JOB DESCRIPTION

POST: National Lead for Practice (Family Group Decision Making (FGDM) and Safeguarding)

RESPONSIBLE TO: Director of Children and Families

SALARY: Band F (£52,282 - £58,765)

CONTRACT: Full time, permanent

Children First - Vision and Values

Children First is Scotland's national children's charity. We stand up for every child because all children should have a safe childhood. We protect children from harm and support them to recover from trauma and abuse through our national and local services. We help children, their families and the people that care for them by offering emotional, practical, and financial support. We give children hope and a safer, brighter future.

Our core values guide how each one of us works in our individual day to day job:

- With love, we put children first.
- With purpose, we transform children's lives together.
- With strength, we do whatever it takes to protect Scotland's children.

Diversity Equity and Inclusion

At Children First, we are committed to building a representative, inclusive and authentic workplace open to applications from all sections of society. We believe in the potential of everyone regardless of; sex, race, religion or belief, ethnic origin, ability, family structure, socio-economic background, age, nationality, marital status or civil partnership, sexual orientation, gender identity, or any other aspect that makes you who you are.

We envision a diverse and inclusive Children First where we cultivate a true sense of belonging and connection for and between our teams, children, young people, families, and communities we work with.

Further to that, as part of our vision to be an Anti-Racist organisation, we are committed to conscious inclusion to build increasingly diverse teams and emotionally safe work environments.

Role Summary

The National Lead for Prevention and Protection (Family Support, Family Group Decision Making and Contextual Safeguarding) will provide strategic leadership, national oversight, and professional assurance for practice across Children First.

The postholder will:

- Lead the development of practice in the key areas of protection of children and prevention of harm in line with our Strategic priorities.
- Lead the ongoing development of FGDM and safeguarding practice within Children First and contribute to external developments with partner agencies.
- Act as the organisation's designated Child Protection and Safeguarding Lead, ensuring robust systems of review, practice improvement and audit.
- Contribute to an open and accountable culture that puts children's needs and rights at the centre of policy and practice.
- Represent Children First as a national expert offering specialist knowledge and consultancy.

Contribute to Children First's influencing campaigns to embed access to restorative practice as a right for all children and families. Ensure the meaningful participation of children, young people and families is at the heart of this work.

Results Areas

1. Strategic Leadership and Development

- Develop and deliver a national FGDM strategy in line with our ambitions for children set out in our Strategic Priorities.
- Ensure consistent, high-quality FGDM practice across all services.
- Lead service innovation, embedding evidence-informed, restorative, and trauma-responsive approaches.
- Keep abreast of national policy developments and work with colleagues to influence and respond.
- Support the capture of evidence and impact to raise awareness, drive investment, and improve outcomes for children.

2. Safeguarding Leadership

- Act as Designated Safeguarding Lead for Children First
- Lead the review, development, and implementation of safeguarding policy, procedures, and practice standards.
- Ensure compliance with legislation, national guidance, and regulatory standards.
- Oversee safeguarding audits, reviews, and learning processes.
- Provide consultation and guidance on complex risk, critical incidents, and case decision-making.
- Represent Children First in undertaking investigations, practice reviews for and alongside partners.
- Support the design and delivery of our FGDM and child protection training.

3. Practice Quality and Assurance

- Establish and lead quality assurance frameworks across FGDM and safeguarding, including monitoring and evaluating practice, outcomes and impact to drive continuous improvement.
- Drive improvement through learning from audits, inspections, and case reviews.
- Promote reflective practice and continuous professional development.

4. Leadership, Practice Development, and Service Delivery

- Oversee the implementation of consistent practice models, ensuring fidelity to FGDM principles and safeguarding standards.
- Support the development and delivery of new and established training, learning programmes, and practice guidance for colleagues and volunteers.
- Ensure continuous improvement through practice development and innovation.
- Contribute to the organisation's planning, business development and sustainability.

5. External Leadership, Influence, and Sector Expertise

- Provide expert consultancy, advice, and professional guidance to external agencies including local authorities, health, education, and charities/not for profit organisations.
- Develop and deliver external training programmes, workshops, and capacity-building initiatives and resources
- Support partners to embed FGDM and strengthen safeguarding systems within their own organisations.
- Represent the organisation at national, international and UK-wide forums as a recognised subject matter expert.
- Contribute to research, publications, and sector-wide knowledge and practice development.

6. Partnership and System Leadership

- Build effective partnerships across social work, health, education, and not for profit organisations.
- Represent Children First in national forums to influence systems reform to realise the ambitions to prevent harm, protect children and promote their recovery.
- Promote integration and collaboration to improve outcomes for children and families.

