

Position Description

Position title	Senior Social Worker – Stream Leader
Department / Division	Social Work / Division of Allied and Digital Health
Classification	Grade 3 Year 1 - Year 4 (SC31 – SC34)
Position reports to	Manager Social Work and Spiritual Care Services
No. of direct & indirect reports	Direct reports 5 FTE Indirect reports 46.6 FTE
Location	The Royal Children's Hospital, Flemington Road, Parkville
Risk category	Category A - works in a direct patient contact role and has or potential to have exposure to blood or body fluids.

The Royal Children's Hospital

The Royal Children's Hospital's (RCH) vision is A world where all kids thrive.

RCH is located within the Melbourne Biomedical Precinct, with more than 45 world-class biomedical organisations and more than 50,000 of the brightest minds working together to make the Precinct number one in the Asia Pacific region for health, education, research, and training. Within this, RCH is also a cornerstone member of the Melbourne Children's Campus, partnering with Murdoch Children's Research Institute, The University of Melbourne Department of Paediatrics and The Royal Children's Hospital Foundation. Each organisation contributes to a paediatric academic health centre which is greater than the sum of its parts.

RCH has cared for the children and young people of Victoria for more than 150 years since it was founded in 1870. A full range of paediatric and adolescent health services are provided plus tertiary and quaternary care for the most critically ill and medically complex patients in Victoria, Tasmania, southern NSW and other states around Australia and overseas. The RCH is the only provider of heart transplant services and CAR T-cell therapy for paediatrics in Australia. RCH is an effective advocate for patients and their families with a particular focus on vulnerable children and increasingly, mental health in young people. The hospital also supports many health promotion and prevention programs. The Hospital has more than 6,000 staff, a budget of \$850M, 12 wards and 350 beds. Annually, the RCH has 300,000+ Specialist Clinic appointments, 90,000+ Emergency Department presentations and 20,000 elective surgeries.

We work collaboratively with hospitals to deliver the right care, in the right place, at the right time. The RCH is committed to the Child Safe Standards <https://www.rch.org.au/quality/child-safety/>.

RCH enjoys high employee engagement and is committed to staff safety and a positive culture through enactment of our Compact.

Further information on RCH is available at www.rch.org.au

ROLE CONTEXT

Hospital Social Workers provide psychosocial assessment and care to patients of the RCH and their families. The RCH Social Work Department is the largest Allied Health team at RCH and Social Work sits within the Allied Health

Directorate. The Social Work management team consists of the Manager of Social Work, Grade 4 Program Managers, clinical Practice Development Leads, and clinical Stream Leaders.

The Senior Social Worker is a key leadership role working as a stream leader for a team of clinical Social Workers, in addition to providing direct clinical Social Work services within their area of responsibility.

ROLE PURPOSE

The Senior Social Worker, Stream Leader works in close collaboration with Medical, Nursing, and Allied Health staff at RCH to deliver excellent clinical care for patients and families, while also working in close liaison with external service responders and community services providers to achieve high quality clinical outcomes for patients and their families.

The main purpose of the role is to provide social and emotional assessments and interventions for the patients and families where issues are identified as impacting on the quality of life and health, the well-being outcomes for the child and/or the safe discharge and delivery of healthcare. This includes issues such as adjustment to a new or life limiting diagnosis, trauma, bereavement, medical decision making, end of life care and the social issues impacting on the child's well-being and family functioning.

This role will also provide high quality clinical and professional leadership within the Social Work Department and the broader organisation. The Senior Social Work role assists in the management, mentorship and support of other social workers, and contributes to the strategic direction of the Social Work Department.

