

# A Candidates Guide to Coventry Children's Services



Coventry

A great place to live,  
learn and work



# Welcome to Children's Services



**“ This handbook will guide you through the information on the city, the service areas, our rewards and benefits offer, and our roles which all play an important part in ensuring children and families are at the heart of everything we do.**

**I want to thank you for your interest in opportunities within Coventry Children's Services. I hope you find the content of this guide helpful and informative to help you make the decision in joining Children's Services in Coventry as we celebrate our recognition as a 'Good' service and take the next steps on our journey to outstanding.**

The experience, skills and professionalism which you will bring to this service are vital to our continued improvement journey. You'll find a number of things. You will find Children's Services a welcoming and supportive environment where you will be offered opportunities for learning and development. You'll find a service full of social workers proud of the work they do every single day to get the very best outcomes for our most vulnerable children and families. You'll find a framework of training, challenge and professional support through our signs of safety and relationship based practice to make sure you have the tools you need to become the best you can be. And you'll find an environment that recognises and understands the unique job you do and supports you to make those difficult decisions.

We are a city with a proud history and an exciting future. Children's Services are on a journey of improvement and we want you to be a part of it.



**Neil Macdonald**

Director of Children's Services

# About Coventry

**Coventry is a city of opportunities, and its local plan sets out a clear vision for improving the quality of life for all.**

Through promoting growth and sustainable economic prosperity, and being locally committed and ensuring its priorities are delivered, the city will continue to grow and develop as a great place to live, work and study.

Businesses continue to invest and grow in Coventry, with recent investment in the city set to create 15,000 jobs. A new business district is being built; Jaguar Land Rover is expanding the company's research and development facility; and both Warwick and Coventry Universities are continuing to build and improve on their excellent educational reputations and play an ever-greater role in city life.

No-one can deny that Coventry has become an exciting place to be. We've got a rich history and are working towards a really bright future.

The city celebrated that in its role as UK City of Culture 2021 when it opened its doors to visitors from far and wide and threw a year-long party.

It was a year to remember as the city shared its culture, its history and heritage, with an amazing array of events.

It was also a year that saw major improvements made to the city and some of its most treasured buildings – and one that has left a legacy for many years to come.

In work and leisure, Coventry has a lot to offer and is appealing to those looking to escape the fast-paced lifestyle of London.

With lower house prices and a more affordable cost of living than the capital and some other cities in the UK, it is the ideal place to build your career as a social worker.



# Coventry Godiva Festival

Coventry **Godiva Festival** is a huge family music festival. Based in the city's historic War Memorial Park, the three-day event offers great live music, family entertainment, international food and drink, craft village and children's funfair!

## Eating and playing

There are so many things for you to see and do in Coventry. From music, theatre and festivals, to museums, Cathedrals and medieval history, the city has something for everyone. Home to rich history, ancient legends and an abundance of unique arts and culture.

-  **What to see and do**  
[www.visitcoventry.co.uk/things](http://www.visitcoventry.co.uk/things)
-  **The best places to eat and drink**  
[www.visitcoventry.co.uk/food-drink](http://www.visitcoventry.co.uk/food-drink)



# Travelling to and from Coventry

Coventry is just one hour from London by train, with great transport to surrounding areas. Coventry's central location makes it easy to travel by train or car with convenient links to M6 and M1.



## Geography

The city of Coventry covers a total surface area of approximately 98.6 square kilometres

## Demographics

Coventry's 2021 population is now estimated at 432,386



### Airport:

A Birmingham



### Railway stations:

- B Coventry
- C Leamington Spa
- D Rugby
- E Nuneaton
- F Warwick Parkway
- G Coleshill Parkway
- H Stratford Parkway
- I Kenilworth



This map is based upon Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. Coventry City Council. LA1000026294. 2020

# Our Vision 2023

## Coventry: where children, young people and families matter

### Right Help Right Time

Promoting children's welfare is most effective when they receive help early and at a level according to their needs. The aim is to provide early interventions for children, young people and families that require support in order to prevent them moving towards higher levels of need, and to reduce the levels of need once these have been identified.

1

Children are at the heart of everything we do



Children and young people are involved as key partners in planning and decision making and help us to shape services.

We will work with children, young people and their families with openness and honesty to ensure we hear their views.

Our approach allows children and young people to receive help and support that makes a difference to their lives and allows families to be empowered.

