



Bradford Practice Standards

May 2025



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Introduction

Bradford Children and Families Trust Children's Services is committed to delivering a high-quality service that is effective and has a positive impact for our children and young people and their families.

Having practice standards means that we are clear about what we will do and by when. This will mean that our children and families benefit from a timely and consistent approach to our work.

It also means that our staff know what is expected of them, what they need to do and what needs to happen to support good practice. These are agreed standards that must happen and align with our professional standards as well as our values as a Trust.

Our key priorities for our children and young people

- Strengthen services to provide earlier help for our children and families.
- Improve quality of relationship-based practice and decision making with a clear focus on outcomes.
- Better choices for local care.
- The Trust being alongside our children and families to empower them to cope better.
- Stronger partnership.
- A culture that delivers stable and high performing teams.
- The new Trust arrangements stabilised.



Our Purpose

is to provide high-quality services with partners that help safeguard, support and promote the welfare of our children, young people and families across the Bradford District.



Our Vision

is for all our children and young people in the Bradford District to be safe and able to realise their full potential.



Our Values

were co-developed with our staff community and reflect the way in which we will operate individually, in our service and as an organisation.

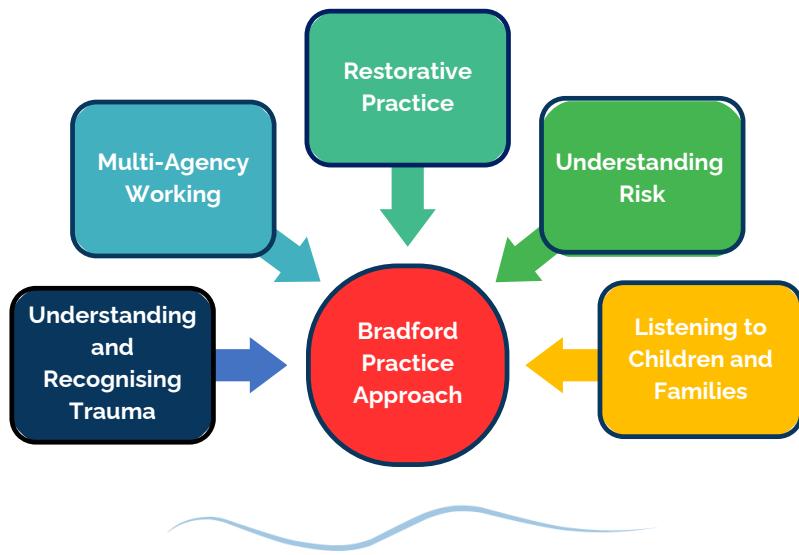


Practice Approach

Our work with children and families is informed by the Bradford Children and Families Trust Practice Approach, providing all staff and partner agencies with a value base, language, behaviours and tools to strengthen our relationships with children and families, as well as each other.

Our focus is on empowering our children and families to find solutions to ensure that support and help is provided whilst recognising them as experts in their own lives.

Central to the practice approach is strong meaningful relationships which means that we work with our children, young people and their families. Children, young people and their families want to be heard and involved in the decisions that we make and for their strengths and the positives to be recognised. It is therefore important to understand their unique journey or experiences to make sure that the service is for them.



Underpinned by Practice Principles



Always working with



Strengths-based approach



Early support at the right time

Children's Voices - what children tell us

“

I have my workers direct phone number and I know who to contact if they are not in work.

Tell me in advance if my social worker can't meet me and if someone else is going to come.

I need to know that you will listen to me.

Help me be safe at home.

Don't break promises and be honest about what you can and cannot do and if you say your going to do something then do it.

I want a worker who will stick with me and not be changed unless they leave.

Support me to take part in meetings about me and help me understand what is happening and why.

Understand my behaviour is because of the situation I am in, it is not me as a person.

Encourage and support me to be the best that I can be and help me reach my dreams.

When I leave care don't just cut off contact, some workers have been important people in my life for a long time.

Talk to me using words I can understand and help to make sense of my situation.

Sometimes you need to stop and think before you react to what I am saying.

”

Planning and Seeing our Children

Listening to our children, recognising their individual experiences and journey, is core to everything that we do, so we can make sure that the plan we have in place to help and support is the right one to make the difference that is needed. To do this, we need to understand the needs of our child through the work we are doing to understand –

- What is my child's life like – what do they do each day?
- What is it like to be my child growing up in Bradford?
- What do they feel about their lives – how would they want things to change?

We do this by making sure that we take time to build relationships and connections with our children so that we are working alongside them, listening to their voices and experiences to help us find the right support to make the changes required. We plan our work using the following standards –

- I take the time to get to know my child that I work with to help me create positive change.
- I use direct work tools that are engaging and appropriate to my child's age, need and level of understanding to understand their wishes and feelings.
- I listen to what my child wants, making sure that this informs my plan of work and what will happen next.
- I share with my child what is happening so that they understand their plan.
- My visits to my child are purposeful, linked to the plan of work to make positive changes.
- I understand my child's journey, their lived experiences and family background from reading their file.
- I talk to my child to understand what is important to them and what is happening for them to understand what their day to day life is.
- My child's voice is recorded clearly in all my assessments and plans.
- I offer my child the chance to complete a Mind of My Own statement whilst working with them.
- My child's voice is recorded clearly in all my assessments and plans.
- I record information clearly and accurately so that my child is able to understand decisions that have been made about what is happening should they want to read their file.

Glossary of acronyms

CF	- Children and Families
CIC	- Children in Care
CICC	- Children in Care Council
CIN	- Child in Need
CP	- Child Protection
ICPC	- Initial Child Protection Conference
IRO	- Independent Reviewing Officer
PLO	- Public Law Outline
RCPC	- Review Child Protection Conference
YJS	- Youth Justice Service
LGP	- Legal Gateway Panel
MAPPA	- Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements
SWET	- Social Work Evidence Template
CMH	- Case Management Hearing
IRH	- Issues Resolution Hearing
CAFCASS	- Children and Families Court Advisory and Support Service
ADM	- Agency Decision Maker
EHCP	- Education Health Care Plan

Our practice standards are supported by practice guidance which is saved in TriX.

