

**Oxfordshire County Council  
Children, Young People and Families**

**JOB DESCRIPTION**

**Job Title: Fostering Agency Advisor –  
Fostering Service : Children,Families&Education**

**Team : Fostering Panels and Fostering Service**

**Grade: 14**

**Responsible to: Fostering Service Manager**

---

**MAIN PURPOSE(S) OF THE JOB:**

**To ensure statutory requirements are met under the Fostering Services Regulations and NMS 2011 by offering professional advice to the fostering Panels. To advise, consult and contribute to training and policy development.**

**The primary role of the Agency Advisor is to provide professional advice to the panels and agency and ensure that high quality fostering services are provided by Oxfordshire County Council in compliance with the Fostering Regulations and NMS.**

**Tasks**

**To take responsibility for the operational management and supervision of the Fostering Panels, ensuring the highest standards of service are provided, within the County Council's scheme of delegation.**

**To participate in the development of services in the children and families service areas, ensuring there is appropriate and effective interagency liaison.**

**To take responsibility for keeping up to date with legislation, service developments and personal development needs.**

**This post holder is responsible for ensuring that all County Child Protection Policies are adhered to and concerns are raised in accordance with these policies.**

**Main Duties**

- 1.1 The Fostering Advisor is responsible for monitoring the performance of panel members and the fostering service overall and ensuring best practice is achieved. In addition he/she is responsible for monitoring outcomes resulting from the decisions made for children for whom fostering is the care plan and for ensuring information is shared appropriately.

- 1.2 The Fostering Advisor will contribute to the management of the Fostering Service by playing an active role in the management team, to include regular liaison with the Fostering Panel Chair regarding any matters presented to the Fostering Panel.
- 1.3 The Fostering Advisor will be expected to negotiate and liaise on behalf of the Directorate with other areas of the Council, to undertake audits and reviews of services and to work with operational staff to promote the development and manage new services, in accordance with statute and the government's agenda.

## 2. **PRINCIPAL ACCOUNTABILITIES**

### Service development and delivery

- 2.1 To be responsible for working collaboratively with the Fostering Service Manager in reviewing and developing the service in accordance with related legislation, regulations, national and local priorities and council priorities and performance indicators. To undertake projects and other pieces of work as required in achieving this aim.
- 2.2 Responsible for the appointment, termination, reviewing and monitoring the performance of Panel members and for the induction, supervision and together with the Chair, annual appraisals of Panel members. This will include the appraisals of senior colleagues from other agencies as well as elected members of the Council serving on panels. To maintain up to date files on panel members containing the necessary DBS clearance, confidentiality undertakings, references, qualifications and annual appraisal records.
- 2.3 Responsible for the functioning of Fostering Panels to ensure compliance with fostering regulations and standards
- 2.4 To organize statutory training days for panel members and staff as required. To provide and co-ordinate training on relevant legislation, practice and policy to staff across the Directorate and/or to other agencies on behalf of the department as required. To participate with the management team in planning training events for the service.
- 2.5 To have an explicit quality assurance role in relation to reports presented to Panel. The Fostering Panel Adviser has responsibility for producing Panel procedures and the constitution and terms of reference and for ensuring Panel members adhere to these.
- 2.6 To provide professional advice to practitioners and managers on quality and practice issues in relation to reports presented to Panel and practice across the Directorate.
- 2.7 To give professional advice to Panel, liaise between the agency and Panel and to meet with the Agency Decision Maker and brief him/her on the discussions and recommendations of the Panel.

- 2.8 To work with the Fostering Panel administrator to maintain statistical information on the activity of Panel. To take a role in the production of the annual Fostering Agency reports that are presented to the Department's Corporate Parenting Panel.
- 2.9 To respond on behalf of the agency to consultation documents from the Department for Education, other government departments or agencies and to represent the agency on local and national groups.
- 2.10 To liaise and be the identified contact with other national agencies in relation to fostering, including the Fostering Consortium, Fostering Network, BAAF, and CAFCASS. To ensure any contracts with these agencies are in place and compliant with county specifications.
- 2.11 To develop policy and procedure for new service developments involving consultation with internal staff, external agencies and when appropriate, elected members and to take the lead in planning and implementing developments in policy, procedure and practice.
- 2.12 To write and maintain operational procedures, as required, and provide professional advice to staff in relation to internal operational instructions.
- 2.13 To assist the Directorate in preparing for external inspections, external audits and reviews which may include the preparation of reports and documents, supporting and advising staff and assisting the external auditors with their schedule during their visit.
- 2.14 To represent and promote the interests of the CE&F Division on an inter-agency basis to ensure co-ordination and co-operation between the statutory, voluntary and the independent sector.
- 2.15 To maintain an overview of national policy and guidance and assist the Directorate in developing and implementing its response. To develop operational policies and procedures to support the development of services.
- 2.16 To be responsible for the Foster Carer register and ensure it is accurate and up to date

### Resource management

- 2.17 To assist in the management and planning of budgets for the panels and to ensure compliance with all financial regulations.