The outcomes we achieve for children and young people compare favourably with high performing local authorities.

2

Working with children and families and services around them



We aim to deliver top class early help services, to optimise prospects for the best start in life for all children and young people.

We provide excellent help and support to our families. We work with them to understand the skills they have and need to raise their children in a loving, happy, healthy and safe environment, which enables them to become confident and responsible adults.

We listen to what our children and families say and build our support around them to enable families to remain together whenever possible.

When children and young people cannot remain with their families, they are able to live in or near to Coventry in the most appropriate placement to meet their needs.

3

High quality child centred effective services that are reflective and responsive to change



We deliver high quality, child centred, effective help and support to children and young people, their parents/carers and family at the right time and in the right way.

Our services reflect and respond to the changing needs of Coventry's diverse population of children, young people and their families.

Our quality assurance and reflective learning provides evidence of continuous improvements.

4

Our One Coventry approach



We are committed to One Coventry working with our partners and communities to ensure that our residents get the very best that the city can offer.

Our partnerships are mature, trusting and effective at both strategic and operational level. In our partnership work, the focus remains on the child or young person.

We have arrangements with our partners and communities that mean we can adapt and be dynamic in our response to emerging issues/ need at strategic and individual level.

We are fully engaged with partners who share our vision and actively contribute to enhance the local authority offer.

5

Committed sustainable workforce



Our workforce is stable, skilled, motivated and committed to delivering excellent services to children and young people in Coventry.

We have a confident leadership team, with staff having confidence in leaders and feeling trusted and empowered to make decisions and are confident and clear about their role and accountability.

Social work practice will flourish.

We are recognised as a centre for excellence.

# Our Children's Services Teams

## MASH

The Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) brings key professionals together to facilitate quality information sharing, analysis and decision-making, to safeguard vulnerable children, young people more effectively. Staff from across health, social care, police, and education are based in the MASH at any one time at its based in Broadgate House in the city centre. Our MASH is the front door to statutory services, by applying consistent thresholds based on Right Help, Right Time.

## EDT

The Emergency Duty Team provides an out of hours emergency service between 5pm and 8.30am throughout the week, including weekends. The team responds to safeguarding concerns relating to children, young people, their families and adults. They also provide an out of hours housing service.

## Horizon Team

The Horizon team works with young people who are at risk of exploitation. Horizon is a statutory social work team that consists of Social Workers, Youth Workers, a Children and Families Worker, a Health Worker and Police Officers. The Horizon team support young people via the Child In Need or Child Protection frameworks. Young people are supported to understand healthy and unhealthy relationships, grooming, online safety and exploitation, from sexual exploitation to criminal exploitation.

## Area Teams

There are 15 social work teams across four areas, each team consisting of a Team Manager, Senior Practitioners and a mixture of experienced and newly qualified social workers, and a child and family worker. The Social Work Teams work with all new referrals into the service, completing assessments and child protection enquires, as well as working with children and families who are supported via CIN and CP plans, those in PLO and all initial court work. The teams are fast paced, but there is high support and manageable caseloads.

## Early Help

Our Early Help Service, is provided across 8 family hubs, 2 per area. Each Hub has a variety of skilled and experienced staff, there is Early Help Manager per area, and a Team Leader in each family hub, as well as Early Help Social Worker, Youth Workers, Family Hub workers. , Early Help is offered in a variety of way, from group work, 121 work, parenting support and needs are assessed through assessment and plans. The team will be a supportive network for you to practice creative interventions using the Signs of Safety Methodology.



# Our Children's Services Teams

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## Youth Justice team

The Youth Justice team is a multi-agency team, which partners with statutory and voluntary agencies, to coordinate and deliver local youth justice services. The team manages and delivers interventions to, children who are subject to court orders (including custodial sentences) and police imposed out of court disposals. The services also offers support, managing formal Parenting Contracts for parents of children open to the service. Coventry's Youth Justice team have also been registered as a restorative Organisation, recognition of its work supporting victims of youth crime.

## Looked After Children and Permanence Service

The Service works with children who are Looked After from birth to 12 years old. We take case responsibility from the child's first Looked After Child's Review or first court hearing from Social Work Teams. We work with children who are subject to care proceedings, long term Looked After, and those with an adoption plan, whilst also working closely with the Regional Adoption Agency, Adoption Central England (ACE).

