


# Practice Standards

## For All Managers

Some standards will relate specifically to the role of Team Managers/Assistant Team Managers; others will be more general

June 2023



✓High Expectations ✓High Support ✓High Challenge

**#MakeADifference**

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# Introduction

High quality social work, good partnership communication and collaboration is vital for supporting and safeguarding children and young people. These Practice Standards have been developed to support managers to promote consistent social work practice, supervision and management oversight in Sefton. They set out minimum service standards which can be expected by our leaders, managers, teams, children, young people, care experienced young adults, families, foster carers and partners.

These Practice Standards are a living document and will be reviewed regularly to fully reflect the needs of teams in Children's Services in Sefton as it develops and grows.

They are informed by statutory guidance and regulations; policies and procedures and so do not stand alone. All employees of Sefton Children's Services or those providing services on behalf of Sefton Children's Services are accountable for ensuring these Practice Standards are met at all times. They are mandatory.

Our Practice Standards should be understood within the context of:

1. Social Work England, Professional Standards
2. The Health and Care Professions Council Standards of Conduct, Performance and Ethics
3. The Department for Education's Knowledge and Skills Statement for approved child and family practitioners
4. Sefton Children's Services Practice Standards for effective intervention with children, young people and families and Sefton Children's Services Practice Standards for Business Support when launched in 2022
5. Working Together to Safeguard Children – July 2018

Sefton Children's Services recognises that working with children and young people and their families is one of the hardest and most complex tasks carried out within the public sector. Practitioners are required to give of themselves both professionally and emotionally in a demanding environment. Practitioners and managers require a high level of emotional intelligence, resilience and fortitude. They have a right to expect high-quality support and supervision from the organisation in which they work.

*"Children's social work can be highly pressured and, at times, extremely stressful. So, whether you are a frontline social worker, team manager or working with children in another social care setting, effective supervision helps you to do your job well."*

(Supervision and Effective Social Work Practice, Ofsted Blog, 23 October 2018)

Practitioners and managers also have a responsibility to be accountable for their own practice and behaviours.

*"Be accountable for the quality of my practice and the decisions I make."*

(Social Work England, Professional Standards, Standard 3)



The decisions and actions made by managers and practitioners can have a profound impact on the lives of children, young people, care experienced young adults, families and foster carers. Decision making must therefore be undertaken with the greatest care and diligence to ensure the best possible outcomes for children, young people, and their families.

Managers across the services; including Directors, Assistant Directors, Service Managers, Team Managers, Assistant Team Managers, Consultant Social Workers, Case Progression Managers, Practice Improvement Managers, Panel Advisors, IRO/FIRO and Child Protection Chairs and Registered Managers are responsible for ensuring that a good quality service is provided, which includes the following:

- Ensuring a professional response from the initial referral to closure
- Overseeing and recording good quality decisions about the type of response or intervention to be undertaken, and ensuring the skills, competence and capacities are in place for a quality service
- Providing clear direction and setting priorities in the service
- Ensuring the child or young person's voice is heard and fully considered when implementing the plan
- Scrutinising to ensure good quality recording, analysis of need and report writing
- Providing good quality supervision, annual Personal Development Reviews (PDRs) and well organised team and service meetings
- Making sure employees work within a supportive team culture, with good communication, high expectations, high support and routine commitment to rigorous professional practice
- Demonstrating effective multi-agency collaboration and working
- Ensuring **Sefton Stronger Together (Leeds Family Valued)** approach is implemented consistently across the service and understood by partner agencies to ensure a whole partnership approach.

Additionally, Registered Managers also have responsibilities as set out in the Children's homes regulations, including quality standards guide:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/Children's-homes-regulations-including-quality-standards-guide>

The National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fostering-services-national-minimum-standards>

The National Minimum Standards for Adoption can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/adoption-national-minimum-standards>



# Practice Standards

Our aim is to provide a quality service, these Practice Standards have been devised to support this. All practitioners need to know what their manager expects of them, and managers need to be assured that work has been carried out to an acceptable standard. In a practitioner's absence, colleagues need to be able to access records and know quickly what has been happening in the child's life and how best to respond to any need arising. Our Emergency Duty Service (EDT) rely on sound case recording and accurate case summaries to inform decision making out of hours. Key information should be available from the basic details screen, within the case summary, chronology, genogram, recent reports, and the latest records, plan, and reviews.

Managers are responsible for ensuring there are systems in place to monitor and review the performance of individuals and teams and provide protection, support, and professional development for practitioners, so they can deliver the best service possible, as well as comply with service procedures and legal requirements. Consistent scrutiny of practice makes explicit the service's expectations of each practitioner and enables the manager to provide evidenced feedback about outstanding, good, or acceptable practice, or to address unacceptable performance where it is identified.

Sefton has a Quality Assurance & Impact Framework in place which is intended to be supportive and strengths based. Good practice will be identified through audit activity and any areas of concern to improve performance and outcomes for children, young people, care experienced young adults and families. We are concerned to ensure that intervention makes a positive difference to the lives of children and young people and so impact will always be a key consideration. Where possible; we will gain feedback during audit from children, young people, families and care experienced young adults.

These Practice Standards are intended to assist managers across Children's Services; some standards will relate to specific roles. They provide guidance to promote consistent scrutiny, support, and supervision, and ensure defensible, informed and proportionate decision making. They are intended to clarify expectations and are broken down into five key aspects:

- General Management Standards
- Supervision
- Culture and Support
- Recruitment
- Sickness Absence

More detailed practice guides can be found at the end of these Practice Standards. It is acknowledged that the implementation of Practice Standards requires time and understanding. Communication should be ongoing to embed these Practice Standards which are mandatory and essential in supporting our improvement journey.

# 1. General Management Standards

## Induction

- All managers will ensure that every new starter to the organisation receives an induction which allows them time to understand the organisation and its core values, meet relevant others, familiarise self with Practice Standards, policies and procedures and complete mandatory core training.
- An induction programme has been created to welcome every new employee to Sefton CS.
- The 2-week induction programme can be adapted to suit different roles but contains key essential information relevant to all employees across CS.
- All new managers to CS should be provided with a copy of these Practice Standards as part of their induction.
- A revised induction programme may be useful to support individuals who have been absent from the workplace for a significant period.
- Our young people have created beautiful welcome cards which are held by Business Support Officers and our Child Participation Officer. These should be used to welcome new starters and new foster carers.

