

## Job Description & Person Specifications

### Practice Lead – Residential Family Assessment Centre

#### 1. Role Purpose

The Practice Lead is responsible for the day-to-day leadership of practice within the residential family assessment centre, ensuring that work with families is consistent, purposeful, and aligned with assessment objectives.

The post holder leads shifts, supports practitioners in real time, and ensures that the quality of direct work, observation and recording is of a high standard. The role plays a critical part in connecting daily practice with the overall parenting assessment.

Working closely with the Assessing Social Worker and Consultant Practitioner, the Practice Lead ensures that:

- practice is structured and intentional
- observations are meaningful and consistent
- recording contributes effectively to assessment
- families experience a clear and supportive environment

The Practice Lead operates as the key bridge between operational delivery and professional assessment.

#### 2. Reporting Structure

- **Reports to:** Registered Manager
- **Works closely with:**
  - Assessing Social Worker (assessment direction)
  - Consultant Practitioner (practice quality and reflection)
- **Line management:** May provide day-to-day supervision and support to Family Practitioners and Senior Family Practitioners (final structure dependent)

#### 3. Key Responsibilities

##### A. Shift Leadership and Daily Operations

- Lead the day-to-day running of the residential shift
- Allocate work across Family Practitioners and Senior Family Practitioners
- Ensure appropriate staffing deployment based on family need and risk
- Maintain a calm, structured and safe environment for families and staff

- Respond to emerging issues, incidents or risks in real time

## **B. Practice Oversight and Quality**

- Ensure that work with families is purposeful and linked to assessment goals
- Support staff to use teachable moments effectively
- Monitor the quality and consistency of interactions with families
- Provide in-the-moment guidance and challenge to staff

## **C. Recording and Evidence Quality**

- Oversee the quality of daily recording within the house
- Ensure observations are:
  - clear and evidence-based
  - consistent across staff
  - relevant to assessment domains
- Identify gaps in recording and direct staff to address these
- Ensure recording is completed within required timeframes

## **D. Working with the Assessing Social Worker (ASW)**

- Translate assessment plans into daily practice activity
- Ensure staff understand:
  - what needs to be observed
  - what evidence is required
- Share emerging patterns, concerns and progress with the ASW
- Support structured reflective discussions about families
- Ensure alignment between practice, recording and assessment

*(Maintaining clear boundaries: the ASW leads analysis and conclusions)*

## **E. Supporting Staff and Developing Practice**

- Provide day-to-day guidance, coaching and support to practitioners
- Support less experienced staff to develop observation and recording skills
- Promote reflective practice within the team

- Model high-quality direct work with families

#### **F. Safeguarding and Risk Management**

- Maintain oversight of safeguarding within the shift
- Ensure concerns are identified, recorded and escalated appropriately
- Contribute to risk assessment and safety planning
- Support staff to respond confidently to safeguarding issues

#### **G. Working with the Consultant Practitioner (CP)**

- Engage in reflective supervision and practice discussions
- Support the embedding of practice frameworks across the house
- Contribute to continuous improvement in service delivery
- Identify areas for development in staff practice

#### **H. Compliance and Standards**

- Ensure practice aligns with:
  - regulatory requirements
  - organisational policies
  - SMF Standards of Practice
- Support implementation of any required changes or improvements
- Contribute to audits and quality assurance processes

#### **4. Scope of the Role**

- Leads shifts within a 24-hour residential service (including evenings and weekends)
- Does not hold formal case responsibility but is accountable for practice quality on shift
- Works across multiple families within the house
- May contribute to supervision processes depending on final structure

#### **5. Person Specification**

##### **Essential**

- Significant experience working with children and families in a residential or similar setting

- Strong understanding of safeguarding and child protection
- Demonstrated ability to lead practice within a team environment
- Strong observational and analytical thinking
- Ability to support and challenge staff constructively
- Commitment to relational, trauma-informed and anti-oppressive practice

### **Desirable**

- Relevant professional qualification (e.g. social work, youth work, early years, or equivalent experience)
- Experience within a residential family assessment setting
- Experience supporting staff development or mentoring
- Knowledge of parenting assessment frameworks

## **6. Values and Practice Expectations**

The Practice Lead is expected to:

- Promote a child-centred and safety-focused environment
- Balance support and accountability in work with families
- Foster consistency, stability and clarity for families and staff
- Encourage reflection, curiosity and learning within the team
- Model professional integrity and high standards of practice