Adult Social care and Children’s Services
Social work progression between levels is based on the Professional Capabilities Framework where development is assessed in terms of

- level of confidence, underpinned by practice experience, reflection and deepening understanding
- increased ability to work independently and to collaborate on equal terms with members of other professions
- the quality of professional judgements and the ability to explain and justify them
- ability to make effective partnerships and act as a change agent
- ability to make a difference with situations of increasing complexity and challenge (multi-agency; complex dynamics; hostility & conflict of interest; multiple problems and disadvantage; multiple and significant risk factors; need to take into account the public interest)
- appropriate use of authority and challenge
- enabling others to learn
- leadership, management and research
**Background**

The career pathway has been developed in order to provide transparency in career progression, to properly reward good performance and to provide a competitive edge as part of Southwark’s resources strategy for recruitment and retention of high calibre social workers in Children and Adult Services.

**Principles behind the framework**

*Effective workforce planning systems will make sure we have the right numbers of social workers, with the right capabilities to meet current and future service demands.*

An equitable basis for paying employees is the cornerstone of the remuneration policy and provides a non discriminatory basis for addressing the relative responsibility levels of jobs and of jobs to grades.

The allocation of grades to jobs is by job evaluation and for this the Council uses the Hay scheme. Structured job evaluation creates a defensible hierarchy of jobs. The number of jobs is determined through workforce planning which is led by service need. This is informed by regular assessments of local and regional supply and demand in partnership with others.

This framework sits within the Councils total reward package that is affordable, competitive and grounded in equal pay and performance management principles. The package covers not only pay and benefits, but access to high quality learning and development, a range of modern flexible working practices, generous annual leave and access to the Local Government Pension Scheme.

The framework is designed to meet customer, organisational and individual employee development needs. Keeping it simple and aligned to other professional ‘anchors’ so it fits seamlessly with existing performance management, continuous professional development and registration requirements.

From an organisational perspective, there is a need to meet the Councils corporate priorities; ensuring the delivery of responsive, customer focused, high quality services to the local communities, delivered by the right people, with the right skills, in the right place, at the right time.

A competitive total reward package and a workplace culture that can sustain ambition and interest in work through promotion, challenge, development and reward is an incentive for social workers wanting to make a real difference to people's lives and feel properly rewarded themselves whilst they do so.

The Children and Adults department is a talent intensive organisation, where employees are genuinely our most valued asset. We are committed to:

1. Sustaining high quality supply and ongoing development of social workers.
2. Establishing transparent career pathways from defined entry routes so staff can see what they have to do to progress and when.
3. Excellent person centred service improvements as a result of effective resource and succession planning.

Career progression promotes the concept of lifelong learning and nurtures diversity of talent through valuing and building upon the strengths and unique contribution of social work practitioners in the context of the particular service needs, the College of Social Work and National Health Care Professions Council Standards.

Succession Planning

From a succession planning perspective, the scheme aims to ensure that in the long term, there is the necessary managerial, frontline and practice talent to achieve organisational goals.

- It arises from defined needs
- It will be aligned to the Workforce Strategy and Workforce Resourcing plans and informed by known changes including data about those known to be leaving / retiring in the future and predicted turnover.

In respect of ensuring the right number of social workers with the right level of skills to meet current and future service demands, factors for consideration will be,

- Type and numbers of role required driven by service need
- The specialist skills/ knowledge/ capabilities required
- The contractual flexibilities that identify Southwark an attractive employer eg work/ life balance part time/ compressed working week, annualised hours, training and development opportunities etc.

Managers will ensure that in terms of access and entry routes into social work, we can provide good quality practice placements, other types of practice learning and effective workplace assessment.

Senior managers will also ensure that there is sufficient management capacity and systems to ensure time for reflective learning, continuous professional development and quality supervision. Importantly, managers will be given the space to manage and everyone who comes into contact with a Southwark Social Worker can take away a positive experience.

Pay Structure

In a nutshell the new grade ranges are as indicated below. Because of structural and responsibility differences between divisions, progression routes vary between adults and children’s services.

All fully qualified practising Social Workers will be recruited at Grade 10 which will be the main social worker grade.

