



### **Our Vision**

**Make life great for Children and Young People**

### **Our Mission**

**To empower Children and Young People who haven't had a fair deal – to have a home, strengthen their mental health and be part of a community**

### **Our Ethos**

**We need each other to make life work**

### **Our Values**

**We make our own choices**

**We are loving and compassionate**

**We take risks**

**We make mistakes and learn**

**We never give up**

## **Introduction on MACS Children's Therapeutic Community:**

MACS have established a Therapeutic Community (Home/House) for 3 children aged between 6-13 years old. The children can live in the House for 2 years. The House is in a rural setting; approximately 15mins car journey from Belfast.

**The children referred will have experienced significant trauma and will therefore show us complex needs and extreme behaviours. Their needs and risk taking behaviours cannot be met in mainstream Children's Homes or Foster Care. This is a fast-paced Service and the team will need to be capable of responding to arising behaviours in a compassionate, skilled and flexible way. This Service works to a Trauma Informed Model. We do not take a punitive approach when working with risk or challenging behaviours. When children show us their pain and fear through their complex, and often extreme behaviours, we respond with confidence and compassion, applying interventions as agreed in therapeutic planning and seek out natural consequences as appropriate. We are informed by 'Connection before Correction'. In any role in the House staff will be expected to have the skills, experience and resilience to work with a range of very challenging and complex behaviours including (this is not an exhaustive list); Sexualised behaviour, sexualised behaviour towards others; making allegations; spitting; running away/hiding; prolonged periods of distress and anger; rages; enuresis; cruelty to animals; biting, hitting, hair pulling, slapping, nipping, punching, kicking; road safety risk; throwing and breaking household items; damaging personal items; theft.**

This is an exciting opportunity for MACS to deliver something brand new and groundbreaking in Northern Ireland. We have completed extensive research into the needs of these children, taking into account the views of young people who have been through the Care system and from professionals working in the field. We strive to maintain a multi – disciplinary team drawing on those from Social Work, Youth Work, Teaching and Psychology, as well as people who have a range of relevant experience working with children and young people who have experienced trauma. Sensory Processing, Trauma and Attachment theories will underpin all interventions with the children.

We will be using the Just Right State model which facilitates the process of self-regulation through the use of sensory activities, food and an enriched environment. The model is based on the principle that when somatosensory based experiences are incorporated into daily life routines, the child will learn to develop the capacity to remain regulated in activities that have been challenging for them.

In order to emulate a family environment and to provide vital consistency, caring and safety a staffing model based on longer hours will be essential. 'House Parents' will live at the House, alongside the children for 5 consecutive 24 hour periods followed by the same off i.e. 5 days on and 5 days off; Activity Workers and Day House Parents have a working pattern that spans days, evenings and weekends on a rotational basis.

Activity based interventions will be core to the life of the House and for each child. Activity workers and Day House Parents will be the main link with statutory partners, family, education / schools, doctors, clubs and networks etc. therefore mirroring what happens in any ordinary household. A range of clinically informed structured and semi structured play based interventions will be led by these workers. Activity Workers provide what is widely known as a 'key worker' role.

House Parent Support Staff (Sessional Workers) will provide support to House Parents when planned or unplanned absences arise. They will support with maintaining the House routine (shopping, cooking, cleaning, covering breaks, facilitating access to a range of meetings) and children's routines (supporting them to travel to and attend events / school, holding boundaries, completing morning / bedtime routines, working therapeutically to meet needs / manage risk).

All staff will be expected to maintain records and adhere to the range of systems and processes in place to support communication, implementation of Care Planning and manage risk and to ensure that the House is in good safe repair.

**The staff team will be skilled and experienced in areas of personal and emotional resilience, communication, showing love and compassion, maintaining routines that work for children, needs and risk assessment, self-reflection, use of self, working autonomously, giving and receiving feedback and understanding personality types within a team.**

There will be no cooks or cleaners - as living in any family home the team will be expected to run the House involving the children where applicable.