## Children's Disability Team

Coventry Children's Services has a specialist Children's Disability Team (CDT) which provides support to children and young people up to the age of 18 who have a lifelong learning/physical disability. The CDT is passionate about working with children, families and other professionals to achieve the best outcomes for vulnerable children. The team undertake children and family assessments and works with children in need, children subject to child protection plans and looked after children. A multi-disciplinary approach is modelled in the team in partnership with both universal and mainstream services to support children, young people and their families.

## Placements

The Placements Team is responsible for sourcing quality residential, fostering and supported accommodation placements for children and young people who are in need of protection and are not able to live with their families. When a placement is required the team will contact and liaise with internal provisions and independent providers to identify a suitable placement match. The team collate the potential options and shares them with the Social Workers or Personal Advisor to identify the most appropriate placement for the child or young person.

## Through Care

The Through Care Service works with looked after children and care leavers. The service is co-located with carers advisors, a housing liaison officer and a UASC liaison officer. Through Care is an innovative and dynamic service involved in national pilots of Lifelong Links, Leaving Well and New Belongings and were shortlisted for the 2019 social workers of the year awards. Coventry is part of the National Leaving Care Benchmarking Forum.





# Our Children's Services Teams

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## Edge Of Care

Edge of Care is a service that supports the families of young people at risk of entering the care system to remain as a family. The service uses evidence-based models of practice, which assists families to make significant and positive changes, whilst working intensively alongside the allocated social worker and other professionals involved with the family. Edge of Care is an innovative, dynamic and creative service, that has a clear aim to safely prevent and reduce the number of children and young people from entering the care system in Coventry. With a workforce that has commitment to safely keep families together as a unit by strengthening, improving and re-building relationships. The service is passionate about delivering ground-breaking solutions, to promote sustainable change for the families, and strongly encourages individuals to make informed choices about their own lives by involving them in all aspects of the work.

## Fostering

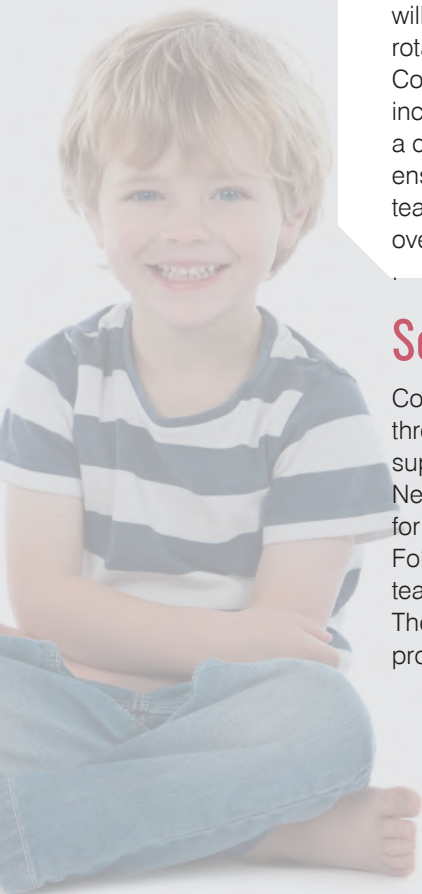
The Recruitment and Assessment Team has responsibility for recruitment and assessment of a range of applicants to become Coventry Foster Carers. The Assessment Team has responsibility for the recruitment and assessment of a range of fostering applicants. The successful candidate will be responsible for undertaking a range of these assessments. They will also undertake initial visits of fostering applicants through participating in a recruitment hub rota.

Coventry City Council is investing strongly in its fostering provision with a target to significantly increase the number of looked after children placed with in house foster carers. The service has a commitment to working closely with our foster carers and with children's social work teams to ensure that fostered children are well cared for and achieve best outcomes. The assessment team has been successful in increasing the number of newly approved foster carers significantly over recent years and is recognised for its market leading recruitment practice

## Social Work Academy

Coventry's Social Work Academy offers children and family social work practitioners a pathway through their career with Coventry Children's Services, by creating an environment which supports stability and continuing professional development. The Social Work Academy supports Newly Qualified Social Workers through their first 12 months. NQSWs are based in the Academy for the first 6 months, spending a minimum of a day per week with their dedicated host teams. Following successful completion of the first 6 months, NQSWs then transition out to their host teams, receiving outreach support from the Academy Team.