## Management Oversight

- All children, young people, and young adults for whom CS has a responsibility will have evidence in their records of managers scrutinising practice to ensure that decisions are made in the interests of the child or young person and are properly recorded. The same applies to the records of foster carers.
- When allocating to a social worker, managers will identify the direction of assessment, support and planning and outline tasks required; indicating timescales and desired outcomes where possible. Management direction must be recorded on the child or young person's file at the point of allocation. The same applies to our work with foster carers within the fostering service.
- Managers will ensure all recording and reports are of a good quality and are completed within timescales. Any court timescales should be explicit within the case summary.
- Managers will ensure that thorough enquiries are undertaken that produce good quality assessments and analysis of needs, leading to well-argued and evidenced recommendations for actions to be taken.

## Observations of Practice

- Managers will observe practice and give constructive formal feedback to Social Workers at least annually. This is to be documented as an observed practice and saved within supervision records on Sharepoint.
- Observations will also be allocated to support monthly audit activity and may occur during Practice Week in October or to support individual or team learning.
- Feedback from children, young people, care experienced young adults, families and carers will be sought wherever possible.

- Practitioners will now be required to submit two pieces of learning and reflect on one of these with a peer for Social Work England registration; the peer reflection has been expected since 01.12.21.
- It is important that observations of practice are supportive, strengths based, reflective, constructive, and well recorded. Any wider learning for the Local Authority should be documented and shared with Senior Managers to take forward.
- Any highlighted actions noted for follow up in an observed practice should be clearly recorded with timescales for completion.
- Managers should offer praise when work is done well and share good practice with Principal Social Worker to cascade or highlight within the Sefton Scoop Newsletter or other learning forums. Promoting a culture of giving and receiving feedback is important to everyone.
- Management oversight and scrutiny of practice will also be evidenced through case file audit, supervision, observations and during Practice week in October each year. This activity will support individual professional development and service improvement.

## Supervision

- All Team Managers and Assistant Team Managers must provide monthly supervision to Social Workers within their team. Supervision is both a right and a responsibility. Frequency will vary between roles.
- All managers should ensure that a supervision agreement is in place which outlines expectations clearly. This should be reviewed on an annual basis or when there is a change in supervisor.
- Supervision is an essential part of employee care; should provide opportunity to consider the impact of work on self; along with professional development and any training needs. Information on these issues must be placed in the practitioner's personal supervision file on Sharepoint, not on the child, young person's/young adults or foster carers record.
- All managers must ensure protected time to explore decision making and workload. Quality supervision is a key requirement to assure us that children and young people are kept safe, receive a quality service and that planning in respect of them is needs led and timely.
- The supervision record is a key management tool for childcare planning and case recording. It must be used in every supervision session relating to that child, young person or foster carer and must include consideration of the following:
  - The purpose of allocation, expectations of the practitioner's intervention – including the purpose of home visits; (Laming 2003 Rec 53); statutory visits, supervisory visits and unannounced visits in the case of fostering.
  - Guidance as to the course of action required if expectations cannot be met, and contingency plans in the event of no access visits. (Laming 2003 Rec34)
  - The requirement for an allocated social worker; that children and young people's needs are assessed; they each have a plan which meets all their needs and support is put into place to actively address those needs.
  - The requirement that children and young people should be seen, seen alone, and spoken to. If this does not happen, there should be an explanation as to why with detail as to who else is in contact with the child or young person.
  - The child/young persons voice should inform planning and decision making; with creative use of direct work tools to engage and communicate.



- Supervision should also consider any potential risk to the practitioner along with their health and wellbeing.
- All Team Managers and Assistant Team Managers are responsible for their team performance which they should check prior to individual supervision sessions to inform their conversations.
- If an audit has taken place; this should be reflected upon during supervision and any actions tracked to ensure learning loops have been closed and good outcomes.
- Service Managers will also be responsible for checking performance to inform supervision with Team Managers and Senior Manager Performance meetings.
- All Team Managers and Assistant Team Managers will have access to LCS and performance data in an ongoing way to observe and monitor team performance.
- All Team Managers and Assistant Team Managers will have access to foster carer records on LCS.
- All Team Managers and Assistant Team Managers should evidence effective and visible management scrutiny on case records by recording oversight showing that files are routinely read and regularly audited.
- Managers should record their oversight on records in **red font**.
- Any key management decisions outside of formal supervision, which shape the actions and interventions of a practitioner, must be recorded by the manager responsible not the practitioner.
- There should be layered management oversight when advice is sought from a Service Manager or Assistant Director; recorded by the relevant Senior Manager.
- Any decisions made outside of hours will be recorded by EDT.

## Supervision Records

- There must be a record of the discussion completed for each child or young person/young adult or foster carer at every supervision session concerning them. It must be recorded within their record within five working days. (Where non case holders (e.g., Service Managers) discuss individual children and young people and make decisions this must be recorded on the record. The same applies to foster carer records.
- The Team Manager/Assistant Team Manager must retain a copy of supervision on the practitioner's welfare supervision file on Sharepoint. If a child, young person, or foster parent has been discussed during welfare supervision; only their LCS number should be recorded within their welfare supervision record; to be held safely within their personal file on SharePoint.
- Supervision notes should always be recorded in a dignified way.
- Group supervision can be an effective; allowing different perspectives to be sought and experience to be shared. A summary of any actions that stem from group supervision should be recorded within the file.

## Auditing

- The Principal Social Worker/Service Manager for Quality Assurance & Practice Improvement and the Quality Assurance team will be responsible for organising and collating audit activity across CS, alerting all relevant Social Workers, Team Managers, IROs, Service Managers of planned audit activity; timescales and learning outcomes.



- Assistant Directors, Service Managers, Practice Improvement Managers, Team Managers, Independent Reviewing Officers, Child Protection Chairs, Panel Advisors, Assistant Team Managers and Practice Assessor Leads will be asked to undertake file audits, dip sample audits and thematic audits within directed timescales. Observations will also be allocated as part of monthly audit activity from Summer 2023.
- Clear guidance will be issued to all new managers who will be given the opportunity to co audit if they are new to auditing.
- The Quality Assurance & Impact Framework when updated will be circulated across CS noting any significant changes with opportunities for group audit learning when new managers join the service.