The staffing model consists of:

- 6 House Parents; 3 on together for a minimum of 5 consecutive 24 hour periods followed by the same off i.e. 5 days on and 5 days off.
- 2 Part Time House Parent Support Workers (providing annual leave and unforeseen absence cover)
- 1 Day House Parent
- 3 Activity workers to work with the children during the day and to liaise with statutory partners and outside agencies where applicable ('Key Worker' role).
- A number of House Parent Support Staff (Sessional workers)
- A House Lead
- A part time Clinical Psychologist.
- **A Service Manager (Registered Manager) who will have overall responsibility for the House.**

## MACS Children's Therapeutic Community

### JOB DETAILS

|                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| <b>JOB TITLE:</b>       | House Parent   |
| <b>CONDITIONS:</b>      | <b>Full Time, Permanent</b>  |
| <b>RESPONSIBLE TO:</b>  | House Team Lead  |
| <b>LOCATION:</b>        | Dundrod, Co. Antrim  |
| <b>WORKING PATTERN:</b> | Live in the home for a minimum of 5 consecutive 24-hour periods followed by the same off i.e. 5 days on and 5 days off. This will include weekends and bank holidays |
| <b>HOLIDAYS:</b>        | 30 days per annum (including bank holidays)  |
| <b>SALARY:</b>          | <b>£34,106</b> per annum & pension at 4% of salary   |

**It will be a requirement of this post to be registered with the Northern Ireland Care Council (NISCC).**

### OVERALL PURPOSE

- To ensure each child experiences a warm, loving and nurturing home environment.
- To implement Therapeutic Care Planning and Therapeutically informed interventions as assessed by the Clinical Psychologist.
- To understand the risk issues presented by Looked After Children and have the skills and knowledge base to work with them.
- To apply the therapeutic approach of 'Connection before Correction' when working with the range of trauma based behaviours presented by children.
- To work with all other members of your team in an honest, transparent way; being sensitive and kind when exploring difficulties in working with others; taking a solution-focused approach when problems, challenges or difficulties arise.

- To be able to work professionally within the Service and with key partners / stakeholders, including the ability to organize your time in tandem with others and complete work allocated to you in accordance with agreed deadlines.

Just right state philosophy – The Just right programme looks at the use of sensory activities and foods, to help children learn how to self-regulate their emotional states and behaviour. It refers to the capacity of being able to achieve and maintain an appropriate level of arousal, whether it's the calm alert state required for engagement of any sort, or calm relaxed state for resting and sleeping. The ability to regulate our levels of arousal is essential for everyday function and even survival. (You will be trained on this approach on completion of your first year in post).

Self-Management – You will be required to work in a team that is acquiring and developing the skills to self-manage. Focusing on strengths and professional development aspirations, each team member will be supported to lead on areas that are essential for the day-to-day running of the House. They will be supported hold transparent conversations, negotiate and problem solve so that differences of opinion, or disagreements are resolved in a mature, kind and professional way. You will be expected to use MACS decision making model when making significant decisions which places emphasis on seeking advice from experts both within the team, the children and externally.

Animals – As with many family homes, The House will have a range of animals. We believe that animals can bring a range of emotional and sensory-based experiences to children and grown-ups that will add to the enrichment of their experience of living / being at the House.

**In order to work in this team, you need to:**

- **understand and can work with the risk behaviours presented by Looked After Children,**
- **be resilient and capable of responding to children in prolonged periods of distress**
- **be able to organize and complete your own work**
- **be perceptive both towards your fellow team players and the children and be able to give/receive feedback in a timely, sensitive and constructive way**
- **be able and willing to work with a range animals**

**The service manager is responsible for the overall effectiveness of the service.**

**This Job Description demonstrates the job role, who you will be accountable to in carrying out your duties and an explanation of why.**

