



Children's Social Care

West Sussex County Council Applicant Information Pack





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A word from Annie MacIver **Director, Family Operations**

Here at West Sussex County Council we are ambitious for our children and our workforce.

We work hard to build a safe climate for undertaking complex work and we have many ways of ensuring that as a Senior team we meet regularly with Social Workers and our frontline staff. These conversations are often the ones where our best ideas and solutions emerge.

Social work is a challenging job and we recognise that to achieve excellent outcomes for our children our staff need to feel supported, contained and challenged. It is important to us that our staff and our children know that we are with them 'every step of the way'. The work we do means we will not always get it right – here in West Sussex we operate high levels of accountability within a context of valuing and practicing 'appreciative enquiry'. We work to ensure we stay curious so that we keep learning and developing – we believe that a learning culture, where staff are well supported will keep children safer.

We have a strong and experienced leadership team in place and a clear practice model. As a Social Worker I am very proud of my profession and continue to be inspired by the work our Social Workers do. Do come and find out more about us – I can guarantee that if you have talent, ambition and a fire in your belly to achieve excellent outcomes for children then we will support you to achieve your career aspirations.

Meet the teams...

MASH

This team:

- Respond to enquirers-offering advice and consultation
- Make decisions on 'contacts' within 24 hours
- Signpost to universal services
- Signpost to early help services
- Work in partnership with partner agencies to identify children in need/need of protection
- Undertake strategy discussions

Family Support & Protection and Disability

This team:

- Works with children subject to a child protection plan
- Works with children and families subject to Pre-Proceedings and initial Court Hearing
- Provides a service for children with disabilities including assessment, family support and children looked after

Contact, Assessment and Intervention

This team:

- Undertakes child and family assessments
- Carries out Section 47 enquiries
- Progresses cases to Initial Child Protection Case Conference
- Deals with intervention and planning for children in need
- Direct work with children and families
- Works in direct partnership with partner agencies including police and health
- Undertakes joint work with our Early Help and Prevention Service

Disability

This team:

- Provides a specialist service for children with complex disability needs
- Undertakes child and family assessments and where required ongoing work with those assessed to be children in need, children looked after, and children in need of protection
- Works with children, families and other agencies to meet children's assessed needs in relation to their disability and support them to achieve their potential

Meet the teams...

Children Looked After

This team:

- Works with children to achieve permanency for children
- Works with children looked after from 0-18years old
- Works with children who are subject to Court Proceedings
- Works with Children who return to their birth family's subject to an Order where it is safe to do so or to extended family/friends subject to a Special Guardianship Order
- Works with Children remaining in long term care where it is not safe for them to return home and there are no other family/ friends options available
- Works with Children who may be placed for adoption
- Works with Children leaving care

Adolescent, Family Resource (AFR)

This team:

- Works directly with families and young people between 11 and 17 to prevent children coming into the care system and staying with family or in the community where safe to do so
- Uses the Signs of Safety and Solutions focused interventions to develop robust Child In Need, Risk and Safety Plans
- Works alongside families to develop resilience and explore parenting models and techniques so families feel equipped to deal with the demands of parenting in a complex environment

Fostering, Adoption and Intervention

This team:

- Recruits, approves, supports and develops foster carers
- Recruits, approves, supports and develops Adopters and Special Guardianship Carers

Child and Family Intervention Service (CFIS)

This team:

- Assist parents/carers to better understand and make changes to their parenting capacity in order to meet their children's needs
- Deliver interventions in order to identify and reduce harm to children within their family context
- Assist colleagues in case holding Social Work teams in making timely permanency decisions for children

Becoming a Social Worker

The title of 'Social Worker' is protected in law for use by those who have qualified and are currently registered with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC).

Qualification is at degree and masters level and is a generic qualification that gives grounding in work with adults, children and families. The Social Work degree may be a two or three year course depending on your previous academic qualifications and will include two practice placements totalling 170 days and 30 practice skills days over the course.

