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**Title of post:** **Lead Practitioner: Substance Use Specialist**

**Location:** Embedded within **Bradford Children and Families Trust Family Hubs**, with travel across the district to other hubs and family homes as required.

**Responsible to:** Service Manager

**Responsible for:** Day-to-day supervision of Early Help: Substance Use Specialists (embedded in Family Hubs)

**Hours of Work:** 33.5 hours per week over 5 days to meet the needs of the service. Core hours are 9am-4.30pm Monday to Thursday (7 hours) and Friday 9am- 3.30pm (6 hours). Each day includes a 30 min unpaid break.

**Salary:** FTE 35,344 (37.5 hours) – pro rata for 33.5 hours per week £31,574

**Service Overview**

The Early Help element strengthens Bradford Children and Families Trust Family Hubs by embedding a team of Substance Use Specialists. Their role is to help practitioners identify and respond earlier when parental substance use is emerging, minimised, or not fully understood.

This is a **non-caseholding service**. Instead, specialists work alongside Early Help staff through consultation, reflective practice, training, auditing, and modelling. The aim is to build workforce confidence and ensure consistent, high-quality responses to parental substance use across the system.

**Lead Practitioner Role**  
The Lead Practitioner is part of a four-person geographically dispersed team across family hubs. While delivering the same core functions as the other specialists, this post also takes on wider responsibility for service leadership.

Key aspects include:

* **Supervision and coordination** – providing day-to-day guidance and support to hub-based specialists, arranging cover, and ensuring consistent practice across all hubs.
* **Operational oversight** – acting as the main point of contact for the Early Help substance use strand, maintaining effective communication with Early Help leadership, and ensuring smooth day-to-day delivery.
* **Service quality and compliance** – ensuing compliance with data collection monitoring contractual requirements and working with the Service Manager and Head of Quality & **Practice leadership** – ensuring the new substance use screening element of the Early Help Assessment Tool is applied consistently in practice, embedding the Practitioner Toolkit with Early Help colleagues, and modelling trauma-informed, relational approaches with substance involved families.

The role combines hands-on practice with visible leadership, ensuring that the service runs effectively and that Early Help practitioners across the district receive consistent, high-quality support in recognising and responding to parental substance use.

**Main Duties and Responsibilities**

**Additional Responsibilities – Lead Practitioner – Substance Use Specialist only**

* Provide day-to-day supervision, guidance, and support to the Early Help Substance Use Specialists, ensuring high-quality practice in the early identification of parental substance use.
* Coordinate the activities of the four hub-based Early Help Substance Use Specialists to ensure consistent coverage across all Family Hubs, arranging cover for planned and unplanned absences.
* Work with the Service Manager to maintain oversight of substance use–related KPIs and performance monitoring, contributing to reports and service evaluations.
* Act as the first point of contact for operational issues within the strand, escalating as required to the Service Manager.
* Ensure consistency of practice across hubs, embedding the new substance use screening and assessment element of the Early Help Assessment Tool and the Substance Use Practitioner Toolkit.
* Work with Early Help practitioners to identify substance-involved families who may require more intensive support, and lead on coordinating referral into the Bridge Family Navigation Team, with a view to providing an episode of intensive intervention to reduce risks.

**Shared Responsibilities – Lead Practitioner – Substance Use Specialist and Early Help Substance Use Specialists**

* Review and audit Early Help Assessments for the identification of parental substance use and the quality of the associated response plans, providing constructive feedback and recommendations to strengthen practice.
* Support Early Help practitioners of all grades to build confidence and competence in the early identification of parental substance use, including where it may be minimised or only partially recognised by families, and to respond effectively with appropriate support and planning.
* Ensure Early Help practitioners are equipped and supported to deliver brief, early substance use interventions as part of the Substance Use Practitioner Toolkit, helping to prevent escalation into the need for formalised treatment.
* Support the implementation and training of the Substance Use Practitioner Toolkit, working alongside the Lead Practitioner – Substance Use Specialist to ensure Early Help staff understand and apply it in practice.
* Provide consultation, reflective practice, and workforce development activities to improve Early Help responses to parental substance use and hidden harm.
* Model trauma-informed, relational practice by working alongside Early Help practitioners in live casework, demonstrating best practice while remaining non-case holding.
* Facilitate problem-solving drop-ins on substance use, making key recommendations on response plans in complex cases.
* Ensure robust pathways are in place for families requiring escalation to more formalised treatment, working closely with the local treatment provider, New Vision Bradford, and other partners.
* Promote effective interagency working to strengthen the whole-system response to parental substance use within Early Help.
* Maintain accurate records, audit notes, and performance data, using findings to inform monitoring, evaluation, and continuous improvement in responses to parental substance use.