| <b>Job role</b>  | <b>Accountable to</b>  | <b>Why?</b>  |
|--|--|--|
| To have knowledge of and experience of working with the range of risk taking behaviours presented by Looked After Children.  | Manager<br><br>Children  | All staff have the skills, knowledge and experience to do fulfil their role with Looked After Children.<br><br>So that staff are not surprised by the complexity of their needs or their risk taking behaviour, nor judged for it.<br><br>It is understood that the children have experienced abuse and are traumatised by that abuse. |
| Carry out day to day chores to run a home as agreed by the team and children and work within an agreed budget.   | Children<br><br>Team members on working pattern with you<br><br>Finance Team | To create a warm and loving environment.<br><br>Fairness, balance of work load.<br><br>Agreement on house expenditure and financial accountability.  |
| To complete daily care and cleaning tasks for the animals at the house.  | Children<br><br>Managers   | So that children learn how to care for animals and can benefit from the experience of having animals at their home.<br><br>That the Vision for the Service is maintained and animals are well cared for.   |
| Attend and participate in the various meetings in place to support with communication, task completion and professional development: team meetings, community meetings, working groups, and supervision.   | Team<br><br>Manager  | The house functions wells, is in good repair, and we understand who is doing what and when. Professional development is advanced.<br><br>Systems in place to support the day to day running of the House and the staff are utilised well and consistently.   |
| To adhere to the ethos of the Service which believes that children should have as much staffing continuity as possible and so the model has longer working patterns.<br><br>To complete the working pattern as established <b>(You will be required to live in the home for a minimum of 5 consecutive 24 hour periods followed by the same off i.e. 5days on and 5 days off).</b> | Children<br><br>Team   | Ensure a working pattern that reflects a home environment and consistency.<br>Children know in advance when you will not be in the house so as to minimise stress.<br><br>Being fair and accommodating to each other in completing working hours   |

| <b>Job role</b>   | <b>Accountable to</b>  | <b>Why?</b>   |
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| Practice and decision making is in keeping with maintaining a 'family home' environment.  | Children<br><br>Team<br><br>Managers                                     | Children are not institutionalised. Children can expect care and decisions based on what we would expect for ourselves.<br><br>We practice in accordance of how we said we would when we applied for the role.<br><br>The ethos and value based are recognised, alive and maintained within the Service.  |
| Nurture within a warm and loving environment. This includes all the normal routines a family home would have.   | Children   | Traumatised children need security, predictability, love and a non-judgmental attitude  |
| To work in accordance with Policy and Procedures and adhere to systems that are in place to promote good communication and the smooth running of the Home.  | RQIA<br><br>Managers<br><br>Team<br><br>Children                         | Ensure good governance and quality of Service delivery<br><br>Safe, compassionate and effective care and support are provided to children and the team.<br><br>Key information is effectively recorded and shared. We are all accountable for our practice<br><br>Focused and relevant discussions by workers ensure they have more time to spend with children   |
| To be resilient and can project containment and confidence when working with intense trauma based behaviours. Children's behaviour can include: Sexualised behaviour, sexualised behaviour towards others; making allegations; spitting; running away/hiding; prolonged periods of distress and anger; rages; enuresis; cruelty to animals; biting, hitting, hair pulling, slapping, nipping, punching, kicking; road safety risk; throwing and breaking household items; damaging personal items; theft. | Children<br><br>Team<br><br>Clinical Psychologist<br><br>Social Services | Compassionate, consistent and fair approach to all children, focusing on the child's needs and not the behaviour<br><br>No one avoids dealing with challenging behaviour – there is a fair and consistent approach<br><br>To use their expertise in relation to their deepening your own capacity for resilience, containment and confidence<br><br>Key stakeholders have confidence in the work being undertaken with children and in those who are delivering it. |
| Working as part of a team to support clinical assessment and implement therapeutic interventions as advised by the Clinical Psychologist.   | Children<br><br>Team   | Helping the child to move from trauma to regulated responses.<br><br>Ensure the efficiency of the team to affect positive change.   |
| To have a working knowledge of Sensory Attachment Intervention (SAI) and the Just Right State programmes (once trained in these) and be capable and confident in your ability to implement such interventions with children and others (taster sessions).   | Children<br><br>Manager  | Sensory based interventions will support the children in learning how to understand, connect with and manage their feelings. Children will have more opportunity to have good outcomes in their future if they can recognise and manage their emotions.<br><br>This is the therapeutic approach underpinning our Service delivery model.  |

