



## Job Description

Job Title: **Assistant Director for Quality and Practice & Principal Social Worker**

Grade: **SM4**

### Overall Purpose of Role

The role reports directly to the Chief Executive and works closely with the senior leadership team (SLT) and all key colleagues across NCT and will act as a role model, embedding our culture, values, and practice model across the service, ensuring that children and young people are at the heart of the decisions we make. They are the voice for social work within the management team and outward facing to external stakeholders. The Children's Principal Social Worker (PSW) provides professional leadership for social work across NCT to shape, influence, guide and promote social work practice.

They are an ambassador for social work in across NCT, leading a culture where practice is valued, equality, diversity, equity and inclusion is embedded, and it is widely accepted that the service is a place where a diverse range of practitioners want to come and work and progress. They will develop and maintain strong relationships with partner agencies to enable a system-wide approach to safeguarding children.

The role will be responsible for leading the quality and assurance (QA) of practice, ensuring the right governance is in place, identifying priorities for improvement and driving that improvement continuously forwards and ensuring that children are safeguarded at all times. This will include senior leadership and continuous improvement of NCT's internal QA services and NCT's quality assurance strategy and framework.

They will ensure the service upholds social work values and standards and supports its practitioners, offering positive challenge to decision makers where needed. They must maintain visible leadership across the social work and alternatively qualified workforce, being ready to offer advice on the most complex and high-risk situations. They will be an ambassador of strength-based practice and will lead an approach that is children and young people centred and community connected.

The role is responsible for ensuring plans are delivered to support the professional development of NCT's workforce to improve retention and recruitment. They will also have a succession plan for key roles through the Social Work Academy for NCT.

They take collective and shared responsibility for the effective leadership and management of NCT's services and delivery of improved outcomes and the achievement of value for money.

<b>Main Accountabilities</b>	
1	Work autonomously, at pace and with demonstrable impact to lead social work within NCT, providing assurance to SLT of NCT's adherence to practice standards and statutory requirements.
2	Lead on providing professional advice and guidance to SLT and wider workforce in relation to changes required by national and local drivers around social work standards, policy and statutory requirements e.g., Ofsted and Children's Social Care reform. Lead on development of new related policies and processes in relation to this where needed. Be responsible for working in partnership with other SLT members to ensure NCT is meeting its statutory and legal duties relating to children's social care legislation as it relates to practice and produce reports for internal and external audiences as required.
3	Provide strong, visible leadership of social work practice, promoting the profession within NCT and externally. Cultivating an environment of children's social work in NCT of being valued, supported and a place where people want to work. Lead with colleagues to ensure social workers and their alternatively qualified colleagues can see clear routes for career progression within the organisation.
4	Lead the delivery of an effective quality assurance strategy, framework, and systems to monitor and evaluate practice, identify areas for practice improvement and develop clear plans to achieve that across NCT. Including activity to deliver against those plans with outcomes that demonstrate tangible ways in which continuous improvement is being achieved, with improved outcomes for children and young people and the voice of people with lived experience at the heart of that. Ensure the internal quality assurance services are delivered to the highest possible standards.
5	Provide effective senior leadership for the quality assurance service to ensure it delivers effective quality assurance across the organisation, as well as delivering specific statutory safeguarding functions. Line manage the Strategic Manager for quality assurance covering the strategic management and operational implementation of the NCT Quality Assurance Framework, the Independent Reviewing Officers function, the Child Protection Chairs function, Children's Rights Statutory function, and the Designated Officer function for the Local Authority.
6	<p>Provide professional social work advice to colleagues across service areas at an operational and strategic level, including advising on children's social care most complex practice situations and being the interface with legal colleagues where needed.</p> <p>Keep up to date with changes to national strategy, policy and legislation (including case law) and lead on activity for local interpretation and implementation.</p> <p>This includes providing strategic leadership in the development of approaches to assessment, planning and recording systems to enable practitioners to deliver the best possible outcomes in a way that is measurable.</p>
7	Provide senior leadership of NCT's social work academy and continuous professional development offer. Ensure that this supports effective recruitment and retention of staff including oversight of activity relating to apprenticeship programmes, newly qualified and return to practice routes and post qualifying qualifications and development opportunities. Ensure that the mandatory and advisory training requirements for all NCT staff are well set out, regularly reviewed, complied with, and are fit for purpose in embedding the skills needed to support good practice standards and meeting regulatory requirements.