## Children/Young People/Care Experienced Young Adults/foster Carers records

Team Managers are responsible for ensuring all children, young people, care experienced young adults and foster carer records open to their team are up to date. They must ensure that:

- The personal details held on the child, young person, wider family, foster family are accurately recorded on the basic details screen.
- The chronology is up to date and provides meaningful information in respect of significant decisions outcomes and achievements. It will be important to think about what would be significant to a child reading their record later in life.
- There is an up-to-date case summary (updated every 3 months or in the event of any meaningful change which brings the child/young person alive and explains their current situation as well as providing a summary of relevant history; detail of key professionals involved, legal status, contingency planning, family time plans, safety planning and detail of any significant timescales. A good practice example and case summary template can be found at the back of this document.
- Involvements are updated with clear contact details.
- Case records should be up to date and well written, free from error and written in a positive way to the child/ young person. There may be times when it will not be appropriate to write to the child/young person but all attempts should be made to ensure that notes are written sensitively in a way that would make sense later in life.
- Team Managers/Assistant Team Managers/Services Managers should use **red font** to highlight their oversight. Layered management oversight should be recorded.
- IRO/CP Chairs should use **green font** to indicate their oversight.
- The child/young person/young adults voice should be recorded in **blue font**.
- Records must meet agreed standards of practice. E.g., frequency for statutory visiting, CIN visiting, CP visiting, supervisory and unannounced visits to foster parents; seeing the child/young person alone, recording of their views and any observations of children irrelevant of their age or developmental stage.
- Records must be maintained electronically.
- Every Cared for child should have an About Me book which is used to get know them and help them to understand their past and current situation. Identifying also if any further work is required to support them.
- There should be a recent photograph located on every cared for child/young person individual file, with their name and date of photograph recorded, to be correctly located on files of cared for children and young people.

- Attempts should be made to obtain a recent photograph of all children and young people who are involved with Sefton MBC; obtaining relevant consent from those with parental responsibility to obtain a photograph of the child or young person to be located on the child or young person's case file.
- There should be a copy of the child/young person's most recent care plan and minutes of any meetings/reviews concerning them on record.
- Copies of fostering assessments, annual reviews must be held on the foster carer file and detailed notes kept of all visits to include planned supervisory visits and unannounced visits; using agreed templates.
- The most recent court order, where appropriate should be uploaded in LCS under documents with anything significant in terms of risk or timescales recorded within the case summary.
- All reports should be quality assured with evidence of management oversight, rationale and direction.
- All reports should be dated and signed by the practitioner and, where appropriate the Team Manager/Assistant Team Manager.
- All documents should be in the correct sections and in the correct order.
- There should be a case note added to LCS when any new information is received.
- In accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018, only documents that are relevant to the child, young person, foster parent in question should be retained, and they should not be kept longer than necessary.
- Managers supervision records relating to the individual child, young person, foster parent should be filed within the case recording tool under the appropriate section.
- Any action needed to address poorly maintained records must be discussed with the practitioner and steps taken to address this should be noted within supervision notes or within an audit tool. Remember, the child, young person or foster parent may see these documents later in life think about how you record.
- Managers will need to speak to the Independent Reviewing Officer/ Child Protection Chair/ Fostering Independent Reviewing Officer about late or missing planning and review documentation; escalating to Service Managers if significant or persistent issues.
- Team Managers will undertake regular file checks. This will ensure that files are well presented and maintained to the required standards should they be required for auditing by:
  - Directors, Assistant Directors, Service Managers, Team Managers, Independent Reviewing Officers or Assistant Team Managers (equivalent roles).
  - Quality Assurance Auditors/Practice Improvement Managers
  - Inspectors
  - Or due to a Subject Access Request (SAR) or in the event of a complaint.

## Confidentiality

All managers have access to personal and highly confidential information pertaining to the public and employees. Sefton Data Protection & Confidentiality Policy explains how we expect employees of the Council to treat confidential and personal information and so should be read alongside this practice guide.

As a manager, you will receive and handle personal and private information about children, families,

foster carers/parents, adopters, partner agencies, Sefton employees and organisational matters through the course of your day-to-day work. Sefton Children's Services is committed to ensuring this information is well-protected. To this end, all Council employees are expected to complete mandatory Information Sharing and Compliance training and to refresh learning on an annual basis.

We must protect information for a number of reasons, to include:

- Children, young people, care experienced young adults and family personal information is sensitive.
- Information can be sensitive to the operational area.
- An employee's personal information belongs to them.
- To safeguard children, young people from harm and / or promote their wellbeing.
- To safeguard and protect vulnerable adults.
- Confidentiality affects all employees. Council employees may have various levels of authorised access to confidential information. All managers are expected to understand and maintain confidentiality relevant to their role. This is key to the functioning and integrity of Sefton Borough Council.

Common examples of confidential and personal information include:

- Financial information.
- Personal data regarding children, families, foster carers/parents, adopters, members of the fostering family, partners, agencies and commissioned services.
- Data entrusted to the Council by external parties.
- Documents and processes explicitly marked as confidential.
- Unpublished goals, plans, forecasts, strategies, and initiatives marked as confidential or otherwise.

### **What you should do:**

- Ensure mandatory training is always up to date.
- Clear desk policy.
- Lock or secure confidential information always.
- Place confidential documents in the confidential waste when they are no longer needed.
- Make sure you only view confidential information for the purpose of completing work related tasks.
- Make sure you only view confidential information on secure devices.
- Only disclose information to other employees when it is necessary and authorised.
- Keep confidential documents inside Sefton MBC premises unless it is absolutely necessary to move them.

## What you should not do

- Use confidential information for any personal benefit, profit, or interest.
- Disclose confidential information to anyone outside of Sefton MBC unless there are legitimate reasons for doing so.
- Replicate confidential documents and files and store them on insecure or personal devices.

## Confidentiality Measures

Sefton MBC will take measures to ensure that confidential information is well protected; to include:

- Ensure that manual records are held securely.
- Minimise printing.
- Encrypt electronic information and safeguard databases.
- Ask you to sign a confidentiality agreement.
- Ask for authorisation by senior management to allow employees to access certain confidential information or restrict access e.g. if there is a known conflict of interest.

## Exceptions

Confidential information may occasionally have to be disclosed for legitimate reasons. Examples include:

- Where a regulatory body requests information as part of an investigation or audit.
- Where it is necessary and considered to be in the best interests of safeguarding the welfare of children and young people.
- Where Sefton MBC examines a venture or partnership that requires disclosing some information (within legal boundaries).
- In such cases, employees involved should document their disclosure procedure and collect all necessary authorisations. We are duty bound to minimise the amount of information disclosed to only that which is necessary.

## Disciplinary Consequences

Any breaches of the Council's Data Protection & Confidentiality Policy may lead to disciplinary and legal action.