Social Work students will develop their learning and practice according to the Professional Capabilities Framework for Social Workers at the end of their first and second placement opportunities. They will need to demonstrate that their practice meets these capability standards and this will be assessed throughout the placements. The Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF) can be found on the British Association of Social Workers (BASW) Website and will give the descriptors at each level of your training and beyond.

www.basw.co.uk/resource

After successful completion of the degree/master's degree, Newly Qualified Social Workers (NQSWS) will be required to complete the

Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) demonstrating that they can meet the requirements of the Knowledge and Skills Statement and the PCF. This needs to be passed in order to continue working as a Social Worker with West Sussex County Council.

Post qualifying training is available at Universities to support professionals to gain further skills through academic study. Social Workers are expected to engage in a range of learning and development activities through their career that support and improve their practice and outcomes for service users. This could include self-study, attending conferences, training to develop specialist knowledge and skill, academic study, reading and research. All Social Workers are expected to engage in Continuing Professional Development (CPD) activity on an ongoing basis in order to be able to keep their registration with the HCPC.

All Social Workers will now refer to and map their professional practice, skills and knowledge against the Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF) held by BASW. This gives detail of the nine domains of professional practice which are present throughout every level of Social Work from pre-qualifying to advanced practice.



Partnerships with Universities



We are working in partnership with the University of Chichester to provide academically accredited training at West Sussex County Council.

The Courses that the University offer are:

- BA (Hons) Social Work
- MA Social Work
- MA Advanced Professional Practice

You would also have the ability to work and progress your career further whilst studying for your postgraduate diploma at the University of Chichester

Career Progression

Our progression pathway allows individual social workers to choose their own career path, so that they can get the most value out of their experience working in West Sussex.

Whether you want to stay working on the frontline or move into management, as a West Sussex social worker we will support your progression towards achieving your career goals.

This training offer for social workers includes a comprehensive internal training programme and post-graduate diploma developed with the University of Chichester.

“We want West Sussex to be a rewarding and fulfilling place for children’s social workers to work and develop their careers,” says Catherine Watkins, the professional practice lead and acting principal social worker at West Sussex County Council.

“The progression pathway and the development of an academically accredited training pathway in partnership with the University of Chichester is part of our ambition to enhance the profile and reputation of the great work that our social workers do.”

These changes mean that there are now opportunities for West Sussex children’s social

workers to progress from newly qualified all the way to senior practitioner whilst remaining in direct practice. Our salaries now start at £27,863 and by October 2018 our most experienced social workers will be able to earn £41,296 a year.

For social workers wishing to move into management, we have established a management development programme and now our frontline practice managers have the scope to earn between £38,239 and £46,980 a year.

West Sussex have been implementing the internationally acclaimed social work model “Signs of Safety” for four years. In the most recent Ofsted inspection (2016) it was identified that by using Signs of Safety: “Assessment practice is improving, supported by the effective use of a clearly defined approach to casework. Assessments are analytical and lead to useful recommendations, reflecting the voice of the child and the diverse needs of each child in the family.... There is strong emerging evidence of the effective use of a clearly defined approach to casework.... This means that assessment is a dynamic process. This approach makes it clear for families what needs to change.”

To find out more about Signs of Safety visit www.signsofsafety.com

Return to Social Work

It may have been a while since you've left social work, maybe you had a career break or left to care for your own family. Whatever the reason you left, we want to support you to return.

Our Return to Social Work programme is overseen by the Principal Social Worker. The programme is tailored to best support you to return to practice. We are looking for Social Workers who have previous experience of working within frontline Children's Social Work Teams and are HCPC registered. Following an initial information session our offer includes a mixture of reflective sessions, shadowing and self-learning to help you to renew your knowledge. There will also be the opportunity to come to relevant light bite training sessions.

"I am delighted to be leading the programme to support social workers to return to practice within West Sussex" - Principal Social Worker

As a social worker with West Sussex you will have access to excellent learning and development provision, post graduate training pathway with the University of Chichester as well as access to Research in Practice and Community Care Inform. You are also guaranteed a minimum of 5 days CPD per year.



Further Information

WSCC Children's
Social Care Website
www.withyoueverystep.co.uk

Community Care Website
www.communitycare.co.uk

Health and Care Professions
Council (HCPC)
www.hcpc-uk.co.uk

Quality Assurance Agency for
Higher Education (QAA)
www.qaa.co.uk/en

Daisy Bogg Consultancy
www.daisyboggconsultancy.co.uk