1.0

Recording on the Child's File



- 1.01** I understand the importance of having accurate and up to date recording of my work with my child and family. I make sure that children's files are updated to help my child understand their journey.
- 1.02** I record that I have seen my child alone if they are aged 4 or over, unless they have chosen not to see me, or it is an agreed decision with my manager. When I have not seen my child alone, I record the reason for this.
- 1.03** For statutory visits I will tick my child has been seen and seen alone when appropriate on Liquid Logic.
- 1.04** I record my visits within 48 hours of seeing my child, unless there is a significant event in which I will record on the day. When I am unable to do this, I will let my manager know.
- 1.05** I record my visits using our agreed format. The voice of the child is in **BOLD** and **BLUE**. This includes what my child has told me in their own voice about their wishes and feelings which I use to progress their plan.
- 1.06** My case recording will capture my child's lived experience through information about what is important to my child using the template as set out in guidance. I capture on my child's record the difference my work is making to progress their plan.
- 1.07** I make sure that fact and opinion are clear in my recordings. All records are respectful of my child and their family using language that is kind, simple and jargon free.
- 1.08** I read the chronology and other important information on the child's file as part of my assessment and use this to help me understand the child's journey and plan my work
- 1.09** All important decisions that make a difference for my child's life are clearly recorded on my child's file.

- 1.10** All documents relating to my child are uploaded to their file within 5 working days
- 1.11** Every child's file has an up to date genogram, chronology and child's summary using our agreed format.
- 1.12** I send my child, the family and professionals a closure letter when I no longer need to be involved.

2.0 Assessments

- 2.01** Wherever possible I seek consent from parent/carers to speak with professionals and their wider family.
- 2.02** I use kind and simple language to explain my role to my child and their parents/carers and how I will complete the assessment. My assessment will address the concerns that have been raised and shared.
- 2.03** I ask my child and family what help and support they need. I take the time to understand who is in their family and network to help them.
- 2.04** My assessment will address the concerns that have been raised with an understanding of the child's journey and any information I have about the family.
- 2.05** I see my child and family within the first 5 working days after allocation. My visit is planned and purposeful to help understand the child's lived experience.
- 2.06** I spend time getting to know my child and parents/ carers to understand their situation so that I can offer the right support.
- 2.07** I observe my child (including babies and toddlers) with people who are important to them.
- 2.08** I agree a plan of work with my manager which includes seeing my child individually as well as with brothers and sisters whilst I am completing the assessment. My assessment includes understanding each child's individual needs as well as a group of brothers and sisters.
- 2.09** I will ask my child about where they would like me to see them.

- 2.10** My child's voice and an understanding of their age and ability is used to help me plan and see my child. Direct work with my child informs my next steps, and decision making and any plan of work.
- 2.11** I speak to parents and important adults including those who do not live in the family home, to understand their views which are used to understand my child's needs and risks. This will be recorded in detail in my recording on the child's file.
- 2.12** I speak to all partner agencies involved with my child and family to understand how they are helping my child and family. I review this information to complete my assessment. When a decision has been made to do this without consent, I record why this was done with clear information about what was shared.
- 2.13** I consider the needs and safety of brothers and sisters, and any other children living in the household or wider network. Where appropriate I refer any concerns to the relevant person or agency.
- 2.14** I recognise and understand the impact of individual experiences and any trauma and what this means for my child and family.
- 2.15** My assessment and plan will be developed with my child and family focusing on what support is needed to make a positive change.
- 2.16** I ask my child and parents to help me develop a plan that will support involving the wider family and important adults. The plan will address risks and support to make a positive difference.
- 2.17** My manager has oversight of the assessment within 10 working days to understand the next steps. I complete my Child and Family assessment to meet the needs of my child (no later than 45 days) using jargon free language that is kind.
- 2.18** Using the chronology and genogram, I identify trends, patterns and the family history, to help me understand what this means for my child and their experience of parenting and the potential for change.

- 2.19** The assessment is evidenced based and not self-reporting. I use evidence-based tools that help me support my child and family.
- 2.20** I talk to my child and family about my decision making, including what will happen next. I will also share the outcome with the referrer and partners who are working with the family.
- 2.21** A copy of the completed assessment is given to my child and the family, so their feedback is part of the record.
- 2.22** My manager will record their decision making on the assessment.
- 2.23** When I have recommended a 'step-down' to another service, I follow the early help procedures to ensure a smooth transition to make sure that my child and family receive the support that they need.
- 2.24** I continue to update my assessment every six months (or sooner if required) for all children that I work with to ensure that our plans are based on their needs.

3.0 Section 47 Child Protection Investigations

- 3.01** A strategy meeting is attended by the social worker, team manager, police, education and health services (minimum) who will provide the relevant information about my child. I share a written outcome with everyone who attended within 24 hours of the discussion.
- 3.02** I use kind and simple language to explain my role to my child and their parents/carers and what will happen next.
- 3.03** I record that I have seen my child alone if they are aged 4 or over, unless they have chosen not to see me, or it is an agreed decision by my manager. When I have not seen my child individually, I record the reason for this.
- 3.04** My child's voice and an understanding of their age and ability is used to help me plan and see my child. Direct work with my child informs my next steps, and decision making and any plan of work.
- 3.05** I consider the needs and safety of brothers and sisters and any other children living in the household or network. Where appropriate I refer any concerns to the relevant person or agency.
- 3.06** I speak to all partner agencies involved with my child and family to understand how they are helping my child and family. I review this information to complete my section 47 (s47) enquiries.
- 3.07** I seek consent from a person with parental responsibility and my child (if age appropriate) or through legal proceedings, for a medical assessment if appropriate.
- 3.08** The outcome of the section 47 provides an analysis of the information gathered and what this means for my child about the likelihood of significant harm. I have a safety plan to keep my child safe and, if required, I seek legal advice.