Sefton MBC will investigate every breach of confidentiality and consider termination of any employee who willfully or regularly breaches our confidentiality guidelines. Sefton MBC may also have to act in respect of any unintentional breach of its confidentiality policy depending on the nature of this, intent, frequency, and seriousness.

## Communication

### Communication with children, young people, care experienced young adults, foster carers and families

- All those who we work with are to be spoken to professionally and always treated with respect.
- Team Managers and Assistant Team Managers to ensure that practitioners have provided full contact details to children and young people, their families and care experienced young adults and



all relevant professionals within two working days of new allocation. This includes name, telephone contact and email address.

- Children, young people and their families to be notified of any significant changes the management within two working days (e.g. re-allocation or transfer).
- All messages to be responded to within two working days.
- All Team Managers to be open, honest, and transparent with families always.
- All Team Managers must use plain and jargon free language.
- Team Managers/Assistant Team Managers must ensure that children, young people, families and care experienced young adults; carers have access to interpreters if their first language is not English, or if British Sign Language speakers – also, that written information provided is translated if required.
- Duty telephones should have clear, relevant message to assist those who are calling Sefton MBC.
- All Managers should ensure they have a complete signature on their email – their name, role, team, telephone and email details; relevant work days if applicable. We are asking all CS employees to support other colleagues by using pronouns and #MyNames to pronounce our names.
- Out of Office should be used so that people are clear whether people are available for contact and accurate voice mail messages should be updated.
- All managers/practitioners should provide their first and last name to callers and when reference is made to someone talking to their manager, the name of that manager is provided to the caller.

### Communication with Professionals:

- All professionals to be spoken to professionally and treated with respect.
- Team Manager/Assistant Team Manager to ensure practitioners provide full contact details to all professionals involved with the child, young person/young adult and their family. This includes name, telephone number and email address.
- All messages to be responded to within two working days.
- Professionals to be advised of any significant events or changes within the family circumstance within 2 working days.
- All professionals to be invited to all key meetings regarding the child or young person with sufficient notice.
- All professionals to receive a copy of all relevant documentation within timescales.
- Foster carers should be afforded the same level of respect.
- If capacity is challenged, wherever possible a response email should be sent with an indication as to when a fuller response can be provided.
- All Managers to connect with relevant partners to increase understanding of each others' roles.

### Communication with your Colleagues.

- Colleagues to be spoken to professionally and always treated with respect.
- All Managers are expected to read circulated information and cascade to their teams. Email traffic can be overwhelming; other ways of delivering messaging need to be considered; with face to face

options increasing.

- Team Manager/IRO/CP Chairs to be advised immediately of any significant changes to a family situation which may mean a child or young person is at risk; Service Manager to be consulted as appropriate and if escalation is required.
- Service Manager to be advised immediately if a timescale or piece of management advice cannot be adhered to with a clear rationale as to why.
- Legal Services to be notified in advance if court timescales cannot be met so that the court and relevant others; to include family can be notified in good time.
- Team Managers must advise their Service Managers if there are any issues which are impacting upon their ability to fulfil their role so that support can be put into place at the earliest opportunity.
- Assistant Team Managers must advise their Team Manager if there are any issues which are impacting upon their ability to fulfil their role so that support can be put into place at the earliest opportunity.
- Team Managers/Assistant Team Managers to follow the flexi policy and ensure teams are aware of relevant policies to support staff wellbeing e.g. Dignity at Work, Lone Working policy etc.
- Care should be taken by all to ensure that emails are directed only to those who a response is required. Sometimes, it will be necessary to copy others into emails for information or when seeking advice. If an answer is expected; please address the email to that person.
- All Team Managers model good practice to their teams in respect of communication.



## 2. Supervision

- All employees will have a supervision contract to be updated annually or if there is a change in supervisory relationship. This includes business support staff and practitioners who are not social work qualified.
- All Team Managers/Assistant Team Managers should observe and record at least one observation of practice per year. Qualified social workers must now record at least one peer reflection as part of their CPD each year.
- Every manager has a duty of care. This includes a requirement to ensure that those they supervise are safe within their work environment.
- All employees will have a Display Screen Equipment assessment on their supervision record.
- Each employee has a professional responsibility to be accountable for their own conduct, development, and delivery of a high-quality service. This includes being prepared for supervision, bringing evidence of progress, seeking appropriate assistance when needed and using a range of learning opportunities.
- All social work practitioners should have at least monthly formal case supervision and welfare supervision, which considers professional development, and personal support. Notes from these meetings should be recorded on a welfare supervision form and shared within five working days; to be signed and dated by the supervisee and supervisor and uploaded to the supervisees file to be held on SharePoint.

The screenshot displays the 'MySeftonMySpace' web application. At the top left is the Sefton Council logo. The main heading is 'MySeftonMySpace'. Below this, there are four text input fields arranged in two rows: 'Name:', 'Service Area/Team:', 'Manager:', and 'Date:'. A blue footer banner contains the text 'A confident and connected borough' and the 'MySeftonMySpace' logo. To the right, a sidebar contains several smaller panels, each with the 'MySeftonMySpace' title, showing various data and settings.

- Discussions and actions in respect of children and families should be recorded within the supervision tool in LCS.
- Case supervision should focus on children, young people, care experienced young adults and families; how we are helping them? What is working well? What could we consider doing differently to improve engagement or gain better outcomes? Whether the plan remains relevant and in the child's best interests? Progress in respect of previous agreed actions and driving the

plan forward? What we hope to help the family achieve and by when?

- As Supervisors, we act as Practice Leaders – supervision should improve our vision of what is happening in the lives of individual children, young people/young adults and families; so that we can consider how best to support employees to work with them.
- Notes taken during any welfare supervision should be recorded within five working days using the welfare supervision tool; to be signed and dated by the supervisee and supervisor and uploaded to the supervisees file to be held on SharePoint. If any children or families are discussed in terms of impact on work on self; only the LCS number should be referenced within the welfare supervision record. The frequency of welfare supervision will vary between roles; details held within Supervision Policy.
- The frequency of supervision sessions will also be determined by the level of experience and the complexity of the work being undertaken. Additionally, supervision for practitioners involved in assessments will need to be more frequent as work can change within four weeks. Every child/young person and foster carer should be considered each month unless there is clear rationale within the case summary for this to be less frequent e.g. children supported by Children with Complex Needs Hub.
- Informal supervision at the point of need is also important; any discussions and agreements from such meetings should also be recorded on the file; within a supervision document or as management oversight.
- Formal supervision will be undertaken weekly with NQSW's until 3-month review, following this fortnightly during next 3-6 months and monthly following positive 6-month ASYE review. There is appropriate guidance in respect of managing newly qualified practitioners with an emphasis on reflective learning and group supervision.
- Frequency of supervision for practitioners who have undertaken a major change of role in transferring to a different team and practitioners returning to work following a career break or other long-term absence will be agreed by receiving Team Manager and Service Manager and recorded within supervision notes/agreement.