The career progression structure will incorporate:
• Grade 9 Newly qualified (ASYE) on 1 year introduction
• Grade 10 main grade Social Worker
• Grade 11 Children’s: Experienced Social Worker, Adults: Advanced Practitioner, Advanced SW Practitioner, Senior Practitioner
• Grade 12 Children’s: Advanced Practitioner; Adults: Team Manager, Practitioner Manager
• JNC grade posts Children’s: Service Manager; Practice Group Leads; Adults: Heads of Service, Service Manager

**Newly Qualified Social Workers (NQSWs)**

Southwark has recruited Newly Qualified Social Workers (NQSWs) through the Early Recruitment Scheme; through traditional recruitment straight from university and through Frontline and Step Up schemes. We aim to appoint staff who have obtained a good honours degree (2.1 and above) to ensure that we have the best calibre of applicants capable of undertaking the learning and development to successfully complete their Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE).

Newly qualified Social Workers will have a social work degree or equivalent and be in the first year of practice. Southwark has an excellent programme to support these staff during the 12 months whilst they achieve competence in the Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF) at this level.

Newly qualified Social Workers in the Assessed and Supported year of Employment will be supported, developed and managed in accordance with the Southwark ASYE handbook and NQSWs: the ASYE- Improving Performance policies. There will be ongoing assessment by the line manager or other suitable professional so that any developmental needs can be addressed at the earliest opportunity. Records of assessment and review meetings will be maintained at three month, six month and nine months. Assessments will be moderated between managers and the outcomes will be sampled and further moderated according to National College of Social Work requirements, to ensure that assessments are being undertaken fairly and consistently according to business and professional capabilities / competencies.

Successful completion of the ASYE will result in the NQSW becoming a main grade Social Worker and assimilated to the bottom point of Grade 10.

**Social Worker**

The Social Worker main grade is scp 36-43 (wef 1 April 2014). Main grade social workers will have expertise in an area of practice that is necessary for the service. Expertise will be developed by the Social Worker who will act as a source of information to others within the service or area of work.

In line with the PCF level descriptor, Main grade Social Workers will

“practice effectively, exercising higher quality judgements, in situations of increasing complexity, risk, uncertainty and challenge. Through growing understanding they expect and anticipate, but do not pre-judge, the issues that may develop. They have greater confidence and independence (whilst accessing support when needed), and use their initiative to broaden their repertoire of responses; they have expertise in one or more areas of practice, be familiar with local resource networks and be recognised by peers as a source of reliable knowledge and advice.”
As they develop and progress through the pay scale, main grade Social Workers will increasingly demonstrate the level descriptors in the PCF of the Experienced Social Worker. Current staff at the top end of the main scale will already be demonstrating proficiency at this higher level of the PCF

**Incremental progression** will occur in line with the performance management scheme, ie at each April subject to the performance management system.

All Social Workers are required to re-register with the HCPC every two years and in doing so submit evidence of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) and standards of proficiency at the PCF experience level. There are a range of learning and development opportunities and activities available to support Social Workers maintain and develop their career. The evidence of demonstrating professional capabilities will integrate with the performance management process and in particular, the learning and development plan.

**Progression/Transition to next level**

Social workers may feel that they are content to operate at main grade level for a number of years, depending on their own confidence and work life balance considerations. Main grade Social Workers may wish to consider lateral moves in order to develop a breadth of experience and knowledge. A transfer mechanism will be developed in order to balance this as a realistic option for staff without detriment to service delivery.

Progress through the main Social Worker grade will be made through consideration of incremental progression each April under performance management. Social Workers would remain on grade 10 unless and until the capabilities and opportunities for progression to a Grade 11 job description are present. This will be assessed at 3 year anniversary point and if successful individuals will be eligible to progress as at the following April subject to availability of suitable posts; these opportunities will be specified in the Divisional Resources plan.

**Professional Social Work posts at Grade 11**

A number of these roles exist within the Department and designation varies according to the area of service.

**Adults Social Care – Progression to Grade 11**

In Adult Services, the transformation programme and the Career Pathway in mental health led to a number of higher level ‘in practice’ Grade 11 posts being created. Any vacancies at Grade 11 will be advertised internally in the first instance, recognising the talent within the workforce is valued and Southwark is keen to retain this expertise. Similarly staff management roles at G11 in adults services will be advertised internally first. Thus there remains two development streams for main grade social workers: management and staying “in practice”.

**Children’s Social Care: Progression to Grade 11**

The changing landscape in Children’s Social Care, as described in *Social Work Matters*, has created a number of Grade 11 posts for staff to step up to a higher level
of proficiency to an Experienced Social Worker role (G11), where the level descriptors of the PCF apply:

**Experienced social workers** are more autonomous in their role. They demonstrate expert and effective practice in complex situations, assessing and managing higher levels of risk, striking a balance between support and control, liaising with a wide range of professionals, including more senior levels. They manage complex caseloads, and offer expert opinion within the organisation and to others. They chair a range of meetings, offer expert support to case conferences, and produce high quality assessments and reports for a range of functions. They model good practice, setting expectations for others. They start to take responsibility and be accountable for the practice of others, mentoring newly qualified social workers, and supervising the work of junior staff. They undertake capacity-building with individuals, families, communities, user groups and voluntary organisations, and contribute their views on service provision to commissioners.