- 3.09** I talk through the outcome of my s47 enquiries including next steps with my child and family.
- 3.10** I share the outcome of my s47 enquiries with partner agencies.
- 3.11** Following the outcome of the s47, I see my child and family before the ICPC. How often I see my child and family will be based on the needs of my child and family to manage the risks and support required as identified with my manager.
- 3.12** For children above the age of 8, I talk to them about an advocate to support their voice being heard and seek consent from the parents and carers to make a referral.
- 3.13** I invite the right partner agencies to the ICPC, who can provide the right information and support to make the best decisions for my child.
- 3.14** I complete an ICPC report which describes what life is like for my child using strengths-based language. I am clear about the risks and the protective factors. My report is authorised by my manager at least 3 working days before the ICPC.
- 3.15** I verbally share my report with my child and family prior to the conference to help my child and family understand what will happen and possible outcomes.
- 3.16** I share my written report with the family and relevant partner agencies 3 days (as a minimum) prior to the conference, to support everyone being able to understand what is happening for my child.
- 3.17** If my child is too young to attend the ICPC, I will share information about my child's voice and lived experience to influence next steps and decision making.

4.0 Children supported by Child Protection Plans

- 4.01** I use kind and simple language to explain my role to my child and their parents/carers and what will happen next. I give them details of how to contact me and who to speak to when I am not available.
- 4.02** I help my family to understand the plan, how they will be supported to reduce the risks identified and how this will look to make a positive change for my child.
- 4.03** I see my child twice a month - every 15 working days for my child's statutory visit and once again to complete direct work. My child may need to be visited more often depending on the level of risk and their needs.
- 4.04** My recording of the visit to my child and family evidences how any risks are addressed and discussed, linking this to the child protection plan.
- 4.05** I observe babies and toddlers when they are awake, and I plan my visits around their routine.
- 4.06** I complete direct work with my child in a way that is purposeful and appropriate to their age, background and ability. My direct work and observations reflect my child's experience and inform my assessment and plan.
- 4.07** Each visit adds to my knowledge of my child's circumstances, their wishes and their feelings. I discuss and agree with my manager the plan for unannounced visits to inform my work with my child and family.
- 4.08** I understand the role of other adults in my child's life and that any new adults visiting, living in the household or in contact with the family have been properly assessed.
- 4.09** I check where my child sleeps including beds and bedding as well as safe sleeping arrangement for babies.

- 4.10** The first core group meeting takes place with the family and professionals within 10 working days of the Initial Child Protection Conference. This meeting is face to face and chaired by the Team Manager and will update and confirm the Child Protection Plan.
- 4.11** Core group meetings are held with at least two other professionals attending with the social worker. In exceptional circumstances if a professional is unable to attend, a summary report is provided to support with reviewing the Child Protection Plan.
- 4.12** Subsequent core group meetings will take place in at a minimum of 30 working days (6 weeks) and are face to face. I am responsible for the minutes. The agenda for the meeting will be the Child Protection Plan which will be reviewed and updated.
- 4.13** My child is invited to core group meetings in line with their age and understanding to be involved in the review of the plan. When they are not able to attend, the meeting captures their voice and lived experience.
- 4.14** A record of the core group meeting minutes is shared with parents/carers and key professionals involved in the plan within 72 hours of the meeting.
- 4.15** The core group meeting prior to the review child protection conference (RCPC) considers whether a CP Plan is still required to reflect the level of risk and need identified.
- 4.16** I use my supervision to review the impact and progress of the plan to ensure that my child is safe and that the work I am doing is making a positive change.
- 4.17** I reflect with my manager, prior to each review, whether a Child Protection Plan is still required and think about other options that reflect the level of risk identified.
- 4.18** I obtain the view of Child Protection Chair if I go to legal gateway panel or if the PLO process is started.

4.19

I continue to update my assessment every six months (or sooner if required) for all children that I work with, to ensure that the plan is based on their needs.

5.0 Children in Need

- 5.01** I make contact with the child and family within five working days of being allocated. I use kind and simple language to explain my role to my child and their parents/carers and what will happen next. I give them details of how to contact me and who to speak to when I am not available.
- 5.02** I plan my first visit to my child and family and gain written consent from parents and carers and provide the family with a complaints, comments and compliments leaflet as well as a children in need leaflet.
- 5.03** The first child in need meeting takes place face to face within 5 days of completing an assessment that recommends a child in need plan.
- 5.04** I let parents/carers know that they can be supported by a relative, friend or advocate to enable them to be involved and supported at children in need reviews.
- 5.05** I provide the opportunity for the family to discuss and arrange a family meeting at the first children in need review.
- 5.06** The children in need plan is written in a SMART way (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely) and in language that my child and family can understand. The plan is linked to the identified needs and risks as identified within my assessment.
- 5.07** A face to face Child in Need review will take place every 30 working days (6 weeks) to review the progress and what difference the plan has made to support my child and family.
- 5.08** My child is invited to their meetings in line with their age and understanding to be involved in the review of the plan. When they are not able to attend, the meeting captures their voice and lived experience.

- 5.09** If the Child in Need plan is not helping to make a positive change within 3 months, I discuss this with my line manager to reflect on my plan of work and for my manager to chair the 6-month review meeting.
- 5.10** I see my child every 20 working days as a minimum on their own. For children who have additional needs or complex health disabilities and are assessed as stable, I see them every 12 weeks as a minimum.
- 5.11** I observe babies and toddlers when they are awake, and I plan my visits around their routine.
- 5.12** I regularly complete direct work with my child in a way that is purposeful and appropriate to their age, background and ability. My direct work and observations reflect my child's experience and inform my assessment and plan.
- 5.13** I update my assessment every 6 months (or sooner if required) to ensure that the plan is linked to the support my child and family need, based on their needs.

6.0 Children with Complex Health or Disabilities

- 6.01** I make sure that details of my child's disabilities are accurately recorded on their file to help understand their additional needs. This includes recording the details of an EHCP if my child has one with a copy saved in documents.
- 6.02** When completing an assessment for my child, I see my child at home, school and any other important settings to understand their needs and what support they may require.
- 6.03** For my child, I update my assessment a minimum of every 12 months (or sooner) if required.
- 6.04** When completing or updating my assessment, I offer to complete a parent/carer needs assessment to identify the support needs of a parent/carer for my child.
- 6.05** Where my assessment identifies additional support needs for personal care or short breaks, I complete a social support plan and make a referral to the Disability Resource Panel within 2 weeks of completing my assessment.
- 6.06** I consider my child's personal or short breaks packages when reviewing the child in need, child protection or child in care plans and attend the disability resource panel to consider any changes needed at a minimum of an annual basis. I recommend changes more often if a review or an assessment identifies a change in need for my child and family.
- 6.07** I see my child every 20 working days at home as a minimum and on their own where possible. This will include my child with complex health or disabilities until there is a stable support package in place. For my child with complex health or disabilities whose situation is stable due to the support they receive with ongoing child in need involvement, I see them every 8 weeks at home as a minimum.

