

Job Description

Job title	Mental Health Discharge Social Worker
Directorate	PEOPLE: Children and Adults
Division	Adult Social Care
Range	MPR SW2
Reports to	Operations Manager

Main purpose of the job:

The primary purpose of this role is to support the delivery of a highly effective adult social care support by ensuring safe, timely, and person-centred discharge planning for adults with mental health needs. The postholder will work collaboratively with individuals, their families, carers, and wider support networks, alongside partner agencies, to promote recovery, independence, and sustained wellbeing.

The role adopts a preventative and strengths-based approach, enabling informed decision-making, positive risk-taking, and the delivery of proportionate support that empowers individuals to maximise independence and achieve positive outcomes in their recovery journey.

The role requires regular liaison with stakeholders in a way that promotes the [One Medway Council Plan](#) and embeds our [values and behaviours](#).

Accountabilities and outcomes:

Manage a defined caseload, providing high-quality professional social work practice and specialist expertise to support individuals with complex mental health needs.

Undertake comprehensive, holistic assessments using a preventative and strengths-based approach, working collaboratively with individuals to co-produce personalised support plans that promote independence, recovery, and sustainable outcomes.

Work proactively with individuals, their families, representatives, and the multi-disciplinary team (MDT) to identify appropriate support and accommodation options, and to develop robust, well-coordinated transition and discharge plans.

Apply least restrictive practice principles, supporting positive risk-taking and informed decision-making to enable recovery and maximise independence.

Medway Council Job Profile

Work closely with hospital patient flow services, ward staff, and community-based professionals to inform assessment, care planning, and timely discharge arrangements, securing positive and person-centred outcomes.

Undertake Mental Capacity Act (MCA) assessments where required, ensuring decisions are made in accordance with the principles of the Mental Capacity Act 2005. Make timely referrals to advocacy services under the Mental Capacity Act 2005 and the Care Act 2014 to ensure individuals are appropriately supported and their views represented.

Convene and chair Best Interests meetings when appropriate, working collaboratively with relevant professionals, families, and advocates to reach lawful and person-centred decisions. Complete and submit Court of Protection Deprivation of Liberty (CoP DoL) applications as required, ensuring legal compliance and the protection of individuals' rights and freedoms.

Make timely and appropriate referrals to community agencies, services, and support providers to ensure safe, coordinated, and sustainable discharge arrangements that meet identified needs.

Complete post-discharge reviews to evaluate whether support arrangements are effective and meeting identified needs, advocating on behalf of individuals to ensure they receive appropriate, timely, and coordinated support within the community.

Identify, assess, and respond appropriately to safeguarding concerns in line with the Care Act 2014, working to safeguard adults at risk of abuse or neglect.

Represent the local authority at a range of internal and multi-agency meetings, panels, and forums, contributing professional expertise to support effective decision-making.

Work in a way that effectively utilises available resources and promotes best value, ensuring services are delivered efficiently while achieving positive, person-centred outcomes.

At manager's discretion, other activities may be assigned that fit the job description.

Key Corporate Accountabilities:

To work with colleagues to achieve service plan objectives and targets.

To understand and actively keep up to date with GDPR responsibilities, including completing regular refresher training.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility: all employees are required to act in such a way that safeguards the health and well-being of children and vulnerable adults.

As a corporate parent, all council employees are responsible for ensuring the well-being and positive outcomes of Medway's care-experienced children and young people.

To participate in the Performance Appraisal process and contribute to the identification of own and team development needs utilising the Career Progression Framework.

Work in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation. Promoting equality of opportunity, fostering good relations and improving the quality of life and opportunities for everyone living and working in Medway.

To ensure full compliance with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, the Council's Health and Safety Policy and all locally agreed safe methods of work.

To fully understand and be aware of the commitment to the duty under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to prevent crime and disorder.

Medway Council Job Profile

Promote the Medway Carbon Neutral by 2050 commitment; supporting the Council action plan to ensure we play our part in addressing the climate emergency.

Medway Council is a Category One responder in relation to the Civil Contingencies Act (2004) and as a result all staff working for the Authority may be asked to carry out Category One response duties or stand into the role of another member of staff who is responding to a Major Civil Incident.

Accountabilities to Adults we work with:

- Be a good listener.
- Be non-judgemental.
- Be responsive.
- Be understanding.
- Be honest.
- Be focused.
- Be realistic.
- Be a good time keeper.
- Be resourceful in your approach.

