



No: 051
29 January 2014

One Minute Guide:

The Role of Principal Child and Family Social Worker (PCFSW)

What is a Principal Child and Family Worker (PCFSW)?

A PCFSW is a senior social worker who has experienced front line social work over a number of years and operated at a senior management and strategic level. The main focus of the role is to report the views and experiences of the front line to all levels of management.

Where did the idea come from?

One of the recommendations from Professor Eileen Munro's report, [The Munro Review of Child Protection](#), supported by the Social Work Reform Board, was that each local authority would identify a Principal Social Worker.

"We expect that each local authority will designate a Principal Child and Family Social Worker as recommended by the Munro Review, and supported by the College of Social Work. These roles will play a key part in refocusing child and family social work." ([Building a safe and confident future](#), June 2012, paragraph 3.19)

What does our PCFSW do?

In Redbridge, the role holds a number of responsibilities, including:

- Relating and representing the views of social workers to senior managers and acting as a 'champion' for social work improvement through the Social Work Transformation Board.
- Developing a learning culture and implementation of evidence informed practice by supporting feedback from children and young people through the Voice of the Child

Working Group and seeking feedback from staff.

- Providing professional support through participating in the Case Work Panel by providing support with difficult cases and facilitating group supervision.
- Chairing the LSCB Individual Case Sub Group and leading on the development of multi-agency audits.
- Developing career pathways for social workers.
- Providing practice input into the review, revision and continuous development of the Integrated Children's System (ICS) Protocol to ensure it supports practice through the participation in the Protocol Review and Improvement Group (PRIG).
- Attending the national PCFSW Network Meetings and liaising with the Chief Social Worker.
- Take a role in the development of external partnerships via the LSCB and other forums.

Is this the same in other Local Authorities?

Most local authorities now have a designated PCFSW. The role does differ, however, in terms of responsibilities and level. PCSWs regularly meet together and link into the Chief Social Worker for Children and Families, [Isabelle Trowler](#), who represents the social work profession at Government level. Specifically, the role of Chief Social Worker is to:

- support and challenge the profession to ensure that children and adults get the best possible help from social workers;
- provide independent expert advice to ministers on social work reform, and the contribution of social work and social workers to policy implementation more generally;
- provide leadership and work with key leaders in the profession and wider sector to drive forward the improvement and reform programme for social work;
- challenge weak practice to achieve decisive improvements in the quality of social work; and
- provide leadership to the network of principal social workers.

How can I contact our PCFSW?

Yolanda can be contacted via 020 8708 5265 or via [e-mail](#). There is also a dedicated [mail box](#) for the PCFSW.

How can I find out more?

The PCFSW is happy to visit your Team Meeting or meet with you on a one-to-one basis to tell you more about her role and receive your feedback or to be consulted on casework. Please contact her PCFSW@redbridge.gov.uk

You can also read about the role on the Social Work Reform Board report [Building a safe and confident future](#), published in June 2012 or the [The Munro Review of Child Protection Final Report: A child-centred system](#).