6.08

For my child receiving an overnight short break due to the complexity of their disability, I see them at their short breaks provision or family based short break setting at a minimum of 12-weekly alongside my child in need visits.

6.9

A child in need review will take place every 30 working days (6 weeks) to review the progress and what difference the plan has made to support my child and family. For my child with complex health or disabilities assessed as stable, a child in need review meeting takes place every 12 weeks, as a minimum.

6.10

I refer my child to the Preparation for Adulthood team on their 16th birthday or as soon as I become involved thereafter.

7.0 Children in Care

- 7.01** My child in care, their carers and their family know who I am, how to contact me and also how to get help when I am not in work.
- 7.02** There is a photograph of my child on their file.
- 7.03** I take time to get to know my child, their likes and dislikes and their interests. I find out about their origins, identity, culture, beliefs and language. I know their wishes, feelings and aspirations.
- 7.04** I complete direct work with my child in a way that is appropriate to their age, background and ability. Where my child's first language is not English, I use an interpreter to support our communication. My direct work and observations enable me to build a good relationship with my child.
- 7.05** I take pride in all of my child's achievements and recognise these in meetings and when I am writing my reports. I nominate my child for awards when appropriate. I celebrate each successful step in my child's journey.
- 7.06** My child is supported to have good quality family time with their family and other people who are important to them, with the safety of this having been assessed. Where my child's family and other significant people are not living in the UK, I make every effort to support communication and ask other services to help with this.
- 7.07** My child's needs are reassessed at least every 6 months and their Care Plan is updated within 10 days of each Child in Care Review.
- 7.08** I listen to my child to hear their wishes and feelings before a review and support them to get involved with the Children in Care Council (if age appropriate), along with any other participation activities.
- 7.09** When completing a request for a new home or family to look after my child (placement request forms), the information that I provide gives equal weight to my child's strengths as well as any identified concerns and risks.

- 7.10** When I am identifying a new home or family for my child, I do everything I can to make sure that the new home or family is the right one to help my child to achieve stability and experience a good level of care where they are safe.
- 7.11** Wherever possible, I arrange introductory visits when my child has to move to a new home or needs to live with a new family.
- 7.12** When my child is subject to a Care Order or Interim Care Order with a person who has parental responsibility, Placement with Parents approval has been given by a Head of Service and this decision has been recorded.
- 7.13** When my child goes to live with a kinship carer who has not been assessed as a foster carer, Regulation 24 approval is given by a Head of Service which is recorded on the child's file.
- 7.14** All relevant information is shared with carers before my child moves in, or on the day in the event of an emergency. This includes the family history, the vulnerability of my child and any identified risks. My child's experiences and voice will be central in this.
- 7.15** Within two working days of my child coming into care I make the necessary arrangements for an initial health assessment to be completed.
- 7.16** I see my child at their home within 5 working days of my child's first or any subsequent home to help them understand why they have come into care and why there has been any changes.
- 7.17** After my child experiences any moves to a new home or family, I hold a Placement Planning meeting within 72 hours. If for any reason this cannot happen, the meeting will take place no later than 5 days from when my child moved.
- I hold a care planning meeting before my child's decision making child in care review (2nd review) to agree a plan of permanence.
 - I hold subsequent care planning meetings as agreed on an individual basis at the child in care review with the Independent Reviewing Officer which will be in accordance with my child's needs and circumstances.

7.18 My child has a health assessment every 6 months if they are under 5 years old and every 12 months once they are over 5 years old. My child will also see the dentist regularly.

7.19 I follow up any actions from the health assessment in a timely manner.

7.20 I visit my child where they live and see their bedroom on a regular basis so that I know that their living arrangements are safe and suitable.

7.21 I see my child in line with the Care Planning, Placement and Case Planning Regulations (England) 2010 and statutory guidance

- Within 1 week of my child experiencing a move to a new home or family.
- After which I see my child at a minimum of every 20 working days if a child has ongoing care proceedings or living at home with parents (Placement with Parents). I also plan to see my child during the month to complete direct work.
- When there is a Care Order, I see my child every 6 weeks (30 working days).

When it has been agreed that where my child is living is a permanent arrangement, I visit my child at a minimum of 12 weeks.

7.22 If my child is living in an unregistered arrangement, I see my child every week or as agreed with my Head of Service.

7.23 I see and observe babies and toddlers when they are awake, and I plan my visits around their routine every 30 working days (6 weeks) as a minimum.

7.24 I complete direct work with my child in a way that is purposeful and appropriate to their age, background and ability. My direct work and observations reflect my child's experience and inform my assessment and plan of work.

7.25 My child always attends at least part of their review, unless they choose not to, or it is agreed with their Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) that it is not in their best interests to attend. My child's attendance at their review is supported by an interpreter where English is not their first language.

- 7.26** Children in Care Reviews are held within 20 working days of my child coming into care and then at month 4. Child in Care Reviews will then be held every 6 months.
- 7.27** If my child does not attend their review, their views will be shared through an agreed approach with the child. The IRO sees my child separately to understand their views.
- 7.28** My report for the Children in Care Review is shared with my child and family before the meeting.
- 7.29** My Children in Care review reports are shared with the Independent Reviewing Officer at least 2 working days before the Child in Care review.
- 7.30** When my child is 16 years old, I complete a post 16 report before the child in care review to support their planning for independence.
- 7.31** The Independent Reviewing Officer is updated or consulted about any significant changes in my child's circumstances as they happen.
- 7.32** I am actively involved in my child's education and ensure that there is an up-to-date personal education plan for them, which is ambitious and supports my child's aspirations. I review my child's personal education plan termly.
- 7.33** I contribute appropriately to the annual review of foster carers who are looking after my child.
- 7.34** Where my child has an EHC Plan I attend their EHCP review meetings and provide information to help assess their educational needs.
- 7.35** By the time my child is 16 years old they have helped form their own pathway plan and that this is discussed as part of their review.
- 7.36** I use my supervision to reflect on the work that I do with my child to understand what difference I making to support positive change.