Be ambitious and professionally curious for adults with care and support needs and promote others to share the same drive.

'Make no decision about me without me.'

Organisation:

This role reports to the Operations Manager–AMHP and DoLS.

The post holder will not be required to line manage others but may be required to direct, coordinate or train other employees.

The post holder will be required to liaise with all stakeholders both internal and external to the organisation.

Working Style:

HYBRID - a flexible working arrangement whereby an employee can undertake their work either in the office and/or partially or mainly from home on a temporary or permanent basis.

This post is exempt under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and as such appointment to this post will be subject to an Enhanced Disclosure application to the Disclosure and Barring service (DBS)

Medway Council Job Profile

Person specification

All criteria at level A are considered essential unless stated otherwise.

Qualifications

Level A

- Degree in Social Work
- Completion of Assisted and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE)
- Registration with Social Work England

Level B (in addition to level A criteria)

- Evidence of ongoing continuous professional development in accordance with Social Work England (SWE) professional standards

Level C (in addition to levels A and B)

- Evidence of ongoing continuous professional development in accordance with Social Work England (SWE) professional standards

Knowledge

Level A

- Knowledge of relevant social care legislation, statutory guidance, policy, and procedures applicable to adult social care and mental health services.
- Understanding of the Equality Act 2010 and the principles of anti-discriminatory and anti-oppressive practice.
- Understanding of General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) requirements and the importance of lawful, proportionate information sharing.
- Understanding of the distinction between theory, research, evidence, and professional expertise, and the role of professional judgement in social work decision-making.
- Sound understanding of mental health legislation, including the Mental Health Act, the role of Mental Health Tribunals, and hospital discharge processes.
- Knowledge of Section 117 aftercare duties, including funding responsibilities and joint working requirements.
- Knowledge of safeguarding principles, risk management, and least restrictive practice in the context of mental health discharge.

Level B (in addition to level A criteria)

- Working knowledge and practical experience of applying relevant adult social care and mental health legislation, statutory guidance, policy, and procedures in complex practice situations.
- Knowledge and application of the prevention and enablement agenda, including strengths-based, recovery-focused approaches to discharge planning.
- Critical understanding of the relationship between theory, research, evidence, and professional expertise, and the confident use of professional judgement in complex decision-making.
- Knowledge of relevant practice evidence and research to inform assessment, care planning, risk management, and discharge decisions in mental health settings.
- Understanding of system pressures affecting hospital discharge and patient flow, and the ability to balance legal duties, best value, and person-centred outcomes.

Medway Council Job Profile

Level C (in addition to level A and B)

- Advanced knowledge of assessment and support-planning approaches for complex cases, including how to enable and develop the practice skills of others.
 - In-depth understanding of the principles of autonomy, self-determination, and least restrictive practice, and how these should be promoted within mental health and Adult Social Care contexts.
 - Strong theoretical knowledge of social justice principles, including how they inform ethical decision-making, challenge discrimination, and guide lawful and proportionate interventions.
 - Knowledge of reflective practice models and the impact of personal values, beliefs, and bias on professional judgement and social work practice.
 - Knowledge of supervision principles, learning and development frameworks, and the roles of Social Care Officers (SCOs), Newly Qualified Social Workers (NQSWs), and social work students in practice learning environments.
 - Expert knowledge of relevant theoretical frameworks, practice models, research evidence, and psychological and human development theories, and their application to complex mental health and discharge-planning practice.
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Experience

Level A

- Demonstrate practice consistent with the Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF) for Newly Qualified Social Workers (NQSW) and Social Work England (SWE) professional standards.
 - Experience of developing and maintaining effective working relationships with community-based services and resources to support individuals to access appropriate support on discharge.
 - Experience of clearly explaining the social work role within multi-disciplinary and multi-agency settings, and constructively challenging health and community partners to promote effective joint working and positive outcomes.
 - Experience and understanding of the impact of trauma, loss, abuse, disability, mental ill health, substance misuse, ageing, and end-of-life issues on individuals and family systems, and how these factors influence assessment, planning, and intervention.
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Level B (in addition to Level A criteria)

- Experience of applying critical reflection and analytical skills to increasingly complex cases, balancing risk, rights, least restrictive practice, and recovery-focused outcomes in mental health discharge planning.
 - Experience of drawing on a range of evidence sources, including legislation, research, practice guidance, and professional expertise, to inform assessment, judgement, and decision-making.
 - Experience of presenting professional analysis and opinion to colleagues, managers, and partner agencies, contributing to shared decision-making in complex mental health and discharge-related situations.
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Level C (in addition to Levels A and B)

- Experience of leading assessment, planning, and risk management in complex mental health work, and supporting others to develop confidence and competence in this area of practice.

