

FAMILY WORKER JOB DESCRIPTION

JOB TITLE: Family Worker

HOURS: Part-time, flexible

TERMS: Fixed term contract (12-13 months), longer subject to funding

REPORTS TO: Senior Family Worker

JOB PURPOSE:

- To work in partnership with families who are experiencing challenging situations/circumstances, in their homes and in the broader community, to achieve positive outcomes for the whole family.
- To work in a whole family way through the development of effective relationships with parents and their family members using strength-based approaches to help, motivate and encourage behaviour change that will lead to a positive difference to people’s lives.
- To identify and tackle difficulties at an early stage, signposting to appropriate services as needed and linking families to more specialised help and support when necessary.
- To support outreach activities to help families and achieve the objectives of the Project, focusing on areas such as parenting, self-esteem and reducing isolation
- To help children and their families to overcome barriers to learning to build positive partnerships between school/s and parents.
- To work in partnership with other relevant agencies and organisations and assist families in accessing, building, and maintaining effective relationships with them to facilitate community cohesion
- To improve outcomes for children and their families in North Cambridge

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MAIN DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES

- To be the lead professional for a caseload of families who may have complex needs, working intensively with family and extended family members for an extended period.
- To work with families in their homes to address key issues that have an impact on family functioning which may include debt and money management, housing, poor school attendance, behaviour both at home and school, domestic violence and abuse.
- To be responsible for working with appropriate partners to deliver interventions.
- In partnership with families and other agencies, carry out a comprehensive assessment for the family, considering both their individual needs and the needs of the wider family. Through this process, identify and understand the family's strengths and challenges and analyse this information to develop appropriate support, referrals, and activities.
- Work in partnership with families in a persistent and proactive way, making flexible and effective use of challenge, and employ a range of creative approaches to positively engage with families who may often be unwilling to be engaged.
- Support family members to develop skills which will enable them to carry out household tasks such as budgeting, basic healthcare, and hygiene, establishing routines; support engagement with universal services such as GPs, dentists, etc and attendance at appointments; increase parenting confidence and capacity.
- Use a positive whole family approach to develop empowering relationships so that families become more resilient and independent so that their need for support services is reduced over time. Act as an advocate for families where necessary, and as a mediator where relationships are complicated or have broken down.
- Work in partnership with practitioners from other agencies and organisations in a persistent and proactive way, to support them to work with families to achieve best possible outcomes, challenging behaviours and practices which do not support a whole family working approach. Undertake a coordinating role as a vital part of a multi-disciplinary team.
- Responsible for keeping up-to-date and accurate case notes detailing interactions with families and other services, in line with the policies of the organisation.
- To maintain up-to-date recording systems that evidence the impact of the intervention.
- Make consistent use of agreed outcome measures with families at the start, during and on exit from involvement, contributing to the evaluation of service delivery both through completion of approved monitoring tools and contribution to case studies, etc.
- Actively manage, safely and appropriately, the handling, processing, sharing and disposal of information and data, both physical and electronic. Operating data quality management processes and maintaining a good awareness of relevant legislation, such as Data Protection and Freedom of Information.
- Operate within the guidelines and protocols set down by the organisation, in particular, the Safeguarding framework and Health and Safety policies and procedures.
- Demonstrate a commitment to continuous professional development through appropriate training. Keep up to date with legislative changes, including Child Protection, Data Protection, Health and Safety etc. Participate in multi-agency skill-sharing opportunities by providing training, coaching and other learning and development opportunities as required.

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OTHER ACCOUNTABILITIES

- The post holder will become part of a wider team supporting Cambridge City District Early Help work and some direct primary school referrals.
- Maintain close working relationships with parents/carers, District Early Help Team, and other partners and agencies in the development of strategies to support families.

OTHER DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES

- Contribute to the broader running of the Project, including the creative promotion and development of services and activities.
- Work with the family work team and the Project Lead to identify potential projects and provide supporting information for funding applications.
- Contribute to and participate in the appraisal management system.
- Work with, and support, students and volunteers placed with the Project from time to time.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING

- Safeguarding procedures and requirements.
- The needs of children, parents, District Early Help, schools, and partner agencies within the area.
- The difficulties and problems that can arise within areas of social or economic deprivation and the resultant impact on family life.
- The roles of relevant support agencies such as Social Care and the Early Help District Team, when cases should be passed to them and the processes to follow when referring such cases, for example, the Early Help Assessment.
- Local resources that are available, to refer parents to for support and assistance when their needs are outside the scope of the Project.
- The educational support mechanisms and strategies relating to children displaying challenging behaviour.
- The vision and values of The Red Hen Project.

PLANNING AND SETTING EXPECTATIONS

- Set expectations for parents and children being supported, by discussing and agreeing on objectives with the people involved and deciding on the work to be undertaken going forward.
- Identify and agree realistic but challenging outcomes, with families at the opening of the case.

