



JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title: Assistant Service Manager

Accountable to: Service Manager/Senior Service Manager

Responsible for: Family Court Advisers, Cafcass Associates, Agency/Locum and Bank Social Workers and student social workers on placement with Cafcass.

Team: (to be specified)

Location: Office base to be agreed, with an expectation of regular travel throughout the operational area and occasional travel to other locations as required.

Key working relationships: Children and Families, Family Court Advisers, Advanced Practitioners, Service Manager, Head of Practice, Assistant Director, Operational Management Team, Corporate Management Team, local judiciary and court services, solicitors, local authority children's Social Workers, Independent Reviewing Officers and other professionals who know the child/family and relevant partners/stakeholders.

Role Requirements: (See person specification and matrix)

Terms of Employment:

Grade: Assistant Service Manager

Band: Band 8B

London Weighting: £4,697 applicable to those staff with a designated office base in Greater London.

Superannuation: The pension scheme used by Cafcass is the West Yorkshire Pension Fund (a Local Government Pension Scheme). This is also our auto enrolment scheme. Contribution rates are based on a tiered system.

Annual Leave: 28 days rising to 33 days after 5 years reckonable service, inclusive of 3 privilege days to be taken between Christmas and New Year plus any of the bank/public holidays.

Wellbeing days: 4 wellbeing days per year can be taken.

JOB SUMMARY

The role of Assistant Service Manager (ASM) combines high-quality practice (active direct casework) in 6 children's cases and effective direct line management of up to 4 Family Court Advisers (FCA).

Through their own practice and reflective/case supervision of colleagues, ASMs consistently reflect and champion the values and core practice elements of our practice framework, **'Together with Children and Families'**, across both public and private law proceedings.

Of paramount importance to the job of the ASM is their **duty to safeguard and protect the welfare of children** who are subject to family law proceedings and any 'connected children', and the support they provide to colleagues to achieve the same standards of safeguarding practice.

ASMs provide **high-quality reflective and case supervision**. They are accountable to the Service Manager/Senior Service Manager (SM) for the quality and impact of their own practice and for the practice quality standards of the FCAs they directly manage.

ASMs ensure that the **practice improvement priorities** set out in the National and Regional Improvement Plans and the Practice Quality Standards in both law types are reflected in their case supervision, group supervision, practice observations, Quality & Impact Audits (QAI) and Practice & Learning Reviews (PLR).

The ASM supports the SM to ensure consistency in the quality and impact of practice for children through the application of the **4 performance and accountability frameworks** of:

- Performance & Quality
- Management Oversight
- Quality and Impact
- Learning

In addition to providing **high quality reflective and case supervision** to a limited number of FCAs in line with the Cafcass supervision model and Practice Quality Standards, the ASM facilitates team-based learning, ensuring that routine feedback from children and families is a core component of learning and improvements to practice.

The ASM supports the SM in **working effectively with local partners**, especially the judiciary, local authorities, and managers for the local courts and plays a key role in **upholding the reputation of Cafcass** locally.

The ASM is responsible for **promoting the wellbeing and morale of the FCAs** they line manage. This includes managing workloads, building the personal and professional resilience of FCAs, encouraging them to engage in live/listening events, enabling learning and development, contributing to Practice Weeks, promoting consultations and staff surveys.

The ASM supports the SM in the implementation of **practice, operational and structural changes**, and reform at a team level, ensuring that their direct reports are supported, and the quality of their practice and performance is sustained.

The ASM supports the SM to ensure effective and efficient **service delivery within the available budget** for the team and can be required to deputise for the SM as appropriate.

The ASM supports the SM in **contributing evidence of impact and preparation for visits and inspections by Ofsted** and plays a key role in supporting the team to achieve positive outcomes.

MAIN RESPONSIBILITIES AND DUTIES

This job description provides the **main responsibilities and duties** of an Assistant Service Manager (ASM). The detail of an ASM's responsibilities, duties and accountabilities, showing both the different tasks and where appropriate the limited sharing of tasks with Service Managers (SM) and Advanced Practitioners (AP) are set out in a supplementary matrix.

Safeguarding and Protecting Children

1. Ensure **children and those connected to them are safeguarded and protected**, through partnership working, high-quality practice and decision-making.
2. Seek, provide and record **reflective and case supervision**, particularly in line with the mandated triggers for situational case supervision.
3. Undertake an immediate **review of the child's case**, their safety and that of any connected children following a Significant Incident as required by the SM and notify the relevant Head of Practice within the required timescale.
4. Support the SM to contribute to a **local collaborative Case Record Reviews (CRR)** or Learning Reviews as required by the National Director or Deputy Director of Operations.
5. Support the SM to **disseminate learning to the team** (or to the service area/region jointly with colleagues) from feedback, complaints, analysis of QAIs, CRRs and Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews.
6. Monitor **the transfer of learning into practice** by FCAs through undertaking QAIs, Practice Observations and PLRs.