	This will include taking the lead on promoting NCT as an excellent employer of social workers with external bodies, such as universities and colleges, ensuring visibility to potential future practitioners. Ensure that a strategy is in place that projects longer term workforce need and set out pipelines to meet that need.
8	Maintain an effective relationship with relevant regulatory bodies and represent NCT in work with partner agencies as required, taking a leading role in some areas including Principle Social Worker Networks, regional and national bodies, particularly Social Work England. Also, within NCT local arrangements such as Safeguarding Children's Partnership Board.
9	Be active in networks of other social work leaders both regionally and nationally. Ensure that the voice of social work, and specifically the views of social workers and alternatively qualified colleagues in the NCT are heard not just internally but in response to external consultations, policy development etc. Acquire, distil, and ensure the workforce access to the very latest and best practice thinking and work collaboratively with Heads of Service, Service Managers, and staff to embed this into everyday practice throughout NCT.
10	To demonstrate awareness/understanding of equal opportunities and other people's behavioural, physical, social and welfare needs.
11	To ensure that reasonable care is taken at all times for the health, safety and welfare of yourself, others and to comply with the policies and procedures relating to health and safety with NCT.

**Safeguarding commitment** *(Include for roles involving work with children/vulnerable adults)*

We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people/vulnerable adults. We require you to understand and demonstrate this commitment.

## Person Specification

### Qualifications, Knowledge, Skills and Experience

Minimum level of qualifications required for this job

Qualifications Required	Subject	Essential/ Desirable
Degree in Social Work (or recognised equivalent)	Social Work	Essential
Post qualifying qualification	Social Work	Essential
Social Work England - active registration		Essential

Minimum levels of knowledge, skills and experience required for this role

Identify	Describe	Essential/ Desirable
<b>Knowledge</b>		
Legislation, government policy and practice guidance	In-depth knowledge of all applicable legislation, government policies and guidance for delivering Children's services, safeguarding children at risk and the factors which lead to positive outcomes for children and young people.	Essential
	Comprehensive knowledge of best practice for Children's social work and robust mechanisms in place, including established relationships with key local and national forums and leaders, to ensure that knowledge remains up to date.	Essential
Sector	Good knowledge of service planning, needs assessment, consultation, option appraisal etc.	Essential
Social Care	Current, up to date understanding of regulatory requirements around assurance activity planned or regularly undertaken by Ofsted or any other regulatory body relating to children's social care	Essential
Anti-discriminatory Practice	In-depth knowledge, commitment to and ability to lead others around issues of equality, diversity, and anti-discriminatory practice and behaviours in the workplace.	Essential
Practice Standards and quality assurance	A high level of skill in the development and use of quality assurance strategies, governance, monitoring processes, professional standards, audit, impactful action and the voice of people with lived experience to establish and maintain continuous	Essential

	improvement in practice and outcomes and ensure regulatory compliance.	
Change management	Ability to instigate and lead projects and programmes to achieve change, including acting as senior responsible owner and delivering outcomes through others.	Essential
Children's social works leadership	Significant experience of leading children's social work, including developing and maintaining strong working relationships across services and with partners. Including effective negotiation skills and political awareness. Leading on embedding best practice to improve outcomes for children and young people.	Essential
Leadership	Experience of managing a large and complex function, ability to deliver against an improvement agenda within a Children's Trust.	
Sector	Experience of developing strong partnership services and relationships incorporating public, private and voluntary sector services.	

Disclosure level	
<b>What DBS Level is required for this post?</b>	
None	<input type="checkbox"/>
Standard	<input type="checkbox"/>
Enhanced Child Only	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Enhanced Child/Adult Bar	<input type="checkbox"/>

Working Arrangements	
What work type does this role fit into? (tick one box that reflects the main work type, the default workers type is flexible)	
Fixed	<input type="checkbox"/>
Flexible	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Field	<input type="checkbox"/>