council is meeting its responsibilities to looked after children while involving children fully in this process. Project work at times involves creating publications in various formats, including the preparation and production of leaflets, newsletters, information packs, DVDs and web-based information, and at times the preparation and specification of necessary tenders to carry out this work.
* Effective communication between vulnerable children and young people, their carers, families, professionals and elected members, requires an innovative and flexible approach using a number of media, taking into account the preferences of children and young people who may be hard to engage.
* The CRM is required to set up and maintain policies and procedures in relation to service delivery, part of which relates to records of work with individual children on the electronic Integrated Children’s System, which maintain the child’s right to confidentiality while ensuring that the information is available to those with a need to know. This is a non-standard use of the system.
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| **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.* **Internal**

Regular contact with colleagues within Children’s Services, e.g. social workers, foster carers, residential staff and other care providers to discuss children’s rights issues. Attendance at other section’s team meetings to give advice and information about service developments. Regularly advocating on behalf of children and young people aged from 8-18 year, on an individual and group basis, often dealing with complex and contentious issues which require a great deal of tact and sensitivity. Membership of a range of relevant groups and forums, to provide information advice and expertise on children’s rights issues and participation within the Council, and delivering children’s rights and advocacy training across the Council when requested. The co-ordination of participation groups and events targeting particular groups of children and young people, in order for specific pieces of consultation to take place. The facilitation of monthly meetings of York’s Children in Care Council, Show Me That I Matter, which is a panel of care experienced children and young people and Elected Members. The CRM acts as a strategic link between this group and senior management within the Council and outcomes can have a significant effect on service delivery. Regular negotiations with Social Care Managers in an attempt to resolve conflicts on behalf of children and young people, either making representation on an individuals or group basis. * **External**

Contacts will also include a range of other professionals from the public and private sector, e.g. health services, education, housing, police, probation services, day care providers and independent fostering and adoption workers, including independent providers of services. The CRM attends regional and national events relating to children’s rights, and maintains professional links with Children’s Rights Servicess in other Councils. The CRM is also involved in partnership work with the University of York, which involves delivering training and influencing / setting up particular projects. |
|  | **DECISIONS – discretion & consequences**The CRM helps and supports children and young people to participate in planning their individual care and in influencing broader service developments. This requires a specialised knowledge of the law and procedures relating to children in care, as many of them are subject to legal orders.**Discretion:** The CRM has discretion over regular decision making in relation to casework and service planning and delivery. The CRM must be able to decide if / when a child or young person’s rights are being compromised and decide what action to take as a consequence. This decision must take place within a sound knowledge of the law relating to children and the individual child’s care plan. The CRM will make important decisions about developing and implementing appropriate plans for promoting the children’s rights and advocacy agendas within the department, and to ensure that these comply with regulations and budgetary constraints. Although this work takes place in the context of the line management structure, and major decisions are subject to the appropriate endorsement, the post is essentially a specialist one, and the manager will be reliant on the advice of the CRM in relation to most aspects of the service. The CRM will have responsibility for budgetary decisions within the service and have direct input within the decision making process regarding the implementation of the Independent Visitors Service. **Consequences:** The consequences of the CRM’s actions and decision making has a significant effect on both the reputation of the Council and the well-being of children and young people. The CRM has to work within the system but must maintain their independence. They independently monitor quality and performance of the service and encourage the development of best practice, and work within the statutory system to protect the rights of the children and their families. The work is an integral part of achieving good quality services for children. The children’s rights agenda is high on the government’s priorities for children’s services, and the Children Act 2004 has identified a specific role for Directors of Children’s Services and Lead Member for Children’s Services in relation to the quality of services provided to looked after children. The CRM is the officer responsible for ensuring that the operational aspects of this are in place, and in particular the Show Me That I Matter Panel. The successful functioning of this Panel impacts both on the welfare of looked after children and young people, and on the reputation of the Council.  |
| **7.** | **RESOURCES – financial & equipment***(Not budget, and not including desktop equipment.)* Description ValueMobile phone £100Cash (average per month) £200 |
| **8.** | **WORK ENVIRONMENT – work demands, physical demands, working conditions & work context**Work demandsCRM works in many different settings, such as homes, offices, foster homes and residential homes. This requires him/her to plan workload and work within service priorities and timescales, while prioritising the needs of individual children. Most of workload known / planned; limited element unplanned and requiring flexible response. Some conflicting demands where planned meetings and children’s requests for service coincide.Physical demandsMixed work conditions; some office based (administration, report writing etc). Some time spent in a range of service development tasks, including the delivery of training, participation in working groups and sub-committees, team meetings and supervision sessions. Significant proportion of time spent meeting children & young people on an individual or group basis. CRM will regularly work out of ‘office hours’, including evenings and weekends / lone working to undertake this. CRM may lead / chair some meeting which may require a high level of concentration over a period of time (facilitating full participation, managing potential conflict, evaluating & analysing information shared, confirming the decisions made and maintaining a record). May involve travelling out of authority to meet children / young people and to attend meetings.Working conditionsMixed work conditions, part of the time is office based, some home working. When attending meetings or consultations in the service user’s home environment they can occasionally be exposed to unpleasant conditions such as smoke, dirt, extremes of temperature and aggressive animals. Work contextSome meetings / situations can be difficult and emotive and may at times involve risks of verbal or physical aggression. CRM spends 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****Knowledge**1. 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, the Children Act 2004, the Children Act 2008, and the Care Matters agenda. 2. Knowledge of the issues that are likely to impact upon the lives and life chances of looked after children and young people.3. An understanding of the emotional health issues that arise as a result of early childhood experiences, separation and loss.4. An understanding of the roles and responsibilities of agencies providing services to children and young people, as described in Every Child Matters. 5. Knowledge of the principles underpinning children’s rights and participation, including the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the European Convention on Human Rights..**Skills**1. Ability to work effectively in cases involving advocacy, negotiation with other agencies and to achieve child-centred outcomes2. Ability to engage with children / young people and understand their needs, developing trust and confidence.3. Ability to work creatively and effectively with individuals and groups of children / young people from diverse backgrounds.4. Good inter-personal skills, and the ability to operate in an enabling and non-judgmental way.5. Ability to negotiate and work towards effective problem resolution.6. Clear commitment to developing customer centred services.7. A good standard of written and oral communication, and the ability to be flexible in selecting methods of communication, including with children, young people and the disabled.8. Ability to be organised, self-motivating, work under pressure and meet deadlines.9. Competent IT user (word processing, email, internet etc).10. Ability to keep accurate confidential records on work with children and young people.11. Able to represent the Council and looked after children and young people effectively and confidently, in a variety of settings.**Qualifications:** 1. A Diploma in Social Work or equivalent. 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** |