- 2.18 To take responsibility for evaluations, service reviews and audits of specific services or policies.
- 2.19 To recruit, appoint and manage Panel members and administrative staff.
- 2.20 To cover the service in the absence or in place of Fostering Team Managers.
- 2.21 To work closely with the fostering panel advisor.
- 2.22 To assist in the investigation of complaints in relation to contracts or panel matters in liaison with the Department's Complaints Officer and Fostering Service Manager when required.
- 2.23 To ensure the effective deployment and use of communication systems, including IT systems and team brief/meetings, to provide information about current policy and procedure and decision making to staff, clients and their representatives.

### **General**

- 2.24 To work at all times within the council's Health and Safety Policy.
- 2.25 To work within and actively promote the Council's Equal Opportunities policy on service delivery and personnel practice.
- 2.26 To be responsible for Elected Members' interface with the fostering service and for promoting the service.
- 2.27 To undertake such other duties appropriate to the grade and character of the work as may reasonably be required within the Department.

The list of duties in the job description should not be regarded as exhaustive. The post holder will be expected to adopt a flexible attitude to the duties which may have to be varied, subject to the needs of the service and in keeping with the general profile of the post.

**For all staff** - You have specific responsibilities under Health & Safety legislation to ensure that you:

- Take reasonable care for your own health and safety, and that of others affected by what you do, or do not do
- Cooperate on all issues involving health and safety
- Use work items provided for you correctly, in accordance with training and instructions
- Do not interfere with or misuse anything provided for your health, safety or welfare

- Report any health and safety concerns to your line manager as soon as practicable

## Selection Criteria

**Directorate: Children, Education & Families**

**Job Title: Fostering Agency Adviser**

**Job Ref. No:**

**Grade: 14**

<b>Educational achievements, Qualifications, Training and Knowledge:</b>
<p><b>Essential</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Professional social work qualification &amp; registration</li> <li>* Evidence of continuous professional development</li> </ul>
<b>Experience:</b>
<p><b>Essential</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* At least 5 years post qualifying experience of fostering work</li> <li>* Experience of effective supervision &amp; appraisal of staff.</li> <li>* Experience and understanding of working with vulnerable children, young people and families</li> <li>* Experience of effective working with other agencies and services</li> <li>* Experience of assessing and managing risk in children's services</li> <li>* Experience of the recruitment process</li> </ul>
<b>Job related aptitude and skills:</b>
<p><b>Essential</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Effective leadership which promotes good communication, staff management and individual, team performance</li> <li>* Demonstrates that children, young people and families are at the centre of practice and decision making processes.</li> <li>* Demonstrates a level of strategic awareness which promotes partnership working, effective budget management and positive outcomes for children, young people and their families</li> <li>* Ability to develop and manage systems with the effective use of IT</li> <li>* Ability to attend work regularly and on time</li> </ul>
<b>Personal qualities:</b>
<p><b>Essential</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Evidence of working in a child and family centred way, ethical approach to social work practice, commitment to develop individuals and teams, including a</li> </ul>

commitment to develop and promote the principle of equal opportunities for all

\* A strong role model who leads by example, enthuses, supports the team and has the ability to work under pressure

\* Evidence of having an impact and is an influential communicator and negotiator

\* Evidence of integrity and the ability to inspire others.

\* Active communication

\* Motivating and influencing

\* Delivering results

\* Strategic awareness

\* Improving performance

\* Decision making

\* Customer focus

\* Personal effectiveness

**Special Requirements:**

***Essential***

\* Experience of management preferably in a fostering team.

\* At least five years post qualifying experience of work in fostering.

\* Satisfactory enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service disclosure.

\* Ability to work flexible hours

\* To be able to prioritise urgent work needs when required

\* Ability to travel to meetings at short notice over a wide and rural area.

**Equal Opportunities:**

***Essential***

Commitment to, and understanding of, the principles of Equal Opportunities for all, in employment and the delivery of services.

**Educational achievements, Qualifications, Training and Knowledge:**

***Desirable***

\* Evidence of PQ training

\* A management qualification

\* Awareness of Local and National Government agendas

\* Evidence of additional relevant training

**Experience:**

***Desirable***

\* Previous experience of working in a statutory setting

\* Additional management experience

**Job related aptitude and skills:**

***Desirable***

\* Good IT skills

\* Ability to represent the team and the department at an inter-agency level

- \* Ability to understand, collect and analyse data
- \* Ability to ensure systems and processes are adhered to

**Personal qualities:**

***Desirable***

- \* Good communication skills
- \* Evidence of effective people management
- \* Ability to promote the department's image