## Annual Performance Appraisals

- All employees must have an annual performance appraisal. There should be a PDR in place which is reviewed and acted upon. The PDR (MySeftonMySpace) provides opportunity for employees to formally think about their achievements in the past twelve months and record any actions or areas for development. The PDR will set goals for the coming year which should be reviewed in an ongoing way.

## Managing Performance

- Effective supervision, high support and high challenge are key to good performance and ultimately good outcomes for children, young people/young adults and families/foster carers. Practitioners are accountable for their own professional practice and should be held to account if performance is not at expected standard. Where poor or under performance by the practitioner is identified, managers must seek support and guidance from their own line managers and Sefton Human Resources service in line with relevant procedure.

*“Supervision and case consultations are critical in helping practitioners draw out their reasoning so that it can be reviewed.”*

(The Munro Review of Child protection, Munro, 2011)



## 3. Culture and Support

- All managers will lead their team and ensure that everyone works in a professional environment that is conducive to delivering good professional practice. It is essential that Social Workers and other team members receive support from their Team Manager and peers. Developing and maintaining a supportive team culture can be a challenge at times of high demand but is essential to ensure adequate support, constructive challenge, a sense of belonging and pride along with professional rigour to daily practice.
- Teams work best when there is a culture of mutual support, inclusion, clear management leadership, good communication, clear expectations, a shared understanding of professional responsibilities, standards and vision.
- Managers should be aware of and actively adopt Sefton “One Council’ values which relate directly to how we deliver services and the way in which we treat one another and talk about Sefton to others. They are to:
  - Put people at the heart of what they do
  - Listen, value, and respect each other’s views
  - Develop a culture of challenge, ownership, innovation, and improvement
  - Be ambassadors for Sefton
  - Be responsive and efficient
  - Be clear about what they can and cannot do.
- Managers are responsible for ensuring monthly team meetings take place so that all team members understand what is happening in the wider organisation and the expectations of them. Managers need to model the expected standards for their teams which includes:
  - Always presenting professionally
  - Being on time for meetings
  - Being prepared for meetings and briefings
  - Acting as required in a timely way
  - Responding to telephone calls, emails
  - Having a good knowledge of the children, young people, young adults, families and foster carers within the team
  - Supporting and challenging appropriately.
- In addition, individuals and teams need support from their managers that demonstrates commitment to their professional development and opportunities to innovate, which consider and provide the practical means to work in a supportive physical environment and gives protection so that the workload is manageable.
- The Management Team will promote a supportive culture of giving and receiving feedback, learning, and listening in a range of ways – highlighting new ideas and sharing positive feedback in the Sefton Scoop newsletter which should be discussed at every team meeting to keep all abreast of change across the service.
- Managers should encourage team members to attend staff engagement sessions, Q & A sessions with Director and Senior Leadership Team so that they can express their views, keep abreast of change and contribute to innovation and improvement.
- Managers at all levels will be visible, accessible and approachable to their teams and lead by example.

- New managers will be given opportunities to shadow other managers across the service.
- Children's Services will be situated in one building (Magdalen House, Bootle) which will allow and enable open visiting to service areas; teams and managers to spend time with each other, direct communication, service and team meetings, briefings, engagement sessions and practice learning events.
- **Sefton Stronger Together** is a whole partnership approach based on Leeds Family Valued approach which will inform practice and service delivery in Sefton moving forward. Sefton will be working with Leeds Protecting Children, Strengthening Families Team to embed this restorative approach as part of a 2 year partnership during 2022 – 2024. All managers will be responsible for supporting implementation of this approach. To this end, all managers will be expected to attend relevant training on restorative practice, leadership, supervision, and management oversight and support their teams to take advantage of learning opportunities to embed this approach.
- The managerial role can be tough, sometimes lonely. Peer support and mentoring is to be promoted and encouraged across the service.

## 4. Recruitment

- Our aim in Sefton is to recruit the best people in a fair, transparent and efficient manner.
- All managers are responsible for identifying vacancies within their team/service area.
- All managers are responsible for ensuring that:
  - Job Descriptions and Person Specifications are appropriate for the role, are in Sefton's format, and have been approved via the Job Evaluation Process.
  - Ensuring that the appropriate budget and funding is in place for the role and the relevant Establishment Control forms\* (ECF) are completed and authorised prior to advertisement.
  - Investing time in recruitment to attract and recruit the best person with the required skills and attributes for the role. This includes:
    - Preparing an attractive and effective advertisement that promotes Sefton as an employer of choice – The Transformation Team has been set up to support this
    - Arranging a recruitment and selection panel
    - Arrange shortlisting with the panel
    - Updating the HR recruitment team with details of those shortlisted
    - To prepare appropriate selection activities including a formal interview with appropriate questions
    - Completing New Starter forms
    - Verifying references
    - Preparing and delivering Induction
    - Completing Probationary meetings in accordance with [Council Policy Probationary Periods \(smbc.loc\)](#)
- The recruiting manager should ensure the advert promotes Sefton and includes the following:
  - Role title
  - Salary point and scale (confirm with HR if in doubt)
  - Location of work
  - Close Date
  - Likely interview date
  - Details of contact person should applicant wish to find out more about the role – email address is sufficient.
  - Details of Market Supplement, Golden Hello, ASYE incentive if applicable to the role. If in doubt, seek HR advice.
- The recruiting manager will need to obtain the most recent job description and person specification linked to the post to be advertised and attach this with advert and forward to SM.
- Upon instruction, the HR recruitment team will support you by sending out letters for interview dates, undertaking relevant checks including references and preparing and sending out all contractual paperwork.
- All Managers need to check that an ECF has been authorised before advertising any new roles.
- For newly created posts, managers will need to liaise with HR to ensure the post has been job evaluated appropriately.
- Adverts should be sent to Sheila Mawdsley to upload to the intranet/Sefton Council website.