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RELATIONS WITH PARENTS, STATUTORY AGENCIES AND THE WIDER COMMUNITY

- Develop and support relationships between children, parents, and the supporting agencies.
- Establish a partnership with parents. Advise and work with them on strategies that promote positive behaviour at home and at school. Provide information about other resources available to them.
- Work with children and parents, helping them understand both their own, and others' behaviour. This may include direct work with children, liaison with the family at home, and/or group work where appropriate.
- Empower the child, and parents to resolve problems themselves, as well as signposting to other support facilities in the local area.
- Attend and contribute to planning meetings with parents and other professionals.
- Develop effective links with the local community and other agencies to make full use of the services available to the families and enable any family with problems to approach the Project for support.

ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

- Maintain records of work undertaken with children and families and monitor the progress against agreed aims, achieved by the employment of appropriate strategies:
 - Children experiencing trauma, crisis or challenging behaviour will have improved emotional and physical wellbeing and improved engagement with their education.
 - Parents facing family crisis will increase their parenting skills, confidence, and emotional wellbeing.
 - Support agencies and statutory bodies will be better coordinated to meet local needs so that families feel less isolated and frustrated with their interactions with them.
 - Families will have improved links with others in their communities and are better able to support others with similar problems.
- Evaluate the outcomes achieved against the aims of the Project.

MANAGING OWN PERFORMANCE AND DEVELOPMENT

- Prioritise and manage own time effectively, particularly concerning balancing the demands of a family work case load and involvement in the broader running of the Project.
- Take responsibility for your professional development.
- Participate in the arrangement for appraisal and participate in the appraisal of team colleagues.

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OTHER IMPORTANT FACTORS

- We work with parents, carers, and children up to the thresholds for Children’s Social Care involvement, with the aim that our early-intervention work will avoid difficulties in the family escalating to such an extent that referrals to statutory services become necessary. Where families have vulnerabilities but have limited capacity to change, Family Workers have a role in supporting the management of risks.
- The nature of the work may involve the jobholder carrying out work outside of regular working hours, i.e. evenings and weekends.
- Travelling around the area we operate in is essential, and as such, a driving licence and use of a vehicle is essential.
- You will be expected to undertake other duties and responsibilities appropriate to the salary grade and the overall purpose and principles of the Family Worker role.
- Due to the type and size of the organisation, you will need to be flexible, creative and self-sufficient. You will be expected to take ownership of your caseload and other projects without the need for close management.
- You are expected to understand, and commitment to, equal opportunities, and the ability to apply this to all situations.

It is standard practice to review job descriptions annually to ensure that they are relevant to the job currently being performed, and to incorporate any changes which have occurred or are proposed. We reserve the right to make reasonable changes to your job description to meet the needs of the role.

The Red Hen Project is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. All appointments are conditional and subject to an enhanced DBS check.

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FAMILY WORKER - PERSON SPECIFICATION

The following criteria are appropriate for this post. To be short-listed for the post you should meet the essential criteria, and it is advantageous if you meet the desirable criteria.

Education, Qualifications & Training

Criteria	Essential	Desirable
English and Maths at GCSC grade A-C (or equivalent)	x	
Key Skill Level 3: A levels grade A-E, Level 3 NVQ, Level 3 National Diploma, Advanced Apprenticeship (or equivalent) in a field relating to working with children and/or young people	x	
Level 4 qualification in working with children and/or parents	x	
Professional qualification relevant to one of the following organisations: health, social care, education, youth work, Local Authority Youth Support Services		x

Experience of

• Working with children and families	x	
• Working within a multi-disciplinary team setting - working with wider professionals or networks of support as part of an intervention for families	x	
• Working with vulnerable groups and/or individuals	x	
• Partnership working with social services, education, health, voluntary and community sector, locality team, local authorities etc	x	
• Working directly with families, including in their own home	x	
• Setting appropriate professional boundaries with families	x	
• Engaging parents in community activities		x
• Assessment of family needs (e.g. via CAF, Early Help Assessment)	x	
• Providing direct support to families with complex needs who typically find it challenging to engage with services	x	
• Facilitating group work for parents		x
• Children's social care and safeguarding services		x
• Experience of working with issues of conflict and confrontation and an ability to diffuse difficult situations		x
• Experience of working with voluntary and community sector organisations	x	

Knowledge/understanding of

Criteria	Essential	Desirable
• Development and its influence on parent/child relationship in every stage of a child's development		X
• Issues which may have an impact on the lives of families such as domestic violence and abuse, mental health difficulties, substance misuse, poverty, housing	X	
• Knowledge of relevant legislation, and associated regulations and guidance concerning child protection and adult safeguarding procedures, housing, safeguarding, information sharing etc	X	
• Behaviour management	X	
• Parenting skills	X	
• How schools function		X
• How charities operate		X
• How partnership organisations function		X
• Partnership working - empowerment, advocacy, anti-oppressive practice	X	
• Information sharing protocols and confidentiality	X	
• Signs of abuse and neglect in children and young people	X	
• Significance of school attendance and its impact on children's outcomes	X	
• Evidence-based parenting interventions (e.g. Triple P, Incredible Years)		X
• Motivational Interviewing or Solution Focused Questioning techniques		X