See Appendix 1 for details of the application process.

**Further progression**

Due to the relative small numbers of promotional opportunities at Grade 12 level and above, and consistent with the legal and policy requirements to appoint on merit, these posts will continue to be advertised in accordance with the recruitment and selection procedure so it will be for each individual to apply as posts are advertised. The appropriate pay and benefit package to the post will apply. On promotion staff will attain the next increment on the scale.

The Professional Capabilities Framework aligns to each of these roles and sets the standards required.

Defined job roles will be available for these posts and their own set of essential criteria and competencies, but all of them will have a key requirement to be effective assessors who are able to identify the capabilities of others, and, where standards are not being met by staff to offer support directly or indirectly to rectify the situation both informally and formally where necessary.

It is anticipated that, as the Social Worker progression framework interfaces structured development through use of the PCF with the performance management scheme, a natural consequence will be a more structured approach to career development. From this, employees managing their own development with support from line managers and OD will be able to develop the pre-requisite skills and capabilities required to progress through the Social Work hierarchy. ‘Growing our own’ management talent successfully and appointing on merit from within is another indicator of a healthy organisation that nurtures and rewards a high quality workforce.

**Job and Performance management documentation**

Each role in Southwark has its own job profile and description consisting of the following.

- Job description with objectives and duties
- Person specification including required competencies, level of experience and qualifications
• Workplans will have a level descriptor within the Professional Capabilities Framework, across the 9 domains and these descriptors set out the capabilities to be developed across the pathways reflecting desired career progression.
• In accordance with Investors in People principles, there will also be a clear line of sight from Corporate objectives through service and team plans to individual workplans
• Development targets for individuals as part of performance management

There should be a consequential link between service requirements, social work capabilities and the specific performance outputs and duties required at that level.

Career development

A key feature of using the PCF within the progression framework is investing in the continuing development of Social Workers and all staff in the profession.

Effective development of employees can mean,

• Better utilisation of existing resources
• Better service provision
• Improved retention
• Improved morale
• Reduction in agency
• Establishment of a talent pool
• Succession planning
• Meeting short and long term organisational needs
• Reduction in absenteeism
• Winning the ‘war on talent’ without having to rely heavily on salary to attract and retain.

Links with OD and Training and Development

Ongoing training needs analysis through supervision and performance management (appraisal) will be conducted for all new recruits through induction. Development targets will need clear delivery methods to be in place meaning very close cooperation and collaboration with OD to ensure the learning and development interventions are in place at the right time and are objective based.

Transfers across the service

Employees that wish to transfer to another equivalent position are free to apply for a relevant vacant specialist position if and when it arises.

For those on the Social Worker grade a transfer protocol will be developed. Needs of the service come first - the appointment of transferees will be on merit.

Management transfers can be agreed by the Director.

Impact and evaluation

Directors will maintain control over costs and the number of Social Work posts in the Organisational Structure. The Director and Executive HR Manager will monitor and
evaluate the success of the changes with regards to equalities, promotions and impact on vacancies and turnover.

**Recruitment**

Recruitment going forward will be specified in Divisional Resources Plans which, will aim to identify activity anticipated and structural changes, post numbers etc planned. Each division will also draw up a Recruitment Strategy, which will identify methods, media, innovation alongside actions and responsible officers. Plans and strategy will be at a minimum annually refreshed as necessary.

The fundamental approach will be along the lines identified in the Council’s workforce strategy (2013-2016) to maximise opportunities to grow our own alongside replacement where there are shortfalls in expertise.

Newly Qualified Social Workers will be recruited to Grade 9 with potential progression to grade 10 after 1 year (as specified above). Normally staff will be appointed to the bottom point (scp 32) however up to 2 scps can be awarded for relevant qualifications (not academic standard) or relevant experience. Social Workers (main grade) will be recruited to Grade 10 at a point recognising their experience or existing salary as normal practice. Any progression opportunities will follow the process above.

Any recruitment to Grade 11 posts will be internal first as specified above in the career progression sections taking account of assessments carried out.

All other promotional posts will be advertised internally and externally simultaneously, with selection on merit as per the Council’s recruitment policy.

