



Children & Young People

Introduction to our Child Protection and Court Teams



Herefordshire Council Introduction

Herefordshire is on a journey and we would like you to be part of our next chapter. This is an exciting opportunity to have a genuine impact on the local authority and help improve and protect the children and young people within it. In Herefordshire, we recognise that social workers undertake a very important, challenging and rewarding role alongside key stakeholders from across the county. With this in mind, and alongside our package of benefits, we strive to maintain manageable caseloads so you can build meaningful relationships with children, young people and their families.

We appreciate there are a number of considerations you will have when you are thinking about joining us which is why we place a premium on creating the optimum conditions within which our social workers practice. With this in mind, and alongside our package of benefits, we strive to maintain manageable caseloads so you can build meaningful relationships with children, young people and their families. We offer support from line managers who offer regular and reflective supervision and have a growing learning academy that will support you to develop and progress your career in Herefordshire. Our senior leaders are visible and accessible... so, what's stopping you? Come and join us and be part of the change.

We are now looking for energetic and passionate people to join the team and to help support and drive our vision. We have a number of vacant roles across the service, including Social Workers, Senior Practitioners and Manager roles as well as support roles too. You'll be joining a team of hardworking, passionate and committed people who work with families and put children at the centre of everything they do.

“Our vision is that all children and young people in Herefordshire feel safe, loved, and valued, and grow up with the confidence and skills to be the best they can be.”



Why Join Us?

The Children's Child Protection & Court Teams are based in the centre of Hereford with good transport links to get around the City as needed. The staff are very welcoming and are always keen to offer help and guidance if needed to anyone new to the team.

There are 5 teams which are made up of a Team Manager, 1 Senior Practitioner, 6 Social Workers and 4 Family Support Workers. Working from council offices at Plough Lane gives everyone a chance to catch up and meet new staff and ask any questions, there is also flexibility for working at home.

We work alongside families in improving outcomes for their children, we have a restorative approach to social work and this is also evident in the team culture and senior management style as we are always available for discussions on complex matters which we work together to ensure the right outcome is achieved for our families.

The Social Workers work closely with the Council's Legal Team to complete Court applications this can be a learning experience for Social Workers but plenty of support is available to help when needed, we have Court Progression Officers who support the teams in ensuring we meet court timescales and identify any training that may be required to ensure that our staff feel equipped & supported.

Regular supervision takes place each month and you will have an allocated supervisor, who is available on a daily basis, for both formal and informal supervision sessions and case discussions.

We are happy to welcome new Social Workers so please consider joining us!

For an informal conversation about any of the Social Work roles available in our Child Protection and Court Teams, please contact: Denyse Ratcliff, Head of Service on denyse.ratcliff@herefordshire.gov.uk / 01432 261740 or Debbie Weissang, Service Manager on debbie.weissang@herefordshire.gov.uk / 01432 261935.



Lisa's Story - Family Support Worker

I have been a Family Support Worker within the Child Protection team since July 2023, before this I worked in a primary school as a Teaching Assistant. Herefordshire Council provided me with a comprehensive introductory training package, which helped to break down some of the boundaries you can sometimes experience on your first day. The Child Protection team is an amazing team to work in, I have numerous colleagues, all with different experiences and skills that are all willing to support each other both professionally and personally should you need it.

As a Family Support Worker each day is different, we work closely with Social Workers who have identified areas of need and support. We manage our own case load, however, regular team meetings and supervisions help to recognise potential difficulties a team member may be experiencing, when actions are put in place to ease further worries.

We complete visits to vulnerable families and children on our case load, we may be needed to deliver evidence based therapeutic interventions, along with practical solutions to support families within their homes. We also attend a variety of meetings, advocating for our families within the Multi-agency approach Herefordshire Council has adopted.

During my time as a Family Support Worker I have been given the opportunity to complete many training sessions in a variety of topics, enhancing my own professional development, but also providing up to date knowledge for us to provide the best support possible for our families.

Joining the Child Protection team has given me the opportunity to provide practical and emotional support for vulnerable families and children, help families and children work towards achieving positive outcomes, reducing or eliminating risks within their lives, and work towards ensuring children grow up with the provision of safe and effective care.



Tom's Story - Team Manager

What inspired you to develop a career in social work practice?

Prior to training as a Social Worker I completed my undergraduate degree in Psychology and started to work with adults who have acquired brain injuries and significant mental health needs. The heart of this role was around promoting the individual rights, independence and voices of the adults I was supporting. During this time I came into contact with a variety of Social Workers from both the community and hospital teams and started to develop my understanding of this role. After researching further I then made the decision to return to university to complete my masters in Social Work.