The Social Work Academy also supports social worker progression and development for professionals at every stage of their careers.



# Our Children's Services Teams

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## Quality Assurance

### a. Family Group Conferencing

The Family Group Conferencing model seeks to place decision making processes for children, in the hands of families and communities. Coordinators support family groups to make informed and responsible decisions, recommendations and plans with regard to their children. This enables families to work in partnership with professional services to secure positive outcomes for children and young people.

### b. Child Protection Conference Chairs

CP Conference Chairs independently chair multi agency child protection conferences for children who are considered at risk of significant harm. CP Conference Chairs focus on ensuring children are safeguarded first and foremost and their families receive the support they need in order to achieve the best possible outcomes to make a difference for the better in their lives.

### c. Independent Reviewing Officers

The IROs independently oversee and track care planning for children in care in Coventry and are responsible for providing challenge where appropriate and protecting the interests of children. IROs develop positive working relationships with the children they are responsible for and support their wishes and feelings in decision making.

### d. Risk Management Team

The team plays a key part in managing strategic and contextual safeguarding risks for vulnerable children and young people in Coventry by working closely with partners and key stakeholders. This includes;

- Management and oversight of responses to allegations regarding professionals who are deemed to have abused their position of trust working with children (LADO).
- Delivery of training and support for the early identification of children and young people at risk of harm through radicalisation and exploitation.

## Commissioning and Partnerships

The Commissioning and Partnership Service is responsible for commissioning services for children, where the Council does not provide these services itself, or where it is helpful to have additional provision to meet need. These include fostering and residential placements, supported accommodation provision, mental health provision, family health and lifestyle services and children's advocacy and domestic violence services. A range of services are commissioned jointly with the Education Service, Coventry and Rugby Clinical Commissioning Group and Public Health. Commissioners are responsible for quality assuring commissioned services in partnership with operational colleagues. The Commissioning and Partnerships Service also has a Service Development Team, which delivers specific projects aimed at supporting service improvement and has recently taken on responsibility for managing The Professional Support Staff.



# Our Children's Services Teams

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## Joint Safeguarding Boards

The Coventry Safeguarding Children's Partnership replaces the Coventry Safeguarding Children's Board. This change took place as a result of the Children and Social Work Act 2017, which placed a duty on Local Authorities, Clinical Commissioning Groups and the Police to make local arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in their area. Coventry Safeguarding Adults Board (CSAB) is a formal body whose objective is to ensure that adults who have care and support needs and who are unable to protect themselves are safeguarded. It is a statutory requirement and operates under the Care Act 2014 to ensure that there is a robust multi-agency framework for safeguarding adults and the monitoring of all its work in protecting adults in the City.

## Professional Support Service

The aim of The Professional Support Service is to support the delivery of a first-class service for children and young people. This is a newly created team which works with colleagues at all levels across Children's Services to contribute to positive outcomes for some of the most vulnerable Children and Families across the City. Supporting with performance management processes to ensure compliance with regulatory and statutory requirements, as well as a continuous development of information systems and processes to support and enhance best practice.



# Service Area Teams



**Park Edge Family Hub**  
Bell Green Health Centre  
Roseberry Avenue

**The Moat Family Hub**  
Moathouse  
Primary School  
Deedmore Road

**East Area Team**  
Moat House Leisure and  
Neighbourhood Centre  
1 Winston Avenue

**Central Area  
Team Families  
for All Hub**  
454 Foleshill Road

**West Area Team**  
Coundon Family Centre  
82 Moseley Avenue

**Pathways Family Hub**  
Radford Primary School  
Lawrence Saunders  
Road

**Mosaic Family Hope**  
Tile Hill Children's Centre  
Jardine Crescent

**Harmony Hub**  
Hillfields Early  
Years Centre  
Clifton Street

**Aspire Family Hub**  
Gosford Park  
Primary School

**Broadgate House**  
Looked After Children  
and Permanency Service  
Through Care and  
Edge of Care  
Fostering  
Placements  
Youth Offending Service  
Adoption ACE  
Quality Assurance  
Service  
CDT

**South Area Team**  
Willenhall  
Children's Centre  
257 Stretton Avenue

**Woodside Family Hub**  
Middle Ride  
Children's Centre

**Social Work Academy**

# Our Opportunities & Team

**In Coventry, we are working hard to build something special. Children and families are at the heart of everything we do, and we believe they deserve the best outcomes. Children's Services provides a wide range of statutory and non-statutory duties, from Early Help Services, through to children who are looked after.**

The service reflects and responds to the changing needs of children and their families. It works to enable a reflective and flexible approach, with a strong Early Help offer and a real focus on Relationship Based Practice and Signs of Safety, which focuses on intervention and keeping families together.

