



## **SESSIONAL FAMILY ASSESSMENT WORKER**

### **The Organisation.**

St. Michael's Fellowship is an independent voluntary organisation that acts for the welfare and safeguarding of children. For over a 100 years we have worked residentially with parents so that they might safely and sustainably meet their child's needs – working together to keep families together. We are a dynamic, creative organisation which over the years has taken a lead in the development of services both residentially and in the community to meet the changing needs of families and communities.

St. Michael's Fellowship operates four residential family assessment centres and we have an excellent reputation for the quality of our work with families, and the support we provide our staff who work in these centres. Our residential centres are set up to provide a homely rather than institutional atmosphere. Our aim is to provide a Comprehensive Assessment of risk, and an assessment of a parent's ability to parent their child and meet their child's needs in an environment which can be challenging, is educational and supportive, and offers the parents the time and space to evaluate their own abilities. Staff in the centres approach their work from a 'child's eye' perspective, and maintain an open mind whilst applying a critical evaluation to what they observe. We achieve this by

- Good social work practice
- Independent assessments
- Keeping abreast of current thinking.
- Working in partnership with families and local authorities
- Commitment to anti-discriminatory, anti-racist practice
- Individual work with families
- Therapeutic approaches to aid assessment
- Clear, evidence based recommendations to assist planning for children
- Open recording systems, leading to reports for court
- Resettlement service for families

### **What you can expect from us**

With the emphasis in all of St. Michael's work firmly on the welfare of the child, it is inevitable that in some cases the outcome of the residential work is that a child does not stay with the parents. In such cases staff will communicate openly, and in a way that helps, to 'hear' a very difficult and complex message. We recognise that our work with families with a variety of needs is demanding and can be stressful. We support and enable staff by

- A culture that is committed to providing opportunities for personal and professional learning and development
- Offering experience and training to enhance career development
- Supervision that is embedded in the culture of St Michael's; ongoing opportunities of informal support/supervision.
- Clear guidelines provided regarding practice, interventions, ways of working, guidance
- Induction
- Valuing the views of staff to bring about change
- Supportive

- Pleasant working environment
- Away days
- Massage

### **With whom we work**

At the heart of our work lie values of compassion and respect for the parent as an individual, and a belief in the capacity of every human being for positive change. With these values we work to break the cycles of disadvantage, change family dynamics, and create new opportunities for children. Families come from a variety of backgrounds and cultures, many with complex histories. We meet their individual needs with sensitivity and through anti-discriminatory, anti-racist practice to give all parents a real opportunity to achieve change.

We work with families, either single or two parents, with one or more children, where the majority are aged 0-5 years, but could be older, and where there are concerns surrounding their ability to parent. For example

Parents may have additional difficulties:

- Teenage parents from the care system
- History of mental illness
- History of substance misuse
- Learning difficulties
- History of domestic abuse

Children are likely to be subject to a child protection plan and may be:

- The subject of interim care orders
- In foster care
- Failing to thrive
- Presenting behavioural difficulties
- Demonstrating language delay
- Have special educational needs

Concerns:

- Abuse of a previous child
- Abuse of a current child; emotional, physical, sexual
- Capacity to learn parenting skills
  - to keep child safe
  - to put child's needs first
  - to meet child's emotional, physical developmental needs
  - to form attachments
  - to recognise support needs
  - to recognise signs of their own mental illness

Assessments involve a mix of informal education, one to one, video feedback, parenting skills support, sensitive and close observation and direct work, to facilitate and empower 'good enough parenting.' Parents receive daily feedback based on written recordings made by staff on shift. Placements are reviewed regularly and are generally for between six and twelve weeks.

Not all placements result in the family moving into the community together. The information provided by the staff team enables social workers to make recommendations and the courts to make decisions regarding the future of children. Staff may therefore be required to give evidence in court.

### **Remuneration**

Salary ranges from £12.74 - £14.77 per hour plus sleep-ins at £33.95 per night.

Incremental increases occur, when entitled and possible, on 1<sup>st</sup> April.

A cost of living increase is awarded when possible.

Annual leave accrues depending on hours worked.

