

## **Explanation of the Role: Approved Mental Health Professional (AMHP)**

**Post Title:** The AMHP's are all substantively employed as H grade Social Workers, Senior Social Work Practitioners or Team Managers. The AMHP role is secondary to that and is not a substantive post in itself.

**Department:** All the substantive posts sit within the Children and Families department.

**Service:** The AMHP's are currently based across Adult Services (Assessment) and within the Emergency Duty Team which is managed by Children's Services.

**Number of Identical Posts Covered by this Application:** 37. This is the total number of posts and is not equivalent to FTE's.

**Current Post Pay Grade:** There are a range of pay grades between H-J. That is because the substantive posts range between Social Worker (H), Senior Social Work Practitioner (I) and Team Manager (J).

### **Explanation:**

The AMHP's carry out the Council's statutory duties as determined by the Mental Health Act 1983, amended 2007. This primarily involves conducting Mental Health Act (MHA) assessments and, where appropriate, making applications under Sections of the MHA. Community based MHA assessments are, predominately, for Sections 2, 3 and in the case of an emergency Section 4.

If one of these sections is required it is necessary for two doctors to each make a medical recommendation (only one is required in the case of Section 4). The AMHP will then consider whether the overall criteria for the relevant section are met. Once this has been established and the AMHP is satisfied that there is no less restrictive alternative they will make an application for the required section. **It is not possible to make the application without the involvement of an AMHP.**

This type of assessment involves the management of high levels of risk - to self, including suicide, serious self harm and to others (the general public), including violence and in extreme cases homicide. The number of MHA assessments carried out within Nottingham City is significant and growing. In 2009-10 there were 538; by 2013-14 this figure had increased by over 100% to 1,100.

The AMHP's also assume a high level of personal accountability for the decisions that they make. They have the authority, without referral to management, to make applications under the MHA which can deprive people of their liberty for up to six months. There is no other equivalent power outside of the court.

This level of authority makes the AMHP's a distinct group within the Councils Social Work provision. Whilst other Social Workers are involved in the safeguarding of vulnerable adults and children they are not authorised, without the authority of the court, to make such significant interventions in a citizen's life. The AMHP's are required to make these decisions regularly and autonomously as part of their role.

It is also relevant to note that in order to qualify as an AMHP a Social Worker must have two years post qualification experience, complete stage one of the post qualifying award and then complete four months of training. This training is undertaken outside of the workplace, is provided by the University of Birmingham, and is set at Masters Level.

**Oliver Bolam**  
**Head of Specialist Services**  
**March 21<sup>st</sup> 2016**