Together with Children and Families

7. Fulfil the role of 'Together Champion', working collaboratively with the SM, APs and FCA champions, to embed **the values and core practice elements of the practice framework** consistently into practice.
8. **Support directly managed FCAs and other members of the team** to understand the values and core practice elements of Together and to transfer that learning into their practice.

Quality and Impact of Practice

9. Understand the **Practice Quality Standards** for both law types and apply them in own practice and in supervision of colleagues, QAIs, practice observations CRRs and PLRs.
10. Understand the in-year **practice improvement priorities** set out in the National and Regional Improvement Plans, applying them in own practice and the support provided to directly managed FCAs and the wider team.
11. Apply the **4 key frameworks** of: Performance & Quality, Management Oversight, QAI, and Learning to evidence the quality and impact of individual and team practice and performance; knowing the strengths of supervised FCAs, and areas for further practice improvement.
12. Support the SM to undertake **appreciative inquiries when potential shortfalls in practice and performance are identified** and support timely and proportionate action to bring the quality of practice and performance of individuals and the team back up to standard.
13. **Encourage and enable routine feedback from children and families** as a core component of individual and team learning.
14. **Support the transfer of learning into practice** through individual and group supervision and other team-based learning. Support the SM to monitor and evidence the impact of learning on the practice of individuals and the team.
15. Provide **evidence for the quality and impact of practice** for the Mid-year review of the Regional Improvement Plan, annual Impact Narrative, Performance Board and Ofsted visits/inspections.

Practice Leadership

16. Act all at times in accordance with the **Cafcass leadership values and behaviours**.

17. Model **an applied understanding and commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion** in work with children, families and colleagues.
18. Support the maintenance of a positive team culture based on high support/high challenge, **balancing professional independence and judgement in individual proceedings with professional accountability in meeting the required practice quality standards**.
19. Understand the rationale for any practice, operational and structural changes, and **contribute positively to required changes** – mitigating the impact of change on the morale, practice, and performance of directly managed FCAs and the team.
20. **Protect and enhance the reputation** of self, the team, the service, the profession and Cafcass through professional competence in the role, integrity and reliability.
21. Act at all times as **a positive representative of Cafcass** and as an advocate for the contribution Cafcass makes to safeguarding the welfare of children through family law proceedings.

Management Oversight and Supervision

22. Establish **psychologically safe supervisory relationships** with directly managed FCAs and other team members based on emotional intelligence, honesty, openness, and transparency.
23. Understand, apply and achieve the **Management Quality Standards** consistently.
24. Apply an excellent understanding of **protected characteristics** in all aspects of work, seeking advice and considering reasonable and practicable adjustments.
25. **Develop and support individual resilience** to the pressures of the role, identifying stress early, seeking advice and taking appropriate action to mitigate the impact of stress on self and others.
26. Promote **the health and wellbeing of supervised FCAs**, through fair allocation processes and equitable workloads, as well as access to support, supervision, effective induction, and professional development.
27. **Identify and respond to risks to the safety of supervised FCAs**, seeking advice from the Cafcass Health and Safety Advisor as required.
28. **Identify stress of supervised FCAs early and undertake stress assessments** when appropriate, taking action to mitigate stress and signpost to staff welfare resources.
29. Address shortfalls in attendance at work, capability and/or conduct at the earliest opportunity and at the lowest level, wherever possible preventing an escalation of the problem through **honest feedback, discussion, and support**.

Partnership Working

30. **Engage positively with local partners**, especially the judiciary, local authority children's social care, and court administration services, based on personal and organisational reliability and integrity.
31. Identify barriers to effective partnership working and support the SM to **overcome any barriers collaboratively**, based on a focus on children, mutual respect and evidence.
32. **Communicate and liaise effectively** with courts and other partners about individual children's cases and relevant issues.
33. Take **a solution-focussed approach to professional and agency differences** and with the advice of the SM escalating unresolved problems appropriately.
34. Act as **a positive and effective representative of Cafcass in all partnership engagements**, deputising for the SM as required and appropriate.

Efficiency, Productivity and Throughput

35. Develop a **strengths-based appraisal of individual FCAs** that includes areas for further development, taking appropriate and effective action to increase the competency and confidence of supervised FCAs.
36. Together with the SM **identify individual and team learning needs** and put forward proposals for individual learning plans and team-based learning.