7. Operational Oversight

Support managers to deliver safe, effective, and evidence informed practice that protects children and prevents harm.

- Identify any needs for delivery infrastructure and support systems to sustain both internal services and external offer (training, consultancy, and programme delivery.)
- Contribute to organisational planning, sustainability, and relevant funding opportunities.

What We're Looking For

We're looking for someone who enjoys a role that combines structure with variety and who takes pride in delivering a high standard of work. You'll be great in this role if you have/are:

- Totally driven and committed to children's wellbeing and rights
- Experienced in FGDM, child protection and family support practice
- Confident in high-profile, external-facing environments
- Collaborative, with the ability to build trusted relationships across systems
- Resilient and able to operate effectively in complex, high-stake contexts
- Reflective, self-aware, and committed to continuous learning
- Passionate about improving practice across the wider sector

What You'll Get From Us

- A supportive and people-centred team, with space to contribute ideas and grow
- Opportunities to develop your skills in systems, learning and process improvement
- 40 days annual leave, inclusive of bank holidays
- Pension scheme and wellbeing support
- Flexible and hybrid working arrangements
- The chance to shape and improve how we work behind the scenes
- A workplace with values of with love, with purpose and with strength

Corporate Responsibility

- Be committed and adhere to Children First vision, mission and values.
- Comply with Children First Safeguarding policies and procedures.
- Comply with Children First Colleague Code and any relevant professional standards relating to the role.
- Actively consider the involvement of children, young people and families with whom we work, in all areas of practice and to implement the Children First Participation Standards.
- Actively consider the involvement of volunteers in all areas of our work and to implement the Children First Volunteer Development Policy.
- Observe all health and safety requirements.
- Work within and promote policies in relation to Diversity Equity and Inclusion and anti-discriminatory practices.
- Undertake any other reasonably required duties as instructed by line manager or someone acting on their behalf, in addition to the role specific responsibilities detailed below.

CHILDREN FIRST Protecting Scotland's Children

Need to Have	Need to Show	Need to Know	Need to Be	Core Values
• Degree and recognised professional qualification in Social Work or relevant discipline • Significant senior leadership experience in children's services, safeguarding, or family support • Extensive experience of FGDM / Family Group Conferencing or similar approaches • Strong experience of leading safeguarding systems, practice, and governance • Significant experience in the design and delivery of practice models, programmes, or services relating to FGDM and safeguarding, both internally and with external partners • Proven experience in an external-facing leadership role,	• Strong leadership and decision-making capability • Ability to translate national policy into effective practice • Advanced skills in risk assessment, safeguarding, and complex decision-making • Excellent communication, influencing, and negotiation skills • Ability to act as a credible expert and ambassador in external settings • Strong consultancy, facilitation, and knowledge-sharing skills • Skilled in data analysis, performance management, and quality assurance • Critical thinker and problem solver • Ability to lead innovation, transformation, and system-wide change	In-depth knowledge of: • Child protection practice knowledge • Family support practice • Safeguarding legislation, frameworks, and inspection standards • Children's rights (UNCRC) and participation principles • FGDM / restorative and strengths-based approaches • Trauma-informed practice and child development • Knowledge of national and international developments in FGDM and safeguarding • Knowledge of service design and practice model development within children's services • Understanding of multi-agency systems and public service delivery	• Strong commitment to children's wellbeing and rights • Values-driven with integrity and professional credibility • Confident in high-profile, external-facing environments • Collaborative, with the ability to build trusted relationships across systems • Resilient and able to operate effectively in complex, high-stake contexts • Reflective, self-aware, and committed to continuous learning • Passionate about improving practice across the wider sector • Flexible and willing to travel nationally and work outside standard hours where required • Committed to ongoing professional development	Our core values guide how each one of us works in our individual day to day job: • **With Love**, we put children first • **With purpose**, we transform children's lives together. • **With strength**, we do whatever it takes to protect Scotland's children.

influencing across organisations and sectors • Experience delivering training, consultancy, or expert advice to partner agencies • Demonstrable contribution to policy development, practice improvement, or national guidance • Experience of managing complex risk and critical safeguarding incidents	• Ability to design, implement, and scale practice models across services and systems • Strong capability in developing and delivering training, programmes, and practice frameworks and resources • Ability to translate expertise into practical delivery, both operationally and through external consultancy	• Awareness of governance, accountability, and risk management frameworks		