7.37 I plan and complete lifestory work with my child to help them understand their journey and the decisions that have been made in their life.

7.38 If my child is seeking permission to remain in the UK (asylum) I link them with an immigration lawyer who is experienced in supporting children. I represent my child when they are facing difficult times in the immigration process, triple planning for my child to support every eventual outcome of the asylum claim.

7.39 My child's file is individual to them and not consolidated with their brothers and sisters.

8.0 Care Leavers

- 8.01** My young person and their network know who I am, how to contact me and also how to get help when I am not in work.
- 8.02** There is a recent photograph of my young person on their file with their agreement.
- 8.03** I take the time to get to know my young person. I know their wishes, feelings and aspirations.
- 8.04** I engage with my young person in a way that is appropriate to their age, background and ability. My work and observations enable me to build a good relationship with them.
- 8.05** I am aware of any risks that my young person may be exposed to and make sure that they are safe from harm, including exploitation. I take the necessary steps when I am worried about them to support their safety and wellbeing.
- 8.06** I encourage my young person to stay in care until they are 18 years old so that when they choose to leave, they have all the information and skills needed to help them live independently.
- 8.07** I see my young person who is aged between 18 and 21 years every 8 weeks. I use the care leaver information tab on LCS to record the birthday contact only.
- 8.08** I promote and encourage family time between my young person and their family and friends, when safe to do so and support them to develop new support networks in their community.
- 8.09** I celebrate my young person's successes and achievements with them and those who are important to them.
- 8.10** My young person's file and pathway plan captures information about how the Local Offer has been shared with them and what allowances and grants have been offered.

- 8.11** I actively involve my young person in the development and review of their Pathway Plan which will take place at least every six months and fully reflects their life, needs, wishes and feelings. I update the Pathway Plan more frequently when there have been significant changes.
- 8.12** If my young person is in custody they are seen regularly and planning meetings happen with the services needed to offer support prior to their release.
- 8.13** I update my young person's file with information on Education, Employment and Training, including accommodation type every 8 weeks unless there is a change in circumstances.
- 8.14** My young person will have a personal advisor who will help them prepare for independent living by making sure all support identified has been provided.
- 8.15** My young person will know how to access education, training and employment as well as understand how to access financial support if they want to attend university.
- 8.16** My young person is supported to obtain a National Insurance number, Birth Certificate, bank account and a passport if they do not already have them.
- 8.17** My young person is supported to get a suitable place to live and is aware where appropriate that they can live with their foster carers until they are 21 years old.
- 8.18** Where my young person has an EHCP, they receive the right support after they are eighteen.
- 8.19** My young person knows how to access Leaving Care Services until they are 25 years old. They receive support from a personal advisor as long as they need. My young person will know how to opt out if they do not want support from the service.
- 8.20** If my young person is going to be a parent, I take the necessary steps to ensure that they and their unborn baby are supported and safe as early as possible.

9.0 Foster Care Recruitment

- 9.01** I respond to initial enquiries within 48 hours and provide the enquirer with any further information they require to inform their decision in relation to moving forward with a home visit.
- 9.02** Where enquirers are not known to the fostering service or children's social care I send an information pack to them within 5 working days of the initial enquiry. I will make enquirers aware that there is a downloadable pack on the website.
- 9.03** Where the enquirer or member of the household is known to the fostering service or children's social care I pass the enquiry to a manager for a decision about next steps.
- 9.04** If the manager's decision is not to progress the enquiry, I share this decision and the reasons with the enquirer before closing down the initial enquiry.
- 9.05** I keep track of initial enquiries. Positive enquiries are booked in a home visit with a supervising social worker.
- 9.06** A home visit is undertaken as soon as applicants are available when I explore the applicant's suitability to foster. I consider all members of the household, the suitability of the home, previous fostering/adoption applications or experience, previous significant relationships and the health of the carers.
- 9.07** Following my home visit, I complete a home visit report which is shared with my manager. The applicant is provided with a decision within 10 working days, either by a letter advising of reasons we are unable to progress or send out an application form inviting them to formally apply to foster.
- 9.08** I share with all enquirers and applicants of their right to make a complaint to the fostering service and how to do this if they do not agree with the outcome of their initial enquiry.

9.09

I ensure the formal application form is received from the applicant and signed in order to process stage 1 checks. If we do not receive an application form within 3 weeks we will close the enquiry.

9.10

I complete checks of all household members over the age of 18 including but not limited to DBS, Children's Social Care, Local Authority and health. I record the dates these checks have been requested and the outcomes of these checks. I review the outcomes of all checks on receipt.

9.11

At stage 2 assessment I ask for 2 personal references in respect of the applicants, a current work reference, previous work references (if worked with children/vulnerable adults), birth children references, ex-partner references, certificate of good conduct and SSAFA (if previously armed forces) in written form.

9.12

I request medical oversight of each applicant's fitness to foster.

9.13

All applicants are booked onto and attend preparation training, and I reflect on their engagement and learning as part of my assessment. Birth children of the applicants are invited to attend their own preparatory course.

9.14

I complete a stage 2 assessment of the applicants and a report that includes all relevant information, a recommendation about the applicants' suitability to foster and proposals in relation to terms of approval. My assessment includes a health and safety checks of the applicants' home as well as any relevant risk assessments including transportation and pets.

9.15

If I identify any concerns about the applicants' suitability to foster part way through the assessment, I complete a brief report documenting the work undertaken to date and present this to fostering panel for consideration as to whether the assessment should be ended.

9.16

I share my completed assessment with the applicants for their comments and agreement. I take into consideration issues of consent for information sharing and redact the assessment if necessary with the agreement of my manager.

9.17 I present the completed assessment to fostering panel and will support and prepare the applicants to attend the fostering panel.

