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Table of contents

1. Introduction	pg 1
2. Employability skills	pg 2
3. Self-evaluation	pg 5
4. Personal brand	pg 6
5. Action Plan	pg 6
6. Conclusion	pg 7
7. Reference	pg 8

1. Introduction

The highlights of this report are the functions of social workers in the UK specialised in child protection within the health and social care sector, focusing on local authority services and how they collaborate.

As a social worker, the main focus is to be the safe guardian for the children in certain situations, which means choosing the best option for the child, such as foster families, following the adoption process, or stepping in when the family needs support in certain vulnerable moments. A social worker specialised in child protection will be responsible for the first assessment with a child victim of abuse, neglect or sexual assault and will also be the one who will protect their interest in court.

Social workers specialised in child protection will collaborate with different professionals from different sectors, such as the police, legal services, and health care providers, such as CAMHS, which is the department related to child and teenager mental health. (*Support for social workers*, 2025)

For example, a possible scenario when CAMHS has to step in as a department

is when a child is in a dangerous environment, that could be dangerous or at high risk of danger for the child. Professionals from camhs are always involved when domestic violence abuse happens because the child in this case requires legal and mental protection, and this is the main difference between a social worker and a professional worker for CAMHS; the first one provides legal protection and the second one provides the psychological support, helping with difficult experiences and negative thoughts or support the child's behavioural difficulties in family life. CAMHS support the family and child with different services such as therapy sessions, online group therapy, family treatment and urgent care. (*CAMHS:central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust*, no date)

After my degree, I will carry on with a master's in social work and specialise in child protection, because it is the only case where I get a chance to collaborate with the legal systems and CAMHS, so then both cases can provide for immediate protection.

At the moment, I have already started my apprenticeship in law, focusing on family law, then divorce, and all the cases related to that, and how the divorce or separation can affect the child. This experience will give me the right structure to understand how the law is applicable towards child protection.

I used a vacancy job found on Indeed from NHS JOBS (2025) to understand

Which requirements and characteristics are related to this role.

The highlight of this report is to analyse all the skills required for this role, compare them with my skills, and see how I can improve my current skills.

I also need to understand how I can build my personal professional identity, and finally present the plan with all the actions I need to take to achieve my career goal.

2. Employability skills

A social worker is a professional who helps vulnerable people: children and adults, and to be eligible for this role as a professional, you must have certain skills to fit in this role.

A social worker specialises in child protection and is a professional who works with families in difficult situations, assesses the risk of self-harm, handles the case, plans all the steps to make the routine of the family or of the child safer, and the main thing is to never forget the safety and well-being of the child.

A UK charity was founded in 1884, it is an organization called NSPCC and the main purpose was to protect children from abuse and neglect and support the importance of safeguarding in social working which is the priority of this job. (NSPCC, 2023)

This role is regulated by the legislation Children Act 1989, which says the priority is to always keep the child safe, and it is the responsibility of social services to do that.

The Children Act 2004 is related to a social worker specialised in child protection because it regulates the multi-agencies that work together, meaning social workers, CAMHS and the police will cooperate to protect and keep the child in a safe environment.

To support the law, the Department for Education of the UK government created a statutory guidance, which is a document providing guidance for all professionals to follow for protecting the child; this document was made in 1999, but it is constantly updated.

These laws are crucial because they give the guidelines to follow and make all decisions the right way, and act in the interest of the child.

Social workers are also called to attend the court because they are the ones making reports and collecting important evidence which can be useful in court.

To be able to practise as a social worker in the UK as a professional, you need

to be registered with Social Work England.

A social worker fit to this role must have certain qualities, such as: good communication, emotional intelligence, be pragmatic, be able to make the right decision at the right time, be able to collaborate and cooperate with multi-agencies and lastly, the most important, safeguarding knowledge.

-Excellent communication skills are one of the main skills for this role because, as a social worker specialised in child protection, you need to know how to approach and communicate with children, families, the local authority and police officers.

As well as having great communication skills, a social worker must have good writing skills because it is the one skill that makes the report for the courts and all the agencies involved in the case.

Communication skills are the one that can make the difference, especially when you work with children, because with this quality proves you can be trusted by the children.

-Emotional resilience is the capacity to face difficult situations such as child rape, domestic abuse, or families with difficult situations, and make the right

A decision which needs to protect the child without feeling emotionally involved or experiencing any emotional breakdown.

One example of this scenario could be child abuse, and in this case, the social worker is the first one to speak with the child and make a report.

It is very important to be conscious without feeling emotional and without taking the case personally.

-Decision making and problem solving are the most difficult skills because, in some cases, as a social worker, you need to decide if the child remains with their family or has to be taken away. Again, the important thing to keep in mind is to keep the child safe from any situation that could be dangerous for the child's safety.

A social worker must have these skills to assess dangerous situations in a short time frame and make the best decision for example, if there is any suspicion of child abuse or neglect in the family the social worker is the one that need to be there to talk with child, understand the situation, interview the family, make a report of the child and get the full picture and then make a decision which sometimes

includes multiple agencies to step in on the situation or the police if the child has to be taken out of the family.

In Birmingham in June 2021, a tragedy occurred where a child in year six passed away because the social worker on the case did not understand the risk of the situation and did not assess the neglect from his family.

In this case, the victim was a child in year six who died from abuse and neglect in his home environment. The mistake in this case was the social worker who did not recognise the dangerous situation and did not take any immediate action in time.