**What we want from you**

To support staff teams of 7 involved in a shift system of working where there is a vacancy sickness or when families need additional support. Some shifts will be planned a month in advance other will be to cover emergencies.

- To bring your creativity, commitment and motivation to our work
- To develop supportive working relationships with your colleagues within the centres
- To actively contribute to the ongoing development of the centre
- Examples of Shifts: 4pm–11 or 12midnight sleep-in 7am–3pm, 2pm -11pm sleep-in 7am-12pm
- Days 8am-4pm, 10am–6pm, 11am –7pm, 12 –8pm
- Mondays to Fridays, a minimum of two staff on duty
- Evenings, after 7 or 8pm, and weekends are generally worked alone but there is always management support available.

Staff duties are varied, and as well as contributing to all family assessments staff demonstrate their respect for the families and their work environment by also ensuring that the quality of the environment is maintained by general cleaning.

If appointed, following induction, St Michael’s will offer you shifts which you can accept or reject depending on your availability.

### Crawford House



Is situated in Balham within walking distance of the Northern line tube and main line rail station and with good bus network connections. The house is spacious with attractive facilities for both families and staff and a garden with play equipment for children. Crawford House works with families with any issue but because of its size has been able to work with larger families. In terms of trends, whilst there is a generic nature to the challenges that staff address with the families, Crawford House works with more families with substance misuse issues than our other schemes.

At the most recent Ofsted inspection Crawford House achieved the rating 'Good' with Outstanding features.

[www.stmichaelsfellowship.org.uk](http://www.stmichaelsfellowship.org.uk)

## 46 HERNE HILL



'46' is a Residential Family Assessment and Support Centre situated in Lambeth close to Brockwell Park, local shops and local amenities. It is within walking distance of Herne Hill mainline rail station and a short bus ride from Denmark Hill or Loughborough Junction. There are good bus network connections, including to Brixton underground station. The large Edwardian house with facilities for up to four families blends in with the local community and has homely and well maintained facilities for both families and staff. The service has developed a wealth of experience working with families where parents have additional learning needs, along with families where there are more generic presenting needs.

At the most recent Ofsted inspection '46' achieved the rating 'Good' with Outstanding features.

[www.stmichaelsfellowship.org.uk](http://www.stmichaelsfellowship.org.uk)

## 52 PALACE ROAD



Palace Road is situated within walking distance of Tulse Hill railway station. It has developed significant experience of working with young parents, although we also work generically, with families where there are a range of issues which may compromise parenting capacity, such as mental ill health or substance misuse and/or learning difficulties.

The accommodation at 52 Palace Road is based in a large Edwardian house, set on three floors. It has the facilities to offer 6 families a residential placement to assess their parenting ability and to develop and promote their parenting skills, although it is more common to work with a maximum of 5 families in placement.

Our most recent inspection from Ofsted took place in April 2016 and we were found to be an **OUTSTANDING** provider, a rating we have held since 2007.

**Working together to keep families together.**

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## 84 HERNE HILL ROAD



84 is within walking distance of Loughborough Junction train station. The nearest underground station is Brixton followed by a short P4 bus that goes in the direction of Dulwich and Lewisham stopping outside of the centre. Bus routes – 35, 45 & P4 Brixton – Dulwich – Lewisham.

84 is a residential family assessment centre that works with families with a variety of difficulties but have particular experience working with families where there are mental health issues.

Our most recent inspection from Ofsted took place in September 2015 and we were found to be an **OUTSTANDING** provider, a rating we have held since 2011.

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## **Job Description for Sessional Residential Family Assessment Worker**

**Responsible to:** Service Manager or in Service Manager's absence to the Deputy Manager.

### **General**

1. To help create and maintain a nurturing and learning environment within the house.
2. To ensure a high standard of social work practice.
3. To ensure a reasonable standard of child care and general house management.
4. To work within the Children Act 1989 and 2004.
5. To work within the Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their families and be guided by Working Together to Safeguard Children 2013.
6. To work within the context and be guided by the Residential Family Centres National Minimum Standards 2013.
7. To work in accordance with St Michael's Health and Safety policy.
8. To work in accordance with St Michael's Equal Opportunities policy.
9. To do sleep-in duties and work shifts as agreed.
10. To perform domestic duties as required by the Service Manager or Deputy.
11. To perform such additional tasks as may be required by the Service Manager.