9.18 I aim to complete the stage 2 assessment process within 12-16 weeks and present to panel within 16-20 weeks.

9.19 I inform the newly approved carer of the qualifying determination in writing followed by a foster carer agreement.

10.0 Foster Care Supervision and Support

- 10.01** My child and their foster carers know how to contact me and also know who to get help from when I am not in work.
- 10.02** My child and their foster carers have all the relevant telephone numbers to be able to access support at any time.
- 10.03** All internal fostering options are explored to support the best matches to be made. I complete the matching tool prior to my child moving into a fostering household or as soon as possible thereafter if this is arranged in an emergency.
- 10.04** The foster carers are reminded of their responsibility to notify the Trust and Foster for Bradford of any significant changes. For example, changes in employment, offences or deteriorating health issues.
- 10.05** My child is given the opportunity to meet with the fostering family prior to moving to their new home whenever possible and appropriate.
- 10.06** A placement planning meeting takes place within five working days of my child moving to a new home, to agree how my child's needs will be met including completion of delegated authority.
- 10.07** I complete a health and safety checklist of my foster carer's home every year to ensure good standards are maintained.
- 10.08** Supervisory visits to foster carers take place once a week during the first 4 weeks of having their first foster child, then a minimum of every 4 weeks for their first year of fostering and a minimum of every 8 weeks after their first annual review.
- 10.09** At least two unannounced visits will take place every year to the fostering household to ensure a safe home environment for my child in care.

- 10.10** I record supervision of carers using LCS forms. The guidance on the form is followed to capture the expectations of the supervisory visit and fostering minimum standards, recording how the foster carers evidence these in their care of children.
- 10.11** When my child has been with foster carers for 1 year I discuss long term matching with the foster carer, child's social worker and IRO and follow procedures to achieve permanence for the child where appropriate.
- 10.12** For kinship carers, when a child is living with any carer under Reg 24, the assessing social worker will adopt a dual role of the supervising and assessing social worker during the period of assessment to meet timescales for all visits.
- 10.13** Foster carers have a review every 12 months, or sooner if required in response to any identified concerns. I present the first annual review and every third annual review thereafter to fostering panel.
- 10.14** I identify and address any areas of development or concern that arise in between annual reviews rather than waiting for the next review.
- 10.15** I attend meetings to represent the fostering service and investigate any concerns raised about foster carers.
- 10.16** I request updated DBS checks for foster carers and other adults within the fostering household every 3 years. I request updated medicals for foster carers every 5 years.
- 10.17** I am available for additional support to promote the best possible fostering experience and outcomes for my child.
- 10.18** I take part in recruitment activity, enrichment activities and support groups as required to support the recruitment and retention of foster carers.
- 10.19** I assess how foster carers meet fostering minimum standards through their annual review.

10.20

I support foster carers in completing their training support development standards workbook within 1 year for mainstream foster carers and within 18 months for kinship carers.

10.21

I regularly review a foster carer's training needs and support them in their development. I complete a personal professional development plan with my foster carers.

10.22

My recording is up to date and critical incidents are recorded within 1 working day. If I am unable to do this, I inform my manager.

11.0 Securing Permanence

11.01 I identify my child's family network and important adults as early on as possible in my work to understand who can help parents when they need help. This also provides a backup (contingency) plan for when parents are not able to look after their child.

11.02 I complete viability assessments for kinship carers identified by the family as alternative carers for my child jointly with the kinship assessment team. I progress these assessments within my child's timescale.

11.03 I complete a Regulation 24 assessment for any potential kinship carers. If there is more than one carer I work with the family to identify the most appropriate carer.

11.04 After my child is placed in any new home, I hold a Placement Planning meeting within 72 hours. If for any reason this cannot happen, the meeting will take place no later than 5 days on when my child moved.

- I hold a care planning meeting before my child's decision making child in care review (2nd review) to agree a plan of permanence.
- I hold subsequent care planning meetings as agreed on an individual basis at the child in care review with the IRO which will be in accordance with the child's needs and circumstances.

11.05 By the 2nd Children in Care review, all permanence options have been explored, and a permanence plan has been created for my child.

11.06 I attend permanence panel for ratification of decisions for Placement with Parents, Section 20, Long Term Fostering and Special Guardianship arrangements.

11.07 Where an approved permanence plan is for long-term fostering I speak to the placement team who will identify the right home for my child to live. The placement team have a copy of all the assessments I have completed so that my child's unique needs are clearly understood. When the right home has been identified, the plan to match my child to his or her carers will be presented to the Fostering Panel and Permanence Panel.

- 11.08** For all special guardians, a support plan will be developed, and the relevant financial assessments are undertaken. I do this jointly with the fostering supervising social worker when this is a kinship carer.
- 11.09** When adoption is being considered for my child, I make a referral to One Adoption West Yorkshire as soon as possible to ensure there is no delay.
- 11.10** When the approved permanence plan is for adoption, this is ratified by the Agency Decision Maker. I complete the Child's Permanence Report for the ADM to consider my child's plan prior to filing my final evidence with the Court.
- 11.11** My child's permanence report will support decision making to assist with family finding and help my child understand their life story in later life.
- 11.12** I will notify One Adoption West Yorkshire when my child has brothers or sisters who have been adopted.
- 11.13** My child is supported to move to their new family through an introduction period that meets their age, understanding and needs.
- 11.14** If I am concerned about the stability of where my child is living, an urgent Care Planning meeting will be arranged to look at what support can be offered to my child and their carers.
- 11.15** A Placement Disruption Meeting will be held if the living arrangements for my child breaks down to understand what support is needed for my child and what happened to support learning to improve decision making.
- 11.16** My child understands their journey through life story work which they will have full access to prior to any Final Order being made by the court. If my child remains a child in care, this work will be updated regularly to support their journey and understanding.
- 11.17** Birth parents are given the opportunity to access independent support and counselling.