37. Review performance data to **understand the efficiency, productivity and throughput of individual FCAs and the team**, comparing to national averages, 'best in class', and progress in achieving further improvement.

38. Monitor **the agreed proxy measures for efficiency, productivity and throughput** of, average days to allocation, filing times, extensions, durations and timely case closures, comparing individual and team performance to national averages, 'best in class', and progress in achieving further improvement.

39. Ensure children's **cases are closed in accordance with policy** or transferred to a Post-Assessment Hub where the assessment is completed, the report filed and there is no court hearing date for 6+ weeks.

This job profile is not a definitive list of responsibilities and tasks but identifies the key components of the role. Through negotiation and agreement, mindful of achieving a fair and balanced workload, other tasks appropriate to the grade may be included.

Job descriptions are reviewed regularly, and the specific objectives of the post holder will be subject to review as part of the individual performance review process.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Qualifications

- Social work qualification recognised by Social Work England
- Post-Qualifying training (including accredited post-qualifying awards)

Experience

- Significant post-qualifying experience in a social work setting working with children and families.
- An excellent understanding of the role of Cafcass within the family justice system and experience of achieving positive outcomes for children going through family law proceedings.
- Some experience of supervising, coaching, teaching, or mentoring social workers.

Professional Competencies

Leadership and management

- A good understanding of the role of Assistant Service Manager and how it relates to the roles of Service Manager and Advanced Practitioner.
- A good understanding of own practice and leadership styles.
- The ability to communicate with and engage colleagues in practice discussions and learning.
- The ability to support the implementation of practice changes based on staff engagement, mitigating the impact of the change process on individual morale and performance.
- The ability to undertake appreciative inquiry and a solution-focussed approach to supporting FCAs to rectifying individual shortfalls in the quality and impact of their practice.
- The ability to build and sustain partnership working, learning from, and resolving professional differences.
- The ability to support FCAs calmly in the face of significant challenges arising from demand or capacity.

The quality and impact of practice

- Fully accepts the critical importance of management oversight and supervision in maintaining and further improving the quality and impact of practice.
- Understands what good looks like in both public and private law cases.
- Knows how to evidence the impact of practice – the difference made for children.
- Knows how to support others to improve the quality and impact of practice.
- Accepts the importance of and engages positively in the application of performance and accountability frameworks, balancing professional discretion and judgement with professional accountability.
- Maintains a relentless and forensic focus on the quality of practice and performance, through analysis of data, feedback, supervision, QAI, practice observations and practice and learning reviews.
- Does not wait to be told about the quality and impact of practice of self, directly managed FCAs or the team by external auditors or Ofsted inspectors.
- Knows how to use performance data as the basis for developing hypotheses about the quality and impact of practice for individuals.
- Knows what to do when the quality of practice or performance of an individual drops.
- Knows how to raise and address practice and performance issues with partners.

People management

- Knows how to promote wellbeing and resilience at work, including their role in maintaining morale and their role in mediating between individuals and the organisation
- Is confident in managing staff with a wide range of experience, capability, and confidence, to inspire them to achieve professional, organisational, service and team goals.
- Knows how to lead and manage social workers including the requirements for case and reflective supervision and management oversight.

Resource Management

- Understands the importance of managing service delivery within available resources and has the ability to help control resources within an allocated budget.
- Can demonstrate improvements in efficiency and productivity.

Values, Personal Qualities and Attributes

- Able to articulate and apply the values of social work and demonstrate integrity in practice and management behaviours.
- A strong commitment to social justice and the rights of children.
- A commitment and ability in promoting equality, diversity and inclusion in managing staff and in delivering services to children and families.
- Able to identify and challenge prejudice and discrimination appropriately and effectively.
- Understands the importance of listening to others, especially to feedback about their own performance and that of those they supervise.
- A good communicator both orally and in writing, with emotional intelligence, at all levels and especially with children.
- Resilient and calm under pressure, using a solution-focussed approach to the most complex and pressing challenges.
- Exercises professional authority and influence with humility, builds trust and confidence in their practice.
- Approachable, with excellent interpersonal skills.
- A team player who understands the importance of a collegiate and mutually supportive approach to exercising professional leadership.
- Builds positive relationships and works effectively across professional boundaries, achieving results with and through others.
- Committed to continuing professional development.
- Ability to work flexibly and remotely, including the need to undertake travel and work across service area boundaries to ensure the needs of the organisation are met.
- Able to represent Cafcass across complex partnership arrangements and the ability to deputise for the Service Manager when required and appropriate.

Revised: November 2022 (following formal consultation)