### **Work with Families**

1. To work in partnership with parents, colleagues, social workers and other agencies to improve the service offered to families.
2. To liaise closely with the staff team to ensure awareness of current issues regarding families and plans of work for each parent.
3. To work with and alongside parents on the tasks of daily living.
4. To enable parents to acquire the skills of parenting and independent living.
5. To monitor and supervise parents where necessary in the care of their children.
6. To be involved in the assessment of parents in the care of their children.
7. To encourage parents to participate in house activities and groups.
8. To inform parents of the community facilities available to them and to encourage their appropriate use.
9. To be involved in the resettlement of a family as required in consultation with the assessment centre.

## **Night Assessment Work (NAW).**

Night assessment work (NAW) is a different but an additional and essential element of the ongoing support, appraisal and assessment of a family in the centre.

1. To provide NAW input and support to a family or group of families during the periods specified by the centre and in accordance with the expectations set out in the 'Information and Handbook for Sessional Practitioner' provided to sessional practitioners once appointed.
2. To manage the intermittent nature of the NAW role and the 'quiet' periods, remain alert and maintain an awareness of being engaged in a specific piece(s) of work.
3. To stay awake throughout the night and ensure that families and children are supported, monitored and checked consistently and at regular intervals as required.
4. To follow the specific monitoring and assessment routine for each family where this applies; to observe and record all aspects of child care and family function throughout a 10 hour shift period.
5. To be aware of and maintain detailed records of the child care and activities of families in general in the centre whilst on NAW duty.

## **Administration**

1. To keep records of the day to day running of the house using the house diary, message book and daily report sheets on individual families.
2. To carry out various administrative tasks as appropriate e.g. collection of weekly charges.
3. To read handover notes and sessional staff file at the start of each shift

## **Staff Development**

1. To attend supervision with either the Service Manager or Deputy, this will depend on number of hours worked and/or complexity of current work.
2. To attend appropriate training courses as agreed to enhance professional development and skills in line with St Michael's training policy.
3. To contribute to team meetings when possible.

These are the normal duties which the employer requires at the date of appointment. However, it is necessary for all staff to be flexible and all employees may be required from time to time to perform other duties as may be required by the employer for the efficient running of the organisation. Please also refer to 'Information and Handbook for Sessional Practitioner' provided to sessional practitioners once appointed.

This job description does not form part of the contract of employment.



## **Job Specification**

### **POST: Family Assessment Worker**

#### **SKILLS:**

**Essential:** Interpersonal  
Literacy, a high standard  
Accurate recording  
Report writing  
Word processing

**Desirable:** Counselling  
Assessment

#### **PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE:**

**Essential:** To have worked with people from multi-cultural backgrounds  
To have worked as a member of a team  
To have worked with children and/or parents  
To have worked with adolescents (52 Palace Road)  
To have worked with people with a history of psychiatric illness (84 Herne Hill Road)  
To have worked with people with learning disabilities (46 Herne Hill)

**Desirable:** To have worked residentially  
To have worked in a residential family unit  
To have worked with people who have been abused  
To have worked with families  
To have worked with people with a history of psychiatric illness

#### **KNOWLEDGE:**

**Essential:** Independent living skills  
Parenting skills  
Partnership with parents  
Child development

**Desirable:** Current legislation especially Children Act '89  
Signs of child abuse  
Child abuse procedures  
Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families  
Use of written agreements  
Keyworking  
Importance of play

Effects of abuse on a parent  
Child care  
The benefits system  
Psychiatric illness  
Child sexual abuse  
Open access to files

**QUALIFICATIONS:**

Essential: None

Desirable: CQSW  
Diploma in Social Work  
C.S.S.  
First Aid  
Clean driving licence  
Counselling certificate

**OTHER QUALITIES RELATING TO POST:**

A sense of humour  
Flexibility  
Commitment  
Non-judgmental  
A skill that could be shared  
Willingness to learn