Children's Services is proud of its achievements to date and is continuing to ensure children and families remain at the heart of all it does. We will provide you with an environment where social work can flourish, with high support, high challenge and manageable case loads. Children's Services is proud of its workforce, who are committed, dedicated, and work to a high standard.



## Children's Social Worker

As an experienced Children's Social Worker, you will be holding a manageable case load of complex cases, where children are held at the centre of all we do. Through Signs of Safety drawing out relationship based practice, your role will be to assess, support and guide to empower families and enable change to ensure the best outcomes for children and young people are achieved.

## Advanced Social Worker

One of the most exciting new developments in our social work career pathway has been the creation of new Advanced Social Worker roles. The Advanced Social Worker will monitor and supervise a caseload of the most complex cases in children's services. They provide coaching, mentoring and support to Newly Qualified Social Workers (NQSWs) as well as experienced Social Workers. Providing guidance, support and professional wisdom in situations of high complexity.

## Senior Practitioner

In Coventry, the Senior Practitioner role is a management pathway. You will be an experienced practitioner able to deputise for the Team Manager, allocating work and convening and chairing strategy meetings; supporting social workers with child protection enquiries. You will also be working a complex but manageable (reduced) caseload whilst helping us deliver a strategy that puts children, young people and families at the beginning, middle and end of everything we do, with all the support and resources you need to do it.

## Independent Reviewing Officer

IROs play a crucial role in promoting best outcomes for Coventry's vulnerable Children and ensure that care for all our children are of the highest standard and implemented appropriately without any drift or delay. Providing on-going oversight and scrutiny, the IRO communicates clear expectations and monitors/ tracks progress for children, with varying care plans, needs and timescales.

## Team Manager

Our team managers lead and manage a team of social workers in the delivery of services to children, young people and families. They have oversight of the team activity, managing performance and making sure staff have the chance to develop. Managers make the decisions around the cases in the team, working closely with multi-agency partners and senior managers as appropriate.

# Social Work progression pathway

Newly Qualified Social Worker

Return to Practice Social Worker

Children & Families' Social Worker

Advanced Social Worker

Senior Practitioner

Independent Reviewing Officer

Team Manager

Operational Lead

Strategic Lead



Up to **£47,573\*** and **£3,000**  
Retention Payment payable on  
completing 12 months  
in service

## Our offer

from 1st April 2023

We know how hard our people work, and what it means to have a manager who makes the time to say 'thank you'. So, with us, your work will always be appreciated and recognised.

We also know that, to recruit passionate, dedicated staff in a sector where there's simply more demand than the available resource, we must show our appreciation in other, more tangible ways, too - to make Coventry an attractive place to work in terms of the benefits.

# #myRewards

## my Finances

### my CASH

- + Competitive salary
- + Pay progression through multiple increments
- + Additional role-related allowances
- + Salary match opportunity

### my DISCOUNTS

- + Privilege card discounts
- + Lifestyle Savings

### my WAY

- + Cycle to work
- + Bike shop
- + Car scheme
- + Home electronics
- + Workplace parking scheme
- + Interest free travel loans
- + Payroll giving scheme
- + Licence to Practice

## my Lifestyle

### my TIME

- + Generous annual leave allowance (starting at 27 days plus Bank Holidays)
- + Annual leave purchase scheme
- + Flexible working arrangements supporting work-life balance
- + Parental leave

### my VOICE

- + Employee Networks - Embrace, Pride, Disabled, Young, Women
- + Recognised Trade Unions and active membership
- + Engagement surveys and 'Let's Talk' sessions

### my HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

- + Award-winning occupational health team
- + Counselling service
- + Employee Assistance Programme
- + Advantage Voluntary Health Plan

## my Future

### my AWARDS

- + Long service awards
- + Spire Awards - employee recognition for those who go above and beyond

### my OPPORTUNITIES

- + Learning and development certified courses
- + Pre-retirement courses

### my SAVINGS

- + Generous local government pension scheme
- + Additional Voluntary Pension Contribution
- + Clockwise Credit Union

# Learning and development offer

Coventry Children's Services offers valuable opportunities to maintain your Social Work England registration and evidence your continuous professional development.