| Job role   | Accountable to   | Why?   |
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|  | Psychologist   | That a clear therapeutic approach is embedded and maintained in all work with children.  |
| That key decisions or changes in approach with children are made in full consultation with clinical lead, team & managers.   | Children<br><br>Psychologist<br><br>Managers                       | Children live in a predictable, stable and nurturing living environment.<br><br>That therapeutic planning is at the heart of how we work with children.<br><br>Approach and interventions adhere to clinical direction and are in keeping with the ethos and approach of the Service.  |
| To adhere to the therapeutic approach, planning and direction that focuses on <b>connection before correction: A punitive approach is not used when responding to challenging or risk taking behaviours and natural consequences are identified.</b>                                   | Psychologist<br><br>Children<br><br>Managers                       | Interventions do not compound negative attachment strategies.<br><br>Children feel safe and loved.<br>Children develop sense of social norms, boundaries and natural consequences to their behaviour.<br><br>Children are not punished for their behaviour.  |
| To work alongside the manager, clinical psychologist and team to assess and manage arising and existing risk issues. This is done with an understanding that risk management plans must be reviewed and amended in line with the escalation / de-escalation of risk factors or issues. | Children<br><br>Manager<br><br>Social Services                     | So that children can make mistakes and learn.<br>So that risk management moves in tandem with children and is not fixed and rigid. Children understand what places them at risk and how we are working to keep them safer.<br>Children know that risk management plans can change.<br><br>Risk is understood and agreed plans are implemented. Children take age appropriate risks.<br><br>Risk and risk management is communicated effectively, is shared and adheres to statutory requirements.<br>Children understand what places them at risk and how we are working to keep them safer.<br>Children know that risk management plans can change. |
| To take action to promote the safety and welfare of children and have a full understanding of Child Protection and Safeguarding responsibilities.  | Children<br><br>Social services<br><br>Service Manager<br><br>Team | The child understands when child protection actions need to be taken.<br><br>As corporate parent – Social services are ultimately responsible for the child’s welfare.<br><br>Ensure statutory requirements are met.<br><br>Ensure child is safe and protected.  |
| To maintain MAPA registration  | Children<br><br>Team   | So that children can be contained in times of extreme risk or distress.<br><br>Risk of serious harm / injury to staff and children is Minimised. The team have confidence that everyone is trained in an recognised and licenced assessment and intervention model.  |

| Job role  | Accountable to     | Why?   |
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|   | Social Services    | Any use of physical intervention is completed based on risk assessment and by staff who are trained to do so.  |
|   | RQIA               | So that risk of restrictive practice is minimised, any physical interventions used are recognised and licenced.  |
| To embrace and participate in the Team Reflective practice with a willingness to learn about yourself and others so that working relationships are developed, sustained and improved.           | Team               | So that the challenges of this work are not compounded by poor working relationships. Issues are addressed as they arise and not accumulated to the detriment of relationships. That new ways of communication are learnt and we develop insights and understanding of what works for ourselves as well as others. |
|   | Children           | Children should get the best from the 'grown ups' who are caring for them.   |
|   | Managers           | A cohesive team is maintained and risk of conflict is reduced.<br>An evidenced based mechanism is in place for staff to promote self-care and support resilience in a challenging working environment.   |
|   | Psychologist       | This is a therapeutic working environment and staff must engage in a therapeutic process themselves to support them to fulfil their roles.   |
| To be willing and able to talk to everyone in the team about what is working / not working in your professional relationships or regarding approach to practice: giving and receiving feedback. | Team               | Others know if you have an issue / difficulty / with them and understand why this exists for you. Unresolved or accumulated issues lead to discord and a difficult working environment.  |
|   | Children           | Children should get the best from the 'grown ups' who are caring for them.   |
|   | Managers           | Being able to give and receive feedback is a fundamental requirement of this role.   |
| Adhere to HR Policy and Procedures.   | Team               | Ensure effectiveness and harmony of the team.  |
| To complete tasks assigned to you by the Responsible Person in their Monthly Monitoring Report by the identified deadline.  | Registered Manager | The Service maintains registration as a children's home.   |
| To work alongside the House Lead to identify your learning and development needs on a yearly basis and ensure these are in keeping with the overall aims and objectives of the Service.         |                    |  |
| Maintain Health and Safety Standards as stipulated in the Children's home standards 2006 and in Service and Organisational Policy and Procedure.  | Children           | To avoid risk of significant harm.   |
|   | RQIA               | Retain Registration.   |
|   | Social Services    | To avoid loss of accommodation for the child.<br>To avoid loss of Service.   |