**Person Specification**

**Qualifications**

* Relevant qualification in social care, health, youth work, or a related field, or equivalent professional experience.
* Evidence of continuing professional development.

**Experience**

* At least four years’ experience in substance misuse/substance use delivery services, with proven expertise in early intervention.
* Demonstrated ability as a highly competent practitioner, with excellent care planning and support planning skills.
* Experience of providing supervision, mentoring, or practice leadership within a team.
* Proven ability to undertake safeguarding and risk analysis in complex family contexts.
* Experience of working effectively in a multi-agency framework, including strong partnership working with substance use treatment providers (e.g. New Vision Bradford).
* Experience of delivering workforce development activities such as training, reflective practice, or coaching.
* Experience of reviewing or auditing assessments and making recommendations to strengthen practice.

**Knowledge and Skills**

* Strong understanding of parental substance use and hidden harm, including its impact on children and families.
* Knowledge of screening and assessment tools (e.g. AUDIT-C, full AUDIT) and their role in early identification.
* Applied knowledge of safeguarding legislation, local procedures, and thresholds for intervention.
* Familiarity with the local substance misuse treatment model and referral pathways, and ability to support robust handovers into treatment where needed.
* Skilled in trauma-informed and relational practice approaches.
* Excellent written and verbal communication skills, able to provide clear feedback, reports, and recommendations.
* Strong organisational and time management skills, able to balance supervisory and practice responsibilities.
* Competent IT skills for case recording, auditing, reporting, and use of toolkits/resources.

**General Requirements**

* Commitment to reflective practice, continuous professional development, and maintaining professional resilience.
* Willingness to work flexibly, including occasional out-of-hours commitments.
* Ability to travel across Bradford.
* A collaborative and positive approach, committed to raising workforce confidence and competence in responding to parental substance use at the earliest stage.

**Key Behaviours**

The following key behaviours are expected of all employees at Bridge. They represent the standards of conduct, collaboration, and professionalism that underpin how we work with each other, with our partners, and with the people who use our services.

| **Behaviour** | **Description** |
| --- | --- |
| **Works Proactively** | Demonstrates initiative, thinks ahead, and takes prompt action to solve problems; completes tasks, overcomes obstacles and seizes opportunities. |
| **Leads Change & Improves Performance** | Responds quickly and positively to change, seeking to continuously improve performance by learning quickly from our mistakes, celebrating our successes, and constantly developing our people and processes. |
| **Demonstrates Creativity & Innovation** | Applies creative and lateral thinking to organisational issues; challenges the status quo and introduces new ideas, methods and processes. |
| **Client & Customer Focused** | Focuses on and understands the needs of internal and external service users, members and other stakeholders and strives to deliver a prompt, effective and personalised service. (For ‘service users’, please also read members, stakeholders, and audiences). |
| **Influences Others & Communicates Effectively** | Positively influences others and where appropriate persuades them to change their views, intentions or actions. Listens closely and communicates clearly both verbally and in writing. |
| **Applies & Shares Expert Knowledge** | Demonstrates the specialist knowledge and technical requirements of the job. Applies skills and experience to perform the job effectively, completes work to a high standard and shares knowledge across the organisation. |
| **Works Collaboratively with Others** | Works collaboratively with others for the good of the business; builds a network of good relationships and develops a thorough understanding of the organisation and the wider sector. |
| **Values & Respects Others** | Respects other individuals; listens and takes into account different opinions, feelings and motivations; is trustworthy and acts with integrity; responds and acts constructively towards others. |