- Jobs Go Public site should be used by all managers to track the progress of applications and update accordingly. After shortlisting HR will update applicants as to whether they have been successful for interview or not.
- It is the responsibility of the recruiting manager to confirm the interview date, venue and any specific expectations linked to the interview e.g. title of powerpoint presentation; deadline for forwarding and mechanism for sharing on the interview date.
- It is the responsibility of the recruiting manager to consider part of the application which specifies if the applicant has any additional needs and take these into account in setting out details for the interview.
- All managers should complete mandatory training to support them in their role to ensure they understand recruitment processes.
- On every interview panel, at least one member of the panel should have completed Safer Recruitment training.
- Care must be taken to ensure that the interview process is fair and consistent. The panel should agree what questions will be asked, by whom and in what order.
- It is reasonable to ask a question a second time or prompt a candidate to get the best out of them but care should be taken to ensure the same opportunities are afforded to all those applying for the role.
- Whilst we are interested in ensuring that people we recruit have the right skills, knowledge, experience and qualifications – managers should also seek to use restorative questions which bring out values and beliefs.
- Managers should also outline at the end of the interview basics such as work hours, pay scale, annual leave entitlement, shutdown arrangement. If in doubt, ask HR before any interview.
- Scoring should be completed at the end of the interview schedule. Written records should be made and retained securely.
- All applicants should be notified of the outcome of their interview as soon as practicable. If it is known that there will be a delay, this should be communicated. Both successful and unsuccessful applicants should be given the opportunity to receive feedback. Remember - the candidate may not be perfect for the job they have interviewed for but may consider Sefton again in the future if they get a good impression.
- Successful interviewees should be advised that any offer is subject to satisfactory references.
- An appointment form should be completed in respect of the successful applicant. This should be sent to HR who will take responsibility for all checks, references and subsequent offer paperwork if all is satisfactory.
- Useful information for New Starters can be found at [New starters \(smbc.loc\)](#)
- [Further Information on recruitment and appointment can be found on the Intranet](#)

## 5. Sickness Absence

- All Staff are required to follow Sefton's Sickness Absence policy and Procedures. Managers are required to support staff and manage sickness absence in accordance with the policy and procedure that can be found on Sefton's Intranet on the following link; [Sickness absence \(smbc.loc\)](#)
- Managers are responsible for ensuring that all absences are recorded, maintained and updated on the Sefton's Absence system [Login - Sefton Absences \(smbc.loc\)](#)



- Brief outline of attendance management:
  - Day 1 - Absence should be reported by telephone by the employee (other than in exceptional circumstances) to their line manager; details for reason for absence should be obtained along with the period of the absence initially envisaged. Managers should make contact with employees who do not report an absence on day 1.
  - Absence must be recorded immediately on the absence management system.
  - Day 4 - employee should contact their line manager with an update. If this does not happen, the manager should contact the employee.
  - Day 8 - managers are required to ensure that a doctor's fit note is provided and recorded on the absence management system. Any subsequent notes should also be recorded. The manager is responsible for ensuring that sick notes are received, cover the duration of the absence, and are updated accordingly on the system.
  - Managers are responsible for ensuring that return to work meetings are held for all absences on the first day of the employees return to work. Details of these meetings should be recorded on the absence management system.
  - Managers are responsible for ensuring that attendance reviews are arranged and held in accordance with the policy.
  - Occupational Health referrals should be considered on a case-by-case basis and in accordance with policy.
- Sefton Human Resources Children's Services Team are available to provide support and advice to managers.

# Practice Guidance 1

## General Management Standards

Theme	Standard expected	Standard not met
<b>Induction</b>	<p>Evidence that every new starter whatever their role receives an induction to ensure that they have opportunity to gain experience about their organisation and understand expectations linked to their role.</p> <p>Details of every new starter's induction should be held on their supervision record which will be stored safely within SharePoint.</p>	<p>Little or no induction plan in place.</p> <p>Little of no evidence that induction plan has been in place or completed.</p> <p>Little or no evidenced understanding of the organisation, role, relevant processes, or partners.</p>
<b>Management oversight</b>	<p>Evidence of layered management oversight on records to demonstrate shared and accountable decision making.</p> <p>Evidence of smart management oversight which includes timescales for any work or action required.</p> <p>Evidence of follow up on any actions requiring attention.</p> <p>Evidence of clear oversight if there is change of direction with reasons to explain rationale.</p>	<p>Little or no evidence of management oversight on records.</p> <p>Little of no evidence of follow up by managers to show impact.</p>
<b>Observation of Practice</b>	<p>Evidence within supervision files of at least one observed practice per annum.</p> <p>Evidence that service user feedback was gained as part of observed practice.</p> <p>Evidence that observation of practice encouraged reflection; highlights strengths, immediate actions and any areas for learning or development.</p>	<p>Little or no evidence of observed practice on supervision case records.</p> <p>Little or no evidence of follow up by managers to demonstrate supportive interventions to stretch skills and knowledge or increase opportunities for new learning or consolidation.</p>
<b>Supervision: Contract and frequency</b>	<p>Evidence that regular quality supervision is taking place in line with Sefton Supervision Policy.</p> <p>Supervision contract in place and reviewed annually or when there is a change to supervisor.</p> <p>Record of case supervision within case files.</p>	<p>No evidence of regular supervision in line with Supervision Policy.</p> <p>Sporadic supervision which does not meet expected frequency for role.</p> <p>No dated supervision contract in place.</p>

Theme	Standard expected	Standard not met
	Record of welfare supervision (signed and dated by both supervisee and supervisor) held on individual employee's supervision file held on SharePoint.	No record of case supervision on LCS; or poorly recorded; not SMART  No record of welfare supervision on individual employee's supervision record on SharePoint; or poorly recorded.
<b>Supervision: Quality and effectiveness</b>	<p>Management advice and decisions are well evidenced, professionally sound, and smart. Recording of supervision demonstrates reflective practice and testing of hypotheses.</p> <p>Decisions are revisited to measure progress, impact and drive plans forward. Clear rationale for decision making is evidenced.</p> <p>Supervision considers employee development, needs, health and wellbeing.</p>	<p>Little evidence of management advice and decision-making being recorded.</p> <p>Decision making is not smart. There is no clear rationale for decision making.</p> <p>Actions are not reviewed or commented on to close loops. Advice appears confusing.</p> <p>Supervision does not consider staff professional development needs or health and wellbeing. Supervision lacks reflection and direction.</p>
<b>Audit activity</b>	<p>Evidence of regular auditing of records to ensure that Practice Standards are met routinely.</p> <p>Evidence of follow up of corrective action requirements arising from audits.</p> <p>Impact on outcomes for child, young person, family, or foster parents is recorded.</p> <p>Evidence that attempts have been made to seek the views and opinions of other professionals involved and to speak to family, children, young people and care experienced young adults.</p>	<p>Little or no auditing of records and practice. Little or no follow up of actions to ensure positive outcome of audit.</p> <p>Little or no evidenced understanding of the quality of the service or impact of interventions.</p> <p>Compliance focussed audit which does not consider impact and outcomes for the child, young person and family.</p> <p>Little or no feedback from others to test out/triangulate experience, progress and any learning.</p>
<b>Quality of Assessments, Plans and Reports</b>	Evidence of managers' signatures/electronic equivalents, dates.	Management sign off is tokenistic and does not show that work has