| <b>Job role</b>   | <b>Accountable to</b>                                  | <b>Why?</b>  |
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| To administer, manage and record Medication in accordance with the Medication policy and procedure.   | Children<br>RQIA<br>Social Services<br>Team            | To avoid risk of significant harm and stress.<br>Retain Registration.<br>To avoid loss of accommodation for Child.<br>To avoid loss of service.<br>Risk of miss medicating and malpractice.<br>Compromising other staff if they do not have correct information.<br>Potential investigation into practice across the team.   |
| To help the child with homework and their overall learning experience.<br><br>To support the activity worker with links to the school.  | Children<br><br>Activity Worker                        | Attainment of a basic right to education.<br><br>Working as part of team to meet learning and educational needs of the child.  |
| Reflection and professional development both individually and as part of the team. This will include regular attendance at group reflective sessions facilitated by the Clinical Psychologist.  | Children<br><br>Clinical Psychologist<br><br>Team      | Better insight into the child's traumatised behaviour.<br>Awareness of your own triggers and what to do<br>Development of resilience in practice.<br><br>A clinical and theoretical perspective that guides practice and professional development.<br><br>To hold each other to account. To give each other honest feedback. |
| To develop your skills and confidence in self-management. Taking on lead areas through the Balanced Score Card and developing your ability to manage time, prioritise workload with others, reach consensus and resolve challenging issues. | Children<br><br>Team                                   | The children are clear on how and why decisions are made.<br><br>There is a shared responsibility to making decisions.   |
| Liaison with family where appropriate and support children to maintain Contact arrangements.  | Children<br>Social Services                            | Promote and develop positive family relationships.<br>To adhere to child's care plan.  |
| Recording and communicating in line with statutory requirements.  | Children<br><br>Social Services<br><br>Service Manager | The child understands why information is shared with outside agencies.<br><br>Corporate Parent.<br>Ensure statutory requirements are met.  |
| Support House Activity Worker in relation to attending LAC reviews and statutory appointments.  | Children<br><br>Activity Worker<br><br>Service Manager | Children understand and have a voice in the statutory processes.<br><br>Working as an effective team member.<br>Ensure statutory requirements are met.   |
| To support the Activity Worker to organise a range short breaks, festive events throughout the year including one annual holiday for the children.  | Children<br><br>Team                                   | To experience normal family life.<br><br>To create a family calendar of events.  |

| <b>Job role</b>                        | <b>Accountable to</b>       | <b>Why?</b>  |
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| Any other duties that may be required. | Team<br><br>Service Manager | To be a good team player.<br><br>Responding to arising needs of the service and always putting children first. |

## PERSON SPECIFICATION

| <b>SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE REQUIRED BY POST HOLDER</b>  |                  |
|--|------------------|
| <b>CRITERIA 1</b>  |                  |
| Professional Qualification in any of the following areas: Social Work, Youth and Community Work, Teaching, Nursing.<br><br><b>And</b><br>1 years' experience of working with children / young people who have experienced significant trauma and a compassionate understanding of the associated behaviours.<br><br><b>Or</b><br>3 years' experience of working with children / young people who have experienced significant trauma and a compassionate understanding of the associated behaviours. | <b>ESSENTIAL</b> |
| <b>CRITERIA 2</b>  |                  |
| Ability to work on your own initiative and make decisions in a responsible and accountable manner.   | <b>ESSENTIAL</b> |
| <b>CRITERIA 3</b>  |                  |
| Ability to have frank and open conversations with your team members  | <b>ESSENTIAL</b> |
| <b>CRITERIA 4</b>  |                  |
| Ability to think on your feet in a fast paced and changing environment   | <b>ESSENTIAL</b> |
| <b>CRITERIA 5</b>  |                  |
| Ability to cope with a high level of taking behaviour (see job description for the types of behaviour) and possess the capacity to maintain high levels of resilience when working with presenting risk issues.  | <b>ESSENTIAL</b> |
| <b>CRITERIA 6</b>  |                  |
| Ability to take on the physical and emotional aspects of the 'parental role' with children who are exhibiting demanding behaviors whilst completing all of the tasks associated with running a family home.  | <b>ESSENTIAL</b> |
| <b>CRITERIA 7</b>  |                  |
| A full current driving licence and access to a car is required so as to be able to meet the requirements of the post in full.  | <b>ESSENTIAL</b> |
| <b>DESIRABLE CRITERIA</b>  |                  |

|   |                  |
|---|------------------|
| 3 years' experience of working with children and young people in a residential setting (children's home, leaving and aftercare, Hospitals, residential centres, respite centres). | <b>DESIRABLE</b> |
|---|------------------|