Knowledge and experience of

• Safeguarding policies and procedures and the importance of safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults and the referral thresholds for different services	X	
• Developing and maintaining effective relationships with parents	X	
• Community-based support services available for families and experience of successfully facilitating family engagement with them		X
• Working with vulnerable families and being aware of any issues a practitioner may face while working with vulnerable families	X	
• Enhanced knowledge and expertise in any of the following areas: neglect, substance misuse, domestic violence or mental ill-health.		X
• Working knowledge of systemic practice		X
• Appropriate assessment frameworks		X

Skills & attributes

Criteria	Essential	Desirable
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Excellent communication skills with <ul style="list-style-type: none"> children, young people and parents with a range of different professionals 	X X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comprehensive communication skill set including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> listening questioning giving feedback 	X X	X
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to communicate effectively and concisely both orally and written, with a wide range of individuals and groups 	X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to present information to meet the needs of different audiences 	X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to form positive relationships with partner agencies and members of the public 	X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good negotiation skills 	X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Able to effectively and appropriately delegate to and influence other professionals as part of the lead professional role 	X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flexibility in identifying and responding to the development of the post and its scope, as the work is developing and is evaluated 	X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commitment to the principle of capacity-building and team-working 	X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exceptional problem-solving skills to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> diagnose problems evaluate alternative options make accurate judgements 	X X X X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Excellent assessment skills to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> collect and analyse information identify the source and levels of risk assess the appropriate level of intervention and means of resolution 	X X X X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good administrative skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> able to keep good written records in a timely manner adopt sound administrative practice/ systems keep data/use management information 	X X X X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong IT skills and the ability to pick up new systems quickly 	X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective time-management skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> able to effectively plan able to prioritise workload 	X X X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commitment to preventative work and to working in partnership 	X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to work independently, to demonstrate initiative and commitment to operate with minimal supervision in supporting families and to use supervision appropriately 	X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reliability 	X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to travel locally 	X	

Criteria	Essential	Desirable
• An understanding of the importance of confidentiality and the need to respect shared information with discretion	X	
• An ability to uphold Safeguarding issues	X	
– demonstrate an understanding of the safe working practices that apply to this role	X	
– ability to work in a way that promotes the safety and well-being of children and young people/vulnerable adults	X	
• An understanding of whistleblowing policies and practices	X	
• Confidence and ability to work alone with families in their homes	X	
• Personal impact and the ability to engage and motivate resistant and hard to reach families	X	
• Ability to explore and understand the family’s relationship to help and the family’s history to effectively tailor the current intervention	X	
• Ability to work within boundaries of responsibility and consequences while providing hands-on practical and therapeutic support	X	
• Ability to work proactively, persistently and persuasively with families who may not be willing to engage with services using a range of techniques that encourage active participation	X	
• Understanding the importance of recognising that change is often incremental and that it needs to be coordinated and sustained through empowering support if outcomes are to be improved	X	
• Ability to support families to take responsibility for making changes through the use of coaching skills	X	
• Create, maintain, and develop relationships, demonstrating professionalism with families and professionals while maintaining professional boundaries	X	
• Commitment to own Continuing Professional Development and the use of specialist supervision for own professional practice	X	
• Committed to anti-oppressive and anti-discriminatory practice	X	
• Specialist skills relating to the assessment of, and intervention with needs relating to neglect, domestic violence and mental ill-health		X
• Use positive whole-family approaches to build on parent, family and child strengths and develop resilience, self-reliance and independent action	X	
• Ability to use outcome monitoring tools with families to support the monitoring and evaluation of the Project and produce accurate data	X	
• Ability to motivate and inspire colleagues from a range of agencies to work together in the best interests of families, service providers and the wider community	X	
• Ability to understand and practice appropriate and legal information sharing within and between agencies and the family	X	
• Undertake interventions with regard to the importance of being persistent and consistent	X	

Red Hen Family Worker - Values, Attributes & Approaches

As part of a recent external review of the Project, families and partner organisations gave the following replies when asked to consider the elements that make a good Family Worker.

Supportive	Caring	Understanding	Encouraging
Non-judgemental	Trustworthy	Independent	Approachable
Helpful	A good listener	Has had life experience	Motivated
Knowledgeable	Part of the community	Honest	Put children & young people first
Enabling	Positive	Assertive	Lived experience
Well-trained	Kind	Respectful	Proactive
Friendly	Good local knowledge	Empowering	Common sense

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