12.0 Youth Justice Service

- 12.01** My child knows who I am and how to contact me when they need support.
- 12.02** I use kind and simple language in all my work with my child and family.
- 12.03** I adopt a child first approach in my work with my child recognising they are different to adults and require different support.
- 12.04** I work collaboratively with my child to build a positive identity and divert them from the stigma attached with crime whenever possible.
- 12.05** I recognise my child in the criminal justice system has complex experiences with multiple needs. I see my child first and foremost and look to understand their behaviours.
- 12.06** My child and their family understand why I am working with them. When there is an order or intervention, my child and their family will understand the requirements of these and what could happen if these are not met.
- 12.07** My work and observations reflect my child's experience to inform my assessments. I identify positive activities and use a strengths based approach.
- 12.08** I always consider the risks to, and impact for, victims in all my work with children and their families. I will consider if my child is also a victim and take this into account within my work.
- 12.09** I talk through my reports for court to help my child and family understand what could happen.
- 12.10** I talk through all my assessments and plans to help my child and their family to understand what will happen next. I listen and consider things that they may wish to include.
- 12.11** I use my child and their family's voice to inform my assessment plan and delivery of work.

- 12.12** I check the relevant databases for all new children referred to the service and identify key professionals.
- 12.13** I see my child according to their needs identified, likelihood of future behaviors, safety of themselves and of others.
- 12.14** I see my child at home at least once a month. I also see and speak to the family regularly.
- 12.15** As part of my work assessing, planning and delivering, I always consider issues relating to the likelihood of future behaviour, any safety / wellbeing issues for my child or family including my child as a potential victim alongside victim safety and keeping others safe.
- 12.16** Prior to sentencing I see my child alone at least once as a minimum when completing a pre-sentence report. I also see the family and am informed by relevant professionals.
- 12.17** As a court officer, all recommendations made will be in the best interest of my child and in line with the assessed likelihood of offending, safety of my child and of others. I challenge the court if the disposal being proposed does not meet the needs of my child.
- 12.18** When my child is known to Children's Services or MAPPA, I understand my role in the multi-agency structure and I participate in relevant meetings, including the production of appropriate, professionally written and timely reports.
- 12.19** When my child is in care, I assess whether their offending behaviour is fully or in part linked to their experiences, circumstances and family background. I consider any trauma my child has experienced and where required work in a trauma informed way.
- 12.20** When my child is in care, I will always contribute to their child in care review meeting.

- 12.21** I am creative and determined in my efforts to build a meaningful relationship with child and family that I work with. Where flexibility is needed, I discuss this with my manager and agree if it is appropriate to suspend National Standards.
- 12.22** I am mindful of issues relating to safeguarding. I seek advice and guidance from relevant individuals and agencies and refer cases to Children's Services when required. I record the decisions in the appropriate place on the child's file.
- 12.23** When working with a child who goes to custody, I liaise with the custodial institution to ensure that my child is well and all their needs are being met. I see my child at least once per month and act as an advocate for my child in terms of their safety and wellbeing. I am part of a sentence plan that supports my child's identified needs and integration back into the community.
- 12.24** My child is supported to spend time with their family or meaningful people when in custody.
- 12.25** I work closely with the specialist staff when appropriate to support my child.
- 12.26** I work with my child to support their independence, help them to build support networks within the community and signpost them so that they can access appropriate services. This includes planning an Exit Strategy with my child and their family or support team to manage a positive exit from YJS service.
- 12.27** I understand the importance of accurate and timely recording of case work on Child View and required documents. My knowledge of Child View and required documents is kept up to date through training.
- 12.28** My recording is clear and accurate in line with both the National Standards for Youth Justice and our own local standards.
- 12.29** When I am unsure of what is impacting my child and family I will seek appropriate advice and supervision.
- 12.30** All key decisions impacting on the child's life are recorded, including manager's decisions, discussions and meetings.

13.0 Children Subject to Public Law Outline (PLO)

- 13.01** When my child is assessed as being at risk of significant harm and I have not been able to reduce the risk through the child protection process, I discuss my child and family with my team manager and service manager, and seek approval from my Head of Service for my child to be considered at Legal Gateway Panel (LGP).
- 13.02** I provide a referral, an up to date assessment, medical, genogram and a chronology to the LGP administrator 3 days before the panel takes place. This helps panel members to understand the risks and enable legal advice to be given about next steps.
- 13.03** For unborn children I refer the family to LGP as early as possible if it is assessed that there are high risks or if a decision about pre-proceedings PLO needs to be considered. This will be no later than 24 weeks into the pregnancy.
- 13.04** For unborn children where either parent has had a previous child involved in care proceedings, I refer the family to LGP as soon as I am allocated as the social worker to consider if pre-proceedings PLO should apply while the pre-birth assessment is being completed.
- 13.05** I refer any children that have been agreed as urgent proceedings or Section 20 to LGP for legal advice and planning.
- 13.06** If pre-proceedings PLO is agreed, I meet with my allocated solicitor to discuss the letter and plan. I send an agreed Letter Before Proceedings to parents and anyone with parental responsibility within 5 working days of the panel decision. The letter will be sent to parents even if they are not involved in my child's life.
- 13.07** I write the letter before proceedings using simple and plain language which is jargon free. The letter clearly identifies the risks, why my child needs their parents/carers to change and how the family can avoid care proceedings. I detail how I will work and support the family and what needs to change to improve their child's situation with clear timescales.

- 13.08** I make sure that parents/carers understand that they are entitled to receive free legal advice and representation and encourage them to obtain it.
- 13.09** The first PLO meeting happens within 5-7 working days of the letter being shared with the family and a legal representative attends where possible. This meeting is chaired by the Team Manager and explains how we will support the parents as outlined in the letter before proceedings.
- 13.10** To help parents and carers understand how they can avoid court I provide them with an assessment plan at the initial PLO meeting. This plan will be clear about the purpose of the work I will be doing. I seek agreement where necessary for: attendance at support groups or activities, family group conference, information about alternative carers for the children, agreement to a specialist assessment, my child's current living arrangements, and expected social work visits.
- 13.11** I make sure that every effort is made to keep my child within their family or network. I make sure that all plans are being explored to reduce any potential delay.
- 13.12** Subsequent PLO review meetings take place with the family every 30 working days. My child and family's wishes and feelings are heard and influence the plan of work. My team manager continues to chair these meetings. I make timely decisions and work to the pre-proceedings process lasting no longer than 60 days unless there are exceptional reasons for further time. I meet with my Head of Service to agree any extensions beyond 4 months.
- 13.13** I speak to the child protection chair regarding the progress of PLO reflecting on changes to ensure my child is safe and supported.
- 13.14** I record the minutes of all PLO meetings on the PLO minutes form on LCS and share them with everyone within 5 working days.
- 13.15** I record that a PLO meeting or review has taken place, including the outcome on the child's LCS file within 24 hours.