Medway Council Job Profile

- Experience of promoting and advancing individuals' rights to autonomy, self-determination, and least restrictive practice, even in high-risk or contested situations.
 - Experience of providing professional guidance, support, and constructive challenge to others in relation to social justice, ethical practice, and lawful decision-making.
 - Experience of supporting reflective practice, including helping others explore the impact of personal values, bias, and belief systems on professional decision-making.
 - Experience of Mental Health Tribunals and/or Court of Protection work.
 - Experience of providing supervision to Social Care Officers (SCOs), supporting Newly Qualified Social Workers (NQSWs), and offering practice learning or shadowing opportunities for students.
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Skills

Level A

- Proficient in the use of Microsoft Word, Excel, Teams, Outlook and the Council's case note recording system, MOSAIC, to support effective recording, communication, and service coordination.
 - Able to represent the local authority within health, social care, and welfare systems, clearly articulating the role, duties, and statutory responsibilities of social work in mental health discharge settings.
 - Skilled in enabling individuals to access advice, advocacy, support, and services to which they are entitled, including community-based and specialist resources.
 - Ability to coordinate and facilitate a range of practical and emotional support, building on individuals' own strengths, informal networks, and community assets to maximise choice and control.
 - Ability to work co-productively and creatively with individuals, families, communities, professionals, and partner agencies to support recovery-focused discharge planning.
 - Competent in undertaking decision-specific and time-specific Mental Capacity Act assessments, applying statutory principles appropriately.
 - Able to identify potential deprivations of liberty and understand the processes for assessment, authorisation, and review in individuals' best interests.
 - Highly effective communication skills, using a range of written, verbal, and non-verbal methods, adapted sensitively to meet diverse needs and complex situations.
 - Able to recognise the role and needs of informal carers, ensuring their perspectives are considered through comprehensive assessment and support planning.
 - Skilled in multi-disciplinary and inter-agency working, demonstrating effective partnership with health, housing, and community services.
 - Able to work collaboratively to manage competing and sometimes conflicting interests of individuals, families, and carers.
 - Ability to work within finite resources, meeting eligible needs while managing expectations and emotional responses during discharge and transition planning.
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Level B (in addition to Level A criteria)

- Ability to remain person-centred, analytical, and task-focused when responding to complexity, risk, and competing demands within fast-paced, multi-disciplinary discharge environments.
- Skilled in promoting individuals' rights through active advocacy, enhancing social justice, equality, and human dignity within mental health services.
- Able to mediate, negotiate, and navigate complex systems on behalf of individuals and in partnership with families, professionals, and providers.
- Ability to take a leading role in implementing preventative and early-intervention approaches to reduce deterioration and avoid delayed discharge or readmission.
- Competent in safeguarding adults at risk of abuse, neglect, or discrimination, and in taking proportionate action where individuals pose a risk to themselves or others.
- Able to engage effectively with individuals in complex or crisis situations, establishing trust and maintaining productive professional relationships over time.
- Skilled in balancing competing interests within individuals' networks, ensuring lawful, ethical, and least-restrictive outcomes.

Medway Council Job Profile

- Able to recognise, challenge, and appropriately escalate poor practice, unsafe decision-making, or systemic failings.
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Level C (in addition to Levels A and B)

- Ability to apply legal reasoning confidently, drawing on professional legal knowledge and advice, while recognising the scope for professional judgement in complex cases.
- Able to gather, analyse, and prioritise information quickly to inform decision-making during crises and high-risk discharge scenarios.
- Highly skilled in anticipating, assessing, and managing risk in complex mental health cases, and in supporting others to develop effective risk-management skills.
- Advanced understanding of executive functioning and its relevance when undertaking Mental Capacity Act assessments.
- Demonstrates confidence in providing professional opinion, advice, and constructive challenge to social workers, managers, and multi-disciplinary colleagues.
- Ability to actively promote meaningful participation of individuals and carers in shaping care planning, discharge arrangements, and service delivery.
- Able to identify and communicate to supervisors, senior leaders, and managers how organisational systems and practice can be improved to strengthen outcomes and social work effectiveness.
- Works positively within teams, contributing to a culture of learning, reflection, and mutual support, and providing social work advice to enhance colleagues' practice.