In addition, you will be supported in your work to support children and families to achieve great outcomes for children. Some of the highlights:

- › Access to expertise through trained social workers with skills in assessment and intervention where child sexual abuse is a feature; supported by the Centre of expertise on child sexual abuse.
- › Access to Immersive Virtual Reality headsets to support learning and development and access to this resource in your work with children and families
- › Training in Signs of Safety methodology alongside relationship and restorative approaches to support your work with children and families
- › Research in Practice and Care Knowledge to support your work, particularly around new and emerging areas relevant to current social work practice
- › Access to webinars-bite sized, easily accessible approaches to learning and development
- › Access to champions groups across children's services that share expertise and the opportunity to drive an area of expertise that you bring to Coventry
- › Access to a comprehensive and varied training offer through an award winning Social Work Academy; recognised for an outstanding learning and development offer
- › Many opportunities and routes to progress through a clear career and progression framework
- › Opportunities to shape and share good practice at Practice Development Forums, with an appetite to address issues relating to diversity and inclusion in social work



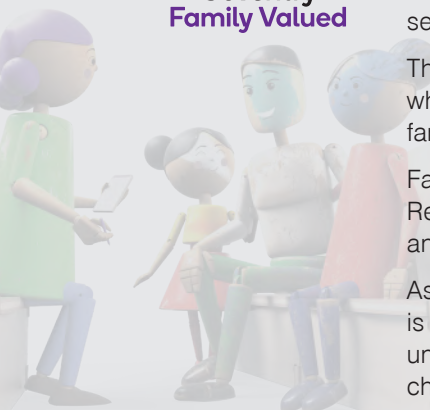
## Coventry Family Valued

As part of the Department for Education's 'Strengthening Families, Protecting Children' Programme, Coventry Children's Services have partnered with Leeds in order to implement Family Valued. Family Valued is a Leeds innovation, which aims to change leadership, culture and practice in order to promote new ways of working with children and families. Family Valued seeks to strengthen the role of families and to safely reduce the need for statutory intervention.

The Coventry Family Valued Programme is building on successes in Coventry; recognising where there is still more to do to improve outcomes for children, young people and their families. Coventry is committed to building a restorative culture with restorative leadership.

Family Valued focusses on the importance of relationships, and restorative ways of working, with Restorative Practice Leads working across Children's Services to support practice, as well as an excellent training offer, to support and embed this way of working, alongside Signs of Safety.

As part of this programme, the Family Group Conferencing Service is being expanded, there is a focus on children and young people living with extended family and friends when they are unable to live with their immediate family, and a Reunification Project aiming to safely return children home.





# The Staff App

The Staff App has been developed for employees at Coventry City Council and will mean all colleagues can access a range of information no matter where they are. The app gives people access to the latest and most useful information and enables all to stay connected and access information how and when they want to.

## Our Values

- Our values define us as an organisation and influence everything we do and how we treat each other.
- We recognise the crucial role each and every one of us plays in helping to achieve our goals.
- We want Coventry City Council to be an inclusive workplace where people know they are valued and feel empowered in their roles to achieve excellence for our customers and communities.

To achieve this, we have committed to the following six values:



A Coronavirus tile has been added and includes latest government, HR and working from home guides and you'll also find Coronavirus wellbeing tips and updates included in the Wellbeing section.

The app also provides instant access to a range of other information including:

- **Real-time news updates**
- **Learning and development opportunities (including access to MeLearning)**
- **Recruitment opportunities**
- **Access to ResourceLink and other pay info**
- **Access to Wellbeing resources, including support and guidance.**

The app includes links to sites we think everyone will find useful, but going forwards, the team will be adding even more content as well as updating existing information.



# Why Coventry?

Join us in Coventry and you'll be delivering on the ground support to families with all the support and resources you need to do it. You will build on the progress we've made in the last two years and work with colleagues who are passionate about the city, its people and its exciting prospects. For more information come and speak to our staff or visit [www.coventry.gov.uk/socialworkjobs](http://www.coventry.gov.uk/socialworkjobs)