KEY ACCOUNTABILITIES

Provision of Care

- Provide excellent, evidenced based, child and family focused clinical care to children and families presenting with a broad range of complex psychosocial needs, including:
 - Psychosocial Assessment
 - Advocacy
 - Referral
 - Interventions for vulnerable children
 - Utilise high-level of clinical reasoning and advanced casework skills
 - Support and counselling for children and families in crisis situations including severe trauma, family violence and bereavement
 - Crisis intervention in external emergency situations
- Manage a complex and varied clinical caseload
- Provide high level of clinical expertise with independent decision making
- Lead and contribute to timely decision making, transition or discharge planning and referral to community providers
- Maintain clinical documentation records and data as per discipline specific guidelines and RCH procedures
- Plan for, and effectively manage, contingencies that may affect the performance of healthcare activities
- Empower all staff to identify, analyse, report and manage risks and support staff who raise concerns about risk or patient safety
- Ensure timely provision of discipline services through appropriate prioritization of stream and departmental caseload and patient needs
- Be a source of clinical expertise, advocacy and guidance within the clinical stream, across the department and within the broader multidisciplinary team
- Participate in Social Work 'On-Call Service Roster' providing out of hours clinical service as required

Lifelong Learning

- Participation in professional development activities to ensure that best clinical practice is maintained

- Develop professional capabilities of self through active participation in clinical supervision, performance appraisal, professional and self-development
- Promote a culture in which clinical supervision is treated as part of core business of contemporary professional practice.
- Foster a culture in which feedback is used as a positive strategy to enhance goals, awareness, and learning
- Model a commitment to continuing professional development and support junior staff in developing and accomplishing professional goals and objectives
- Actively promotes an environment of lifelong learning

Collaborative practice

- Work in collaboration with multidisciplinary team
- Promote and develop partnerships with healthcare and community providers as well as discipline networks
- A flexible and adaptable approach to functioning in a team environment that enhances the team's performance to ensure ongoing excellence in service delivery and teamwork

Communication

- Highly developed verbal communication, interpersonal skills and attention to detail with the ability to interact with a variety of stakeholders
- Recognises issues that may lead to conflict, and constructively addresses issues as they arise
- Communicate effectively with patients and families to ensure their understanding and that their needs and views are included in plans and actions
- Facilitate open and effective communication across all levels of the Social Work Department and more broadly across the organisation
- Ensure systems are in place for coordinating and performing appropriate clinical handover and arrange follow-up to ensure patient care is maintained

Continuous Improvement

- Review and develop clinical guidelines as indicated
- Develops effective time management skills to balance clinical requirements and to contribute to continuous improvement activities
- Lead and contribute to improvements in departmental management and function
- Completes quality activities in timely manner.
- Contributes positively to change processes, through demonstrating flexibility and openness to change.
- Develops awareness of governance requirements including safety and quality clinical practice guidelines, procedures and policies including how they apply to clinical role.
- Manages local risks and escalates appropriately to line manager and relevant stakeholders and empowers team to identify, analyse, report and manage risks appropriately

Supervision, Leadership and People Management

- Demonstrate clinical leadership in providing innovative healthcare practices / Social Work practice
- Actively manage day to day delivery of discipline service, and provide leadership to a Stream of staff including orientation of new staff
- Delegate healthcare activity to others according to their competency and scope of practice to ensure appropriate workload management and prioritization across the department ensuring others can self-manage and regulate their workload
- Develop and undertake quality projects to address areas of own or others practice which need improvement
- Lead and contribute to improvements in departmental management and function
- Mentor and deliver high quality supervision to other staff and students to facilitate the delivery of excellent discipline service
- Provide assistance to the manager of department for planning and recruiting workforce

- Lead and contribute to the social work undergraduate and post graduate education program through program development, student supervision and liaison with Universities
- Act as a resource in paediatric Social Work both internally and externally to RCH

Organisation and Planning

- Highly developed organisational and planning skills with ability to prioritise workload and competing demands
- Contribute to strategic planning as part of departmental and / or multidisciplinary leadership team

Research

- Evaluates current practice with respect to the evidence
- Finds, critically reviews, evaluates and interprets literature and applies to current role/service
- Leads and contribute to the social work research / evaluation / education agenda, including evaluation of own and Social Work practice across a client group / clinical service area

QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

Essential:

- Hold a degree in Social Work from an accredited course/university
- Eligible for membership for Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW)
- Meet AASW accreditation standards for Continuing Professional Education
- Uphold the AASW Code of Ethics
- Extensive experience in Social Work, including clinical expertise and leadership skills recognised in closely related field of practice
- Demonstrated knowledge, skills, and ability to respond to vulnerable children, trauma and grief and loss and bereavement
- Demonstrated experience in culturally sensitive clinical practice
- Understanding of relevant legislation and practice frameworks relating to family violence practice, including but not limited to the Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme (FVISS), Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS) and the Family Violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework (MARAM)

Desirable:

- Post graduate qualification in Social Work or a relevant field
- Experience in leading others, mentoring and training
- Demonstrated clinical competency and experience in paediatric health
- Minimum 7 years post graduate social work experience

KEY SELECTION CRITERIA

- Experienced and skilled social work clinician with consolidated psychosocial assessment, formulation, and clinical reasoning abilities
- Excellent ability to draw on knowledge of relevant theoretical constructs, wider organisational strategy, structure and goals to deliver high quality evidence-based care
- Ability to provide clinical leadership, team management and responsibility for clinical social work service delivery in allocated area.
- Excellent interpersonal, communication and presentation skills
- Autonomous behaviour, independence of thought, awareness of own effectiveness and internalised responsibility

- Ability to improve own and other's practice, behaviour, and team functioning
- Ability to work flexibly in a fast-paced clinical environment, managing competing demands according to departmental and organisational requirements
- Commitment to building professional skills and capacity
- Able to teach, mentor and develop staff at all levels as well as members of the wider community
- Critically reflective stance with capacity for creating practice theory and acting as an appropriate change agent
- Capacity for effective negotiation, conflict resolution and wide consultation at all levels, to maintain and foster key interpersonal relationships.

OTHER REQUIREMENTS

- Employees are required to undertake a National Criminal Record Check and a Working with Children Check prior to commencing employment
- Employees are required to maintain a valid Working with Children Check throughout their employment
- Employees are required to maintain compliance with RCHs "Staff Immunisation - Prevention of Vaccine Preventable Diseases" procedure.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

All employees are required to adhere to the Royal Children's Hospital Values:

- Curious - We are creative, playful and collaborative
- Courageous - We pursue our goals with determination, ambition and confidence
- Inclusive - We embrace diversity, communicate well, build connections and celebrate our successes together
- Kind - We are generous, warm and understanding

RCH COMPACT

All new and existing employees commit to the RCH Compact to contribute to a strong and respectful culture.

- We do better work caring for children and families when we also care for each other
- I bring a positive attitude to work – I share, I laugh, I enjoy other's company
- I take responsibility for my behaviour and its impact on others
- I am curious and seek out ways to constantly learn and improve
- I celebrate the good stuff, the small stuff, the big stuff – it all matters
- I speak up when things aren't right
- I value the many different roles it takes to deliver great patient care
- I actively listen because I want to understand others and make better decisions
- I am inclusive and value diversity
- When it comes to teamwork, I don't hold back – I'm all in

QUALITY, SAFETY AND IMPROVEMENT

RCH employees have a responsibility and accountability to contribute to the organisation's commitment to Quality, Safety and Improvement by:

- Acting in accordance and complying with all relevant Safety and Quality policies and procedures



- Identifying risks, reporting and being actively involved in risk mitigation strategies
- Participating in and actively contributing to quality improvement programs
- Complying with the requirements of the National Safety & Quality Health Service Standards
- Complying with all relevant clinical and/or competency standards
- Complying with the principles of Patient and Family Centred Care that relate to this position

The RCH is committed to a diverse and inclusive workforce. We encourage applications from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, all members of the LGBTQI community and people with disability.

Position description last updated

July 2025