13.16

If following assessment and the plan of work agreed, my child remains at risk of significant harm then I seek approval from my Head of Service to present the child at LGP to consider next steps and a decision about whether care proceedings are required.

14.0 Public Law Proceedings

- 14.01** I discuss my child with the allocated lawyer in Legal Services.
- 14.02** I provide Legal with the evidence and supporting documents in the form of the updated assessment, a SWET statement, a chronology, genogram and an interim care plan within 5 working days of LGP agreeing proceedings and within 3 working days of a newborn baby.
- 14.03** I complete viability assessments and the regulation 24 assessments when my child can live with kinship carers prior to the initial court hearing. Any other viability assessments are completed without delay.
- 14.04** I know what the risks and protective factors are for my child and the impact on them of living in their current situation. My statement provides a confident evidence based explanation of the decision making and the recommendations detailed in the interim care plan.
- 14.05** I consider the need for expert assessment and my statement will give clear reasons why it may, or may not, be necessary and what it will add to the evidence already available.
- 14.06** I make sure that I let anyone with parental responsibility know of the intention to apply for a court order. When this is done in a planned way I provide parents/carers with a letter before proceedings to notify them of the plan.
- 14.07** Following the initial hearing I attend the pre-CMH meeting the Children's Guardian and Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) to exchange contact details and explore any gaps in the initial evidence and plans.
- 14.08** At the Case Management Hearing (CMH), I provide an assessment plan, which reflects my understanding of my child's circumstances, their wishes and feelings and their lived experience. The assessment plan details who will complete the assessment, what it will include and give details of the sessions.

- 14.09** At the CMH the timetable for the filing of evidence will be agreed through to the Issues Resolution Hearing (IRH). I add all filing and hearing dates to my calendar so that I know exactly when to file my evidence and attend court.
- 14.10** I meet all the court directions and deadlines. Where I cannot do this, I speak to my team manager and legal services so that the parties and the court can be notified without delay.
- 14.11** If my child is made the subject of an interim care order, I liaise with the IRO so the child in care reviews can be planned in line with the child's timescales and the timescales of the court process. The final care plan is ratified by the IRO prior to finalising my evidence.
- 14.12** I contact the children's guardian (CAFCASS) and liaise with them throughout the proceedings. Any changes to my child's interim care plan is discussed with the children's guardian.
- 14.13** I know the timescales for any relevant panels e.g. fostering panel, adoption medicals, ADM, permanence panel and I arrange dates to prevent any delay in considering a permanent plan for my child.
- 14.14** I plan and complete a sibling assessment when necessary to support any decisions regarding family time and where children will live.
- 14.15** I complete direct work with my child so that I know who and what is important to my child within and beyond their immediate family and will share their wishes and feelings within my evidence.
- 14.16** I help my child understand in an age-appropriate way what is happening in court and when decisions are going to be made. I also consider advocacy services for my child where appropriate.
- 14.17** I gather information from all relevant multi agency professionals involved with my child and the family.

- 14.18** I use care planning meetings and supervision to discuss the progress of the proceedings as well as consider my assessment, expert assessment, analysis and possible recommendations, and any concluding order that may be necessary to safeguard my child and prevent drift for my child.
- 14.19** I regularly speak to legal services throughout the proceedings so that they are fully aware of any changes for my child.
- 14.20** I send my final assessment and final care plan to my court consultant and team manager one week before they are due to be filed so that the documents can be quality assured. The final care plan is agreed by the Service Manager.
- 14.21** I share my final recommendation with the family and with my child before I file my final evidence.
- 14.22** I arrange for my child to visit the court and meet the judge if they so wish.
- 14.23** I am prepared to give evidence if the proceedings are listed for a contested hearing.

15.0 Youth Homeless

- 15.01** My young person who identifies as homeless or at risk of homelessness is allocated a Social Worker and Personal Advisor at the point of referral.
- 15.02** I have consent from my young person to speak to other professionals and their parents/carers.
- 15.03** My young person is aware that an assessment will be completed to understand their needs. As part of this, my young person is offered an opportunity to speak to the advocacy service to make an informed choice about their legal status; either a Child In Need or to be supported under Section 20 of the Children's Act.
- 15.04** If my young person does not wish to have a legal status of Section 20 voluntary accommodation, child in need reviews will take place as set out in Practice Standard 5 and a discretionary pathway planning process until their needs are fully met.
- 15.05** I complete a single assessment to determine the current situation of my young person; this is completed in partnership with the Integrated Front Door, Care Leavers Service and Housing Option
- 15.06** Where appropriate I attempt to mediate between my young person and their parents/carers.
- 15.07** Where possible and safe to do so, my young person is supported to return home with the right support.
- 15.08** If required, a placement request form will be completed that provides a clear and balanced understanding of my young person's needs, strengths and challenges.
- 15.09** I apply practice standards regarding Children in Care as set out earlier to my young person.

16.0 Private Fostering

- 16.01** I contact my child, the parents/carer and the prospective private foster carers within 5 working days of the Trust being notified.
- 16.02** During my initial visit to the private foster carers, I share the initial paperwork to gather all the information that I need and provide details on how to contact me.
- 16.03** I complete the Private Fostering Assessment, checks and references within 45 days of the notification.
- 16.04** I inform the Designated Manager for Private Fostering once the Private Fostering Assessment has been completed for a Ratifying Letter to be issued.
- 16.05** I develop a Private Fostering SMART Plan (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely) in a language that my child and family can understand. The Private Fostering plan is linked to the identified needs as set out in my assessment.
- 16.06** I visit my child every 6 weeks in the first year and then every 3 months to review the Private Fostering Arrangement.
- 16.07** I review the suitability of the Private Foster Carer on an annual basis and send a copy of the report to the Designated Manager.
- 16.08** Should the Private Fostering Arrangement continue beyond 4 months, I discuss this with my Line Manager to discuss a plan of permanence for the child/young person.



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