Throughout my time at university I had the opportunity to explore my interests in working with children and their families, which I had not been able to in a professional capacity. One of my placements was within a Court Team for another Local Authority which provided me with my keen interest in Child Protection and court work. This area of practice quickly became a passion of mine and when the opportunity arose I applied for a role with the Local Authority.

How were you able to specialise in Child Protection?

When I first joined Herefordshire I had the opportunity to join the Child Protection and Court service as a New Qualified Social Worker supported under the ASYE programme. During this first year of support employment I was able to work with a variety of families with different presenting needs and continue to develop my own interests in certain areas of safeguarding. I was given the opportunities to undertake specialist training such as PAMS training and bespoke training through the Lucy Faithful foundation which was funded through the individual learning budget.



Tom's Story - Team Manager

I was then afforded the opportunity to move across to the MASH team where I was able to further develop my understanding of threshold and short-term risk management. During my time in the MASH I continued to develop my understanding of the right level of support for families and when it was appropriate to intervene at a higher level. Whilst working in the team I was enabled, with support, to step up to Team Manager and continue to implement improvements in the MASH.

I have since returned to the Child Protection Teams as a Team Manager and will continue to develop my practice in this area.

What is a day in the life of a Team Manager?

Every day is different as a Team Manager in the service. I typically start my day looking through any urgent emails and outstanding tasks on my to-do list. I will then prioritise any urgent matters or meetings for the day.

My day can include discussion with allocated workers around the plans for families, how we can progress these plans and what we want to achieve for that family. This can include ad hoc conversations in person/on Teams or during supervision with the allocated worker. When required this can also include discussions with the Service Manager or other Team Managers where we explore alternative plans for families and other options to best support the family.

I could be quality assuring assessments, minutes of meetings or statements to the court depending on what has been requested from the Social Workers. There are also days where I attend Court to support the allocated Social Workers or chair various meetings to progress plans for families.



Tom's Story - Team Manager

How has Herefordshire Council supported your journey?

Herefordshire has supported me in a variety of ways throughout my time with the Local Authority. Firstly, as a newly qualified Social Worker where I was supported throughout my first year of employment. During this time I was able to undertake a variety of training and was supported with regular supervision both through my Team Manager and the Social Care Academy.

Following the end of my newly qualified year I was able to continue to develop my practice through PAMS training and use my personal learning budget to access specialist training through the Lucy Faithful Foundation.

Once I had made the decision to move to another area of the service I was supported by my Team Manager and Head of Service at the time to apply to an alternative role in the authority. This enabled me to continue developing my practice whilst remaining in the employment of the Local Authority.

During my time in the MASH I was supported by my Team Managers and Managing Practitioners to develop my understanding of the team and refine my thresholds. It was during this time I was offered the opportunity to step up to Team Manager and was supported by the other Team Manager, Service Manager and Head of Service to make this change. This included ad hoc discussions with the Service Manager and Team Manager training commissioned through the Ingson Group.

Finally, I made the decision that I wanted to return to the Child Protection and Court Teams. Following my application and interview I was appointed to the role where I have since moved to the team. I have received a gradual induction into the team and my new role.



What We Offer

By joining Herefordshire Council on a permanent basis, you will benefit from:

- **Social Worker starting salary of £38,945- £43,223 (including £5,000 market rate supplement per year).**
- **Welcome payment of £5,000 for experienced social workers joining our children's teams.**
- **Relocation packages: support of up to £10,000.**
- **Recommend a friend scheme to claim £1,000.**

In addition to this, you will receive:

- **Professional Development:** Protected time and budget to support social workers in developing themselves and their careers.
- **Social Care Academy:** A comprehensive package of support and development to staff at all levels.
- **Career Progression:** There are clear pathways to progress to senior social worker levels.
- **Generous Annual Leave:** 31 days' annual leave (pro rata) plus bank holidays.
- **Annual Leave Purchase Scheme:** You can also purchase an additional 10 days per annum.
- **Flexible Working:** Flexi-time, job-share, part-time hours and, in some instances, home working.
- **Employee Assistance Program:** 24/7 access to support and counselling.
- **Pick Your Perks:** Our benefits include access to a range of retail, leisure, holiday and health benefits. This includes savings, cash back and discounts.





Herefordshire Council



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