*Appendix 1 process for progression to Experienced Social Work grade 11 across Children’s Social Care*

*Appendix 2 Direct Observation of Practice Report template and service users feedback template*
Process for progression to Experienced Social Worker grade 11 across Children’s Social Care only

1. Social Worker employees are eligible to submit a written request for consideration from their third year anniversary of employment as a main grade social worker (including ASYE) and will require a portfolio of evidence to support the request for consideration. Employees should lodge their request with Human Resources together with supporting evidence. HR will copy for assessors and monitor the process including the equalities implications.

2. Assessment will be within the framework of the Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF) level descriptors for Experienced Social workers as outlined in the main document “Social Work Career Progression Scheme November 2104” and set out by The College of Social Work.

3. The employee will first need the agreement of their line manager (Advanced Practitioner in Children’s Services) that they meet the defined descriptors and are willing to provide a supporting statement to that effect and evidence of successful performance appraisals in the last two years. The line manager’s recommendation will require the endorsement of the Practice Group Lead.

4. A statement of not more than 2000 words supporting the application should cross reference assessors to the evidence and how it demonstrates meeting the PCF level descriptors for Experienced Social workers.

5. Evidence to be provided by employee will include
   - Evidence of successful performance management outcomes over the last two years.
   - Evidence of PCF in work plans
   - CPD plan in line with HCPC requirements
   - Examples of written work at the appropriate level (anonymised assessments, reports etc)
   - Line manager reports from all direct observations of work (2 in the last year, one of which involves direct work with a child) and all case file audits in the past year.
   - Membership of the College of Social Work
   - Evidence from Quality Assurance including Child Protection Chair or IRO feedback and/or QA audit.
   - Evidence from other professionals e.g. Legal Department.
   - Service user feedback from audits in the past year. (either provided via line manager reports of direct observation in the last year or via service user questionnaire in format provided.
   - Practice Education Professional Standards Stage 1 (Enabling others)

6. A structured conversation will take place between the employee and assessors and this will produce a recommendation on progression. The Practice Group Lead from the applicant’s team and an independent reviewer
from another service area will undertake this process. The conversation will be noted and a recommendation made to Heads of service who will make the final judgement.

7. There will be a panel convened of senior staff from across the service who will moderate the process at regular intervals not less than once per year, to ensure that the assessment is consistent across the service. This will include the Principal Social Workers and a representative from the Children’s Services management team and Organisational Development.

8. Assessors will provide feedback if progression is deemed not appropriate at this point and make recommendations to the employee to follow up and the applicant will be able to reapply in 12 months.

Appendix 2
Direct Observation of Practice Report

This should be written in a way that maintains confidentiality.

Name of Social Worker:

Name & role of Observer:

Date of observation:

Context of observation:
(Detail how consent from service user has been obtained where the context is one in which an observer would not normally be present. Brief details of the case – family circumstances, diversity issues, legal framework, nature of social work and any critical point being observed. Social worker’s experience and professional development.)

Preparation for observation:
(What evidence of learning, progression, and skill development is being sought in relation to the Professional Capabilities Framework? How will this be demonstrated?)

Intervention:
(What was observed? What knowledge and skills were evident? How was engagement and working in partnership evidenced? What was the quality of communication/relationship – degree of empathy and challenge? What models and frameworks were being applied? What risks were being identified, evaluated and managed? For social workers in Children’s Services comment on the degree of focus on the child.

Service user feedback:
(See feedback questionnaire for use after observation or at any time.)

Analysis:
(How was change being promoted and the impact of intervention evaluated? How was the impact of disadvantage and discrimination being considered and service users being empowered? How was the integration of values evident? How is learning – application of knowledge and skills - improving service and benefiting the service user? Is the observation supported by other evidence to demonstrate effectiveness, e.g. timeliness of planning and follow up, working
with other agencies, information sharing and gathering evidence, decision making and provision of help.)

Feedback:
Begin with Social Worker’s self-assessment and follow with additional assessment by manager.

Strengths:
What went well?

Areas for development:
What should be different next time? How is this best tackled? What is the plan for this social worker’s professional development to meet the required level for consideration of experienced social worker? Please consider the level descriptors outlined in TCSW professional capability framework.

Service user feedback
1. Has this social worker listened to you and understood your problems?

2. Are they available and do they get back to you if not?

3. Since you’ve have this social worker, have your problems:
   a) got better
   b) stayed the same
   c) got worse

4. How has this social worker made a difference to you/your family?

5. Are there any ways in which you would have liked this social worker to have worked differently?

6. Is there anything else you would like to say about this social worker or the service you are receiving from LB Southwark?