

Role Profile

Job Title:	Court Progression Officer
Location:	Colindale
Department:	Family Help
Directorate:	Family Services
Grade:	K
Salary Range:	£56,376 - £61,653
Reports to:	Head of Family Help

1. Job Purpose:

The Court Progression Officer provides strategic oversight, coordination and professional leadership for all court proceedings involving Children’s Social Care, including Public Law Outline (PLO), pre-proceedings and care proceedings. The post holder exercises professional authority across the service to direct and influence practice, ensuring that all court work meets high standards of quality, timeliness and compliance.

The role works collaboratively across all social work services, Legal Services and partner agencies, while holding practitioners and managers to account for delivering effective, child-focused and legally robust court work in line with statutory requirements and court expectations.

The post holder acts as a central point of expertise, assurance and practice leadership, providing oversight, challenge and direction to practitioners and managers, and supporting senior leadership to maintain strong governance of court and PLO activity across Family Services. This includes driving improvement in case progression, reducing delay, strengthening practice quality and enhancing the Local Authority’s interface with the courts.

2. Key accountabilities:

Court Progression & System Oversight

- To maintain a strategic overview of all court proceedings across Children’s Social Care, including PLO and care proceedings.

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- To lead, track and monitor timeliness, compliance with court directions and progression against statutory and court timescales (including the 26 week standard).
- To identify, challenge and help improve cases at risk of drift or delay and work constructively with teams and managers to resolve barriers.
- To ensure learning from court outcomes, judgments and feedback is embedded across the service.

Public Law Outline (PLO) / Pre Proceedings

- To provide oversight and coordination of PLO activity across CIN, CP and related services.
- To support managers and practitioners to use PLO as a robust, problem solving and evidence based framework, ensuring proportionate escalation to proceedings.
- To work closely with Legal Services to ensure thresholds, decision making and evidence are clear and aligned prior to issuing proceedings.
- Quality Assurance & Practice Support
- To lead and strengthen the quality of evidence filed to court, including statements, care plans, thresholds and assessments.
- To provide consultation, coaching and advice to social workers and managers to enhance confidence and consistency in court related practice.
- To contribute to audit and quality assurance activity, identifying themes, strengths and areas for development.
- To support the development of court ready practice standards across the service. To identify practice gaps and lead on training professionals to ensure system wide practice improve where necessary

Partnership Working & Representation

- To act as a key interface between Children's Social Care and Legal Services, supporting effective joint working and shared ownership of case progression.
- To represent the Local Authority at court related forums, including:
 - court user groups
 - development and improvement meetings
 - regional or sub regional practice forums
- To build and maintain constructive professional relationships with CAFCASS, the judiciary and partner agencies.

Practice Development & Service Improvement

- To contribute to practice development activity, including briefings, learning sessions and guidance on court related issues.
- To identify systemic issues contributing to delay or poor outcomes and support service leaders to develop improvement plans.
- To use data and performance information to inform service planning, reporting and improvement activity.
- To support innovation and continuous improvement in how the service approaches court work.

Information & Systems

- To support effective use of case recording and performance systems to track court progression and outcomes.

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- To collate and analyse information relating to court activity, producing reports for senior leaders as required.
- To ensure appropriate information governance, confidentiality and data quality are maintained.
- To record management oversight on children files and ensure recommend actions are followed through.

General

- To participate in relevant working groups and project activity as required.
- To contribute to cross service discussions relating to safeguarding, permanence and system improvement.
- To take responsibility for own professional development and contribute to learning across the organisation.
- To work flexibly in response to service demands, within the scope of the role and grade.

3. Financial Responsibilities

- To lead managers and practitioners by contributing to understanding cost drivers and financial implications of court activity.
- To work with managers and Legal Services to support effective use of resources and value for money in court-related work.
- To contribute to the oversight and management of legal budgets to ensure appropriate use of public funds.

4. Staff Responsibilities

- To act as the strategic lead for court progression, providing oversight, challenge and coordination across the system to reduce delay, strengthen practice and ensure that court activity delivers timely permanence and improved outcomes for children.
- The post holder will lead and influence practitioners and managers across the service, providing professional leadership and management oversight.
- To direct and require timely and appropriate action from social workers and managers across all aspects of court work, ensuring high-quality practice, effective decision-making and full compliance with court directions and statutory requirements.
- To lead and oversee quality assurance and audit activity in relation to court work, identifying themes, driving improvement and requiring practice changes where standards are not met.

5. Health and Safety Responsibilities

As an employee of the London Borough of Barnet, the post holder will:

- Comply with Barnet's Health and Safety Policy and associated procedures.
- Complete mandatory health and safety training.
- Take reasonable care for their own health and safety and that of others.