Theme	Standard expected	Standard not met
	<p>Evidence of management scrutiny of the quality of the work undertaken leading to good quality assessments/plans with good outcomes for children and young people.</p> <p>Evidence of advice being sought and given by Assistant Directors, Service Managers when required; Legal Services as appropriate.</p> <p>Evidence of timely sign off by Assistant Director with clear rationale and curiosity evident.</p>	<p>been scrutinised or met required standards.</p> <p>Inadequate assessments being signed off by the Team Manager. Advice not being sought from Senior Managers or Legal Services if deadlines cannot be met, or plans progressed in line with expectations.</p> <p>Advice not being sought from Assistant Director in a timely way; advice lacks analysis.</p>
<b>Addressing poor performance</b>	<p>Evidence that appropriate steps are being taken to address poor or unacceptable performance of practitioners to bring about improvements.</p> <p>Timely use of formal procedures around improving performance.</p>	<p>Acceptance of practice that is below standards and an inability or unwillingness to tackle issues to bring about improvements.</p> <p>Continued use of informal measures where formal processes should be displayed.</p>
<b>Annual Performance Appraisal (PDR MySeftonMySpace)</b>	<p>Evidence that annual performance PDR take place within guidance and plays an active part in the recognition and development of skills and creating opportunities for progression.</p> <p>Evidence that PDR is revisited at regular intervals throughout the year to track progress or modify.</p>	<p>No Personal Development Review (PDR) on supervision record.</p> <p>Tokenistic PDR on supervision record which is not used to develop people throughout the year.</p>
<b>Support and Development of staff</b>	<p>Evidence within supervision records, audit, observation that Manager has a proactive approach to developing people's professional skills.</p> <p>Evidence within supervision, audit, observation that Manager takes initiative to ensure support is adequate to enable people to do their best work.</p> <p>Evidence that manager is aware of Career Progression Policy and holds relevant discussions around progression and development.</p>	<p>Manager acts in a way that reacts to service demands and gives little attention to individual or group support needs or development.</p> <p>Little or no evidence of support and development of staff.</p>



Theme	Standard expected	Standard not met
<b>Celebrating good practice</b>	<p>Manager acknowledges and gives credit to good practice and promotes this within and outside the team.</p>	<p>Good practice is not acknowledged or celebrated.</p> <p>Little attention is given to giving and receiving feedback; cultivating this approach within the team or wider organisation.</p>
<b>Policy, Research and Practice</b>	<p>Manager keeps up to date with key policy and research and uses this in practice. This can be evidenced in the quality of work undertaken and information sharing with teams/others.</p> <p>Managers access Research in Practice and encourage team members to do so and create opportunities for team discussions and reflective learning.</p> <p>Managers understand Practice Standards, Timescales for best practice and Quality Assurance &amp; Impact Framework.</p>	<p>Policy, guidance, learning and research are given little or no recognition in practice.</p> <p>Little awareness of Practice Standards; updates to relevant guidance documents e.g Timescales for best practice, Quality Assurance &amp; Impact Framework.</p>
<b>Culture and Support</b>	<p>Manager promotes an inclusive learning culture through highlighting, recognising, and sharing good practice at all levels, encouraging training and developmental opportunities, shadowing, joint working and modelling positive relationships with colleagues.</p> <p>This leads to increased moral and team stability and in turn good quality social work practice.</p> <p>Managers address negative behaviours and practice as they arise.</p> <p>Manager sets high standards and expectations in terms of compliance with mandatory training expectations.</p> <p>Manager recognises and seeks to address any known support needs.</p>	<p>Manager fails to highlight and share good practice, is not inclusive and does not support training and developmental opportunities or monitor and promote compliance with mandatory training.</p> <p>Manager models negative relationships with colleagues. Manager does not draw on team support, skills, and knowledge to spread workload. This can lead to workforce instability, low team morale and poor social work practice.</p> <p>Manager does not address issues as they arise; this can lead to people feeling unfairly treated or overlooked and can impact on retention and recruitment.</p> <p>Manager is not proactive in addressing support needs of individuals.</p>

Theme	Standard expected	Standard not met
<b>Workloads</b>	<p>Manager ensures that work demands are matched to the skills and abilities of team members, that individual and team capacity and capabilities are understood, defined, and protected.</p> <p>Manager highlights any gaps which will impact of service delivery to relevant Service Manager as appropriate.</p>	<p>Manager does not match work demands to capacity and skills of the team. This results in staff feeling overwhelmed, overloaded, and not working efficiently or effectively.</p> <p>Manager does not escalate concern in respect of resources and demand.</p>
<b>Communication</b>	<p>The manager ensures that good communication takes place within their team, and all employees including those who are absent from work are informed of important matters affecting their work.</p> <p>Regular staff meetings take place and are properly set up, well attended, chaired, recorded and notes circulated.</p> <p>Team/service meetings have formal agendas and track previous agreed actions.</p> <p>Managers promote “One Council” values and link teams to the wider service; ensuring relevant updates and Sefton Scoop newsletter is shared and discussed.</p>	<p>Little or no evidence of team/service meetings taking place monthly.</p> <p>Poor attendance at team/service meetings.</p> <p>No formal agendas, tracking or recording of discussions or actions.</p> <p>Communication arrangements are absent or sporadic.</p> <p>Team/service meetings are poorly organised.</p> <p>Important developments and information are not shared with teams.</p>
<b>Peer support</b>	<p>Senior Leaders and Managers cultivate an atmosphere that is mutually supportive and respectful; an office atmosphere that is inclusive, calm, and purposeful – one which inspires sharing of ideas; that people wish to be part of and feel supported to do their best work.</p>	<p>Senior Leaders and Managers oversee teams that do not support each other; where conflicts and disputes are allowed to fester, and where staff are unhappy coming into work and being together in the work setting.</p>
<b>Challenge and professional rigour</b>	<p>Managers set an example as to how to conduct oneself as a professional, set expectation of good practice that must be adhered to, and create an atmosphere of professionalism.</p> <p>High support, high challenge and professional rigour is expected and appreciated.</p>	<p>Managers are inconsistent and unprofessional in their conduct and set a poor example of conduct.</p> <p>Managers do not set expectations that ensure staff work professionally.</p> <p>Managers do not create and sustain a climate where high</p>

Theme	Standard expected	Standard not met
		support, high challenge and professional rigour is expected and appreciated.



