

one  
two  
three  
four  
five  
six  
seven



PRACTICE  
STANDARDS

# INTRODUCTION

In Knowsley seven Practice Standards have been created which underpin practice and ensure that all children/young people and their parents/carers received a consistently high service from staff; whatever team they are involved with.

Creative work to devise the Practice Standards occurred following Knowsley Children's Social Care Peer Challenge in October 2019 which advised that "a lack of practice standards is hindering quality of practice and consistency of audit."

The standards have been created with consideration to our Children's key messages within the Children's Charter and in consultation with staff, children/young people and their families: over 120 members of staff completed a survey in which they gave feedback on the draft standards; over 40 members of staff attended focus groups to discuss in more detail the findings of the survey.

A group of children & young people from Vibe, the Youth Parliament and MADE attended a focus group, gave their opinions on the draft standards and designed logos for each of the standards; and a parent's group were also sent the standards and asked for their views.

The feedback was analysed & reflected on and amendments were made to the draft standards to produce these seven Practice Standards and their logos.

It is therefore with great pleasure that we are happy to endorse these Practice Standards as a way to providing a better service for all children/young people and their families as well as being a benchmark for:

- Staff to measure their own work against;
- Managers to authorise work against;
- Auditors to audit against;
- Complaints to be responded to against.



**Julie Moss**

Director of Children's Services



**Cllr Margaret Harvey**

Cabinet Member for Children's Services



**Lara Wood**

Principal Social Worker

# PRACTICE STANDARD **one**



Every child/young person and their family/carer will be at the heart of what we do.

We will listen to children/young people and their families/carers so we can understand what life is like for them.

We will be open & honest about any decisions that are made and if we can't act on someone's wishes we will explain the reasons why to them.

We will respect everybody's individual needs and will think about the impact their needs may have on their experience of life.

We will make sure that we have the right training so that we can help children/young people and their families/carers.

In all that we do we will work with children/young people and their families/carers, rather than doing things to them, or for them.

We will use a strengths-based model of practice (Signs of Safety) which will involve children/young people and their families/carers in decision making and planning.

# PRACTICE STANDARD

## two



Every child/young person will have an up-to-date assessment of their individual needs.

Every child/young person will have an up-to-date assessment that considers the strengths and things that are going well as well as the things that are causing worry or concern.

We will use the assessment to help us understand what life is like for the child/young person and their family; both now and in the past. We will think about what life could be like for the child/young person if things don't change, or if they change for the better.

Assessments will include information from the child/young person, their family/carer, other important people in their life and professionals working with the family.

We will write the assessment in a way that makes sense to children and their families/carers and make sure they have a copy of it in a format they can understand.

Assessments will focus on the child/young person's views and their individual needs. They will also include the views of their family/carers.

Assessments will be used to help plan what needs to happen next to support/protect the child/young person at the present time and also in the future.

# PRACTICE STANDARD

# three



Every child/young person will have a plan with clear and measurable goals.

We will work with the child/young person and their family/carers to decide the goals that will support/protect the child/young person at the present time and also in the future.

We will review the plan to check if it is working, making the expected progress and having a positive impact on the child/young person.

We will support the child/young person, their family/carers and other important people in their life to come up with a realistic plan that will achieve the goals we have all agreed on.

If the plan is not working, we will work with everyone involved to change it. Unless it is absolutely necessary we will not change the goals or move the goal posts.

We will make sure the plan shows what needs to happen, who needs to do it, and when they need to do it by. Children and their families/carers will have a copy of the plan in a format they can understand.

We will work with the child/young person, their family/carers and other important people in their life to come up with a back-up plan in case the original plan consistently doesn't make any progress, does not meet the goals or the child/young person's circumstances deteriorate.

# PRACTICE STANDARD

## four



Every child/young person will have a safe, stable and secure home where they feel happy and have a positive sense of belonging.

We recognise that children/young people live in different types of households: some live with family members; some live with carers; and as they get older some live on their own.

We will listen to children/young people about things that make it harder for them to feel happy, safe and at home where they live. We will work with children/young people and their family/carers to stop those things happening.

We recognise that wherever a child/young person lives, and whoever they live with, it is important that they feel happy, safe, secure, have people they can rely on, and that they are able to call that place "home".

We will work with children/young people to make sure they have their own support network (important people in their life that they can rely on) who they can turn to when things are difficult.

We will listen to children/young people about things that help them feel happy, safe and at home where they live. We will work with children/young people and their family/carers to make sure these good things carry on.

We will work with children/young people to consider their long term plan of support or care because we know that feeling you "belong" is incredibly important everybody's happiness.

# PRACTICE STANDARD

# five

WHAT'S  
YOUR  
STORY?

Every child/young person will be supported to know, and understand their life experiences.

We recognise that we all have our own "story"; it is our way of understanding what has happened to us in the past and how these things affects us now and in the future.

We will dream "big" and have "high hopes" for the children/young people that we work with; supporting them to fulfil their potential.

We believe that knowing and understanding your life experiences can help you to have a strong sense of identity and self-worth.

We will work with families/ carers to make sure they are happy with the information that is shared with children/ young people.

We will ensure that every child/young person knows and understands their "story" in a way that makes sense to them.

We will support families/ carers to be as involved as possible in the sharing, and explaining of "stories" to children/young people.



# PRACTICE STANDARD

## six



Every child/young person and their family/carer's involvement with services will be clearly recorded.

We understand that as they get older many young people may want to read the records we hold about them and their involvement with our services.

We will record the details & purpose of things that we do, meetings that we have, plans that are in place, and the visits we complete.

Every child/young person and their family/carer's record will be well written, in clear language that everyone is able to understand; either now or in the future.

We will keep records up to date, including a description of the child/young person and their current circumstances.

We will record significant events (chronologies) that have happened in the child/young person's life; explaining why we believe they were important events.

Before meeting a child/young person or their family/carer we will read their records to make sure they don't have to repeat their "story" to us.



# PRACTICE STANDARD **seven**



Every child/young person and their family/carer's record will show clear management oversight & decision making.

Children/young people & their family/carers will be involved as much as possible in decision making and managers will check these decisions (management oversight) are the best for the child/young person.

Managers will have high expectations for the work completed by staff and check that it has been completed in line with the other Practice Standards.

Management oversight will be completed by different managers at different times; both Team Managers & Senior Officers. Managers will record the reasons for decisions being made in clear language that everyone can understand.

When necessary, managers will challenge staff's practice and support them to make sure they are able to meet all of the Practice Standards in their work.

For some children/young people, staff in the Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Unit will also offer additional challenge and oversight to make sure the decisions being made are the best for the child/young person.

Management oversight will ultimately aim to make sure that the work being done with children/young people is making a difference to their lives.

Special thanks goes to ...