The attention of this case is related to my assignment because it highlights how much it is important to observe everything, report and make the right decision to protect the child, which in this case would've been removing the child from the family.

When the situation is complicated you should collaborate with different agencies, involving the police, the legal professionals, and the Child Adolescent Mental Health

Service (CAMHS) can be crucial for the case to ensure the safety of the child and his well-being.

In this case, the social service system failed miserably, but this is a pragmatic example saying why the right decision at the right time can make the difference even if it sounds harsh or too drastic as this can save the child's life.

Teamwork and multi-agencies are the aspects that make a difference in this job because it makes sure the child receives the correct emotional support and the protection they may need .

- Safe Guardian knowledge for a social worker who works with child

protection services is essential to know. This includes the laws, policies, and all the procedures related. It is important to recognise the signs of abuse and know how to act to protect the children. In more simpler terms to make the picture more realistic and more understandable ask yourself if there are any suspicions of abuse or neglect towards the child. Depending on the answer it is up to the social worker to make a difference because firstly, the professional must be conscious and not get their feelings involved, and must interview, assess and make a report to send to the multi agencies such as police or CAMHS, for example, who are responsible for psychological support toward the child.

During my self evaluation I have noticed I should improve certain areas of qualities and work on my weaknesses. This will make me suitable for the role of a child protection social worker. I know exactly which ones are my skills and which are my strengths and the areas I have to work on.

Strengths

One of my best skills is communication because I'm able to listen carefully, be very sympathetic but filter all the information, take a note in my mind and decide which parts are crucial information.

I'm very empathetic person but most of the time I have the capacity to step out of the situation and make the best decision without letting my feelings get involved; the fact that I am an empathic person allows me to make a genuine click with people and let them feel free to talk and expose their emotion with me.

Weaknesses

An area that I need to work on is my approach towards kids. At the moment I don't have any direct approach with children so I can not work on my emotional skills fully.

Experience

At the moment I started my apprenticeship with law specifically highlighting family law, and all the cases include the safeguarding of children and to understand how the law works and how active "the system" and multi-agencies around this sector highlight how the law process affects the families and children.

This experience helps me daily to improve my communication skills and understand the legal system more.

Development

Improving my skills means approaching different departments and working with them, for example after my degree, I want to send my curriculum to CAMHS, which is the department of mental health service for children and teenagers, to improve my skills with vulnerable children and teenagers and also develop my knowledge of all the laws and policies related to them. Developing these skills and doing at least one apprenticeship with this department will build my confidence in this sector and will make me more aware of certain signals from a child in need. Working with children and teenagers, then as a social worker, will help me make a difference in my career.

.4. Personal brand

In order to stand out in this sector and make your self look good for the agencies hiring staff in this sector it is crucial to make a strong personal brand, as it is how people will perceive you and your professional profile.

This inspires me every day to achieve my career goal, which is to protect the vulnerable children and be able to contribute as a professional in their life in a positive way and improve their environment.

The main strength is the experience I am developing in the legal sector, focusing on family law and everything concerning families and children; studying the law and seeing which ones are policy-related will give me the confidence to take immediate action and understand straight away how the legal situation impacts the child and what is the safest way to keep the child in the safest environment.

During the next couple of years at this apprenticeship that I am currently doing, will help me make a difference, observe and analyse the situations critically, plus connect the situation with all the laws related and then make a plan.

To present my professional brand to the agencies, I will create a LinkedIn profile where I will maintain the experience I am doing with solicitors, the skills I have at the moment, and I will connect my self with the people that work in my sector to see all their connections and see if I can find more opportunities that may be more suitable for my career.

5. Action Plan

When I started my degree, the final goal in my mind was clear which is to become a social worker specialised in child protection services. By the time I started I did not value the law apprenticeship option because I didn't have enough skills or knowledge to make me aware of how important it is to follow the law in order to protect the child and be able to guarantee the child will always be in a safe environment. At the

moment, working with law and understanding the meaning made me realise that this is the most important step and it is the point where one decision can change the life and the future of the child. This experience highlights the importance of clear communication, professional judgment, problem solving and being able to make a decision even in the most sensitive cases.

In all honesty, this case and this process made me very interested in working with different agencies and be the one to work between the police, lawyers and CAMHS.

The time has passed quickly, and I developed more skills to help make my plan clear in the short term, the 2-year mark and 4-year mark.

In one years time, I will finish my degree and develop more skills with family law and then get more experience, which will benefit me in many ways and allow me to apply for the apprenticeship with CAMHS. The year of my masters' will help me understand the law more deeply. This is more important to me because it will give me the chance to be more knowledgeable and be more pragmatic and concrete. This will help make sure the environment around the child will be more safe.

At the end of the year, I will create my professional profile with all my current skills and create good networking connections, which will pair me with different professionals in the same sector. This situation can benefit me as a professional worker as well because it will also offer me different opportunities to choose from and to gain more experience.

In two years, I plan to do a master's and at the same time apply for an apprenticeship with CAMHS for developing and improving my personal empathy in real life situations; this experience can also benefit me because it will let me see the real situation, not just what happens behind the laptop, which is much easier to handle and manage because emotions are not involved.

For my long term goal of the next 4 years I plan to see myself completing my degree as well as my master's, working for multiple agencies as a self-employed worker or collaborate with a police officer and a lawyer to give them my statements or analysis of the case for each situation that needs my professional competence.

Conclusion

In conclusion , it is the social workers role to always be cautious of a child 's safety and reach out to third parties for more support when needed whilst also keeping your emotion under control .

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