6. Promotion of Corporate Values

The post holder will demonstrate Barnet's values in all aspects of their work:

Caring / Learning to Improve / Inclusive / Collaborative

Including maintaining confidentiality, promoting equality and ensuring a high standard of customer care.

7. Flexibility

In order to deliver the service effectively, a degree of flexibility is required. The post holder may be required to undertake duties not specifically listed, provided these fall within the scope and grade of the role.

8. The Council's Commitment to Equality

The post holder is expected to actively promote equality of opportunity and contribute to inclusive service delivery and an inclusive workplace.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

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Criteria	Essential/Desirable	Assessed by:
Professional Membership/Qualification		
Social Work qualification (BA / MA Social Work or equivalent).	Essential	Application
Registration with Social Work England.	Essential	Application
Minimum of 3 years post qualified experience in statutory children's social care.	Essential	Application
Significant experience of care proceedings and court related work.	Essential	Application
Enhanced DBS check.	Essential	Application
Experience & Knowledge		
Substantial experience of working within care proceedings, including Public Law Outline (PLO), interim and final orders.	Essential	Application/Interview
Strong knowledge of care and permanence planning with the ability to promote high quality, evidence-based planning for children.	Essential	Application/Interview
Considerable post-qualifying direct experience in adoption work.	Essential	Interview
Demonstrable experience of improving or supporting case progression and reducing delay in court proceedings.	Essential	Application/Interview
Strong working knowledge of the Children Act 1989, Public Law Outline and relevant statutory guidance (e.g. Working Together).	Essential	Interview
Experience of providing advice, consultation or professional challenge to social workers and managers.	Essential	Interview
Experience of working collaboratively across multiple services or teams.	Essential	Application/Interview

Experience of joint working with Legal Services, CAFCASS and partner agencies.	Essential	Application/Interview
Experience of quality assurance, audit or review activity within children's social care	Essential	Interview
Experience of identifying systemic issues and contributing to service improvement	Essential	Interview
Experience of representing a service or organisation in multi agency or professional forums	Desirable	Interview
Skill & Ability		
Ability to maintain oversight of complex, high volume information and identify risk, drift or delay.	Essential	Interview
Ability to influence and support practice.	Essential	Interview
Ability to analyse complex information and make balanced, evidence based judgements.	Essential	Interview
Ability to track, interpret and use performance and practice data.	Essential	Interview
Excellent written communication skills, including the ability to support or scrutinise complex court documents.	Essential	Application/Interview
Excellent verbal communication skills, with confidence in professional and court related discussions.	Essential	Interview
Ability to work calmly and effectively under pressure and competing priorities.	Essential	Interview
Ability to build and sustain effective professional relationships across services and agencies.	Essential	Application/Interview
Ability to deliver practice guidance, briefings or learning sessions.	Desirable	Interview
High level of IT literacy and confidence using case management and performance systems.	Essential	Interview
Values & Behaviours		
Caring		
Integrity- I work with candidates and colleagues in a way that builds trust.	Essential	Interview
Support- I support my colleagues to deliver excellent services. I focus on resolving any issues and capturing lessons learnt	Essential	Interview
Learning to Improve		
Insight- I regularly rely on evidence and professional standards to support my work and decision making.	Essential	Interview

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Agile-I am fully empowered to act within the scope of my role	Essential	Interview
Growth Mindset- I take responsibility for my own personal development, growth and learning and support others with their learning and development where I can	Essential	Interview
Inclusive		
Personal Responsibility- I am curious about what is important to others around diversity. I reflect and act upon this curiosity to improve my own understanding	Essential	Interview
Champion Diversity- I recognise the advantages and importance of equality, diversity and inclusion in delivering outcomes for residents, and take an active role to ensure they are implemented and integrated in everything I do.	Essential	Interview
Collaborative		
One Team- I actively and purposefully build my network of relationships with people across the Council and with partners. I proactively seek feedback and evidence as a way of learning from and improving the way I work with others.	Essential	Interview
Accountable- I accept responsibility for my own actions and decisions, and demonstrate commitment to ensuring these align to what is best for Barnet.	Essential	Interview
Outcomes Focused- I adapt my way of working to best suit the outcome we are trying to achieve within the scope of my role and professional standards.	Essential	Interview

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Accountable- I accept responsibility for my own actions and decisions, and demonstrate commitment to ensuring these align to what is best for Barnet	Essential	Application/Interview
Outcomes Focused- I adapt my way of working to best suit the outcome we are trying to achieve within the scope of my role and professional standards	Essential	Application/Interview