# Practice Guidance 2

## Supervision

- Supervision is an essential component of practice in social work and social care, not just for frontline social work staff but at all levels of the organisation. Effective supervision can provide a safe space for reflective practice, considered decision making; as well as an opportunity to develop skills and knowledge and consider health and wellbeing of employees who are one of our most important assets.
- There are a number of key functions to supervision which fit into four broad categories; often termed differently by researchers in this field. Supervision has a Managerial, Developmental, Supportive and Mediation function.

The **managerial** element will address:

- Overall management of the quality of work practice
- The impact of intervention on children, young people, and their families; foster carers.
- Overall management of workload and priorities of resources
- Provision of a safe, inclusive environment in which to work
- Professional discussion around performance against individual and team objectives
- Ensuring that social care policies are communicated and made clear to all.

The **developmental** element will address:

- Identifying individual strengths
- Identifying areas for development to conduct the role to the required standard to meet desired objectives
- Identifying learning and development opportunities
- Planning how development needs could be met
- Ensuring that the practitioner has induction training
- Evaluating and reflecting on training and development opportunities taken
- Discussing and reflecting on audit, observation of practice, compliments/complaints
- Discussing progress, practice and improvement goals.

The **supportive** element will address:

- Support for the practitioner as a professional and as an individual person in their own right, including acknowledgement of issues of diversity
- Support for health and well-being at work.

The **mediation** element will address:

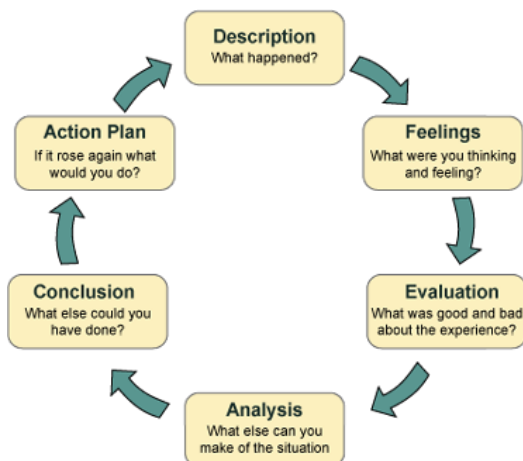
- Advocacy between the practitioner, senior management, the team, and any outside agencies
- The transfer of relevant information between the practitioners, senior management, the team, and any outside agencies/partners.



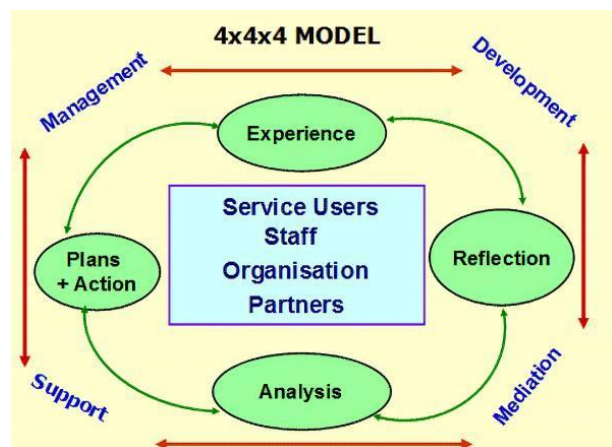
## Effective supervision is:

- Regular: scheduled and uninterrupted
- Both parties take opportunity to prepare for supervision
- There needs to be a clear audit trail and record of supervision including actions required from the supervision with agreed timescales
- Issues such as workload, health and wellbeing, personal issues, safety in dangerous situations and the emotional effect of difficult work or any issues of discrimination must be considered
- A transparent, strengths-based approach to supervision is preferred; a blame culture will lead to defensive behaviour and the cover up of omissions
- Family life and risk assessment can be complex; children, young people, families and care experienced young adults must be discussed in detail to ensure all issues have been reflected upon and understood
- All managers need to be trained in supervision skills and have opportunity to reflect on their supervisory practice in an ongoing way.

### Gibbs Reflective Cycle 1988



### T Morrisson and J Wonnacott 2009



### Rolfe's Model of Reflection 2011





# Practice Guidance 3

## Culture and Support

### High Expectations

- Managers and practitioners are expected to adhere to minimum Practice Standards to ensure sound, safe practice; good communication, positive impact and best outcomes for children, young people/young adults and families.
- These standards apply to all managerial roles across Children's Services.

### High Support

Managers will lead by example and set standards of behaviour:

- Presentation and conduct that promotes good professional practice and positivity
- Managers will cultivate an atmosphere that is inclusive, mutually supportive and draws on the professional strengths of all our people
- Managers will ensure that individuals have manageable workloads, within guidelines and advice set
- Managers will provide clear lines of communication, ensuring that important service policy and procedures are shared in a timely way, understood, and acted upon
- Communication should be clear, regular and consistent. If a message is not being received, think about communicating this in a different way
- Managers will provide regular supervision and meaningful annual appraisals that take account of strengths and areas for improvement; and seek to ensure that CS continues to invest in individual and team development to include team away days
- Managers will ensure that the internal administrative and information sharing systems and arrangements support professional practice and adhere to GDPR; seeking appropriate advice if required.

### High challenge and professional rigour

- Managers will monitor the quality of the service they are responsible for through case discussions, regularly scrutinising practice, audit activity and supervision and take steps to improve quality when poor practice is identified
- Managers will look for opportunities to bring about improvements in practice and support their teams in delivering those improvements
- Managers will keep up to date on research findings in practice and policy and guidance documents relevant to their area of work and routinely access Research in Practice events and materials provided through practice development websites and publications
- Managers will complete mandatory training and any additional training identified to support them in their role and will encourage the same from those they supervise
- Managers will expect individuals and teams to develop their professional skills and expertise by keeping up to date with research and developments
- Managers will ensure that Social Workers adhere to Social Work England Professional Standards and teams adhere to relevant Practice Standards.
- Managers will ensure that their teams always conduct themselves in a professional manner, in terms of their dress, language, and behaviours; challenging where necessary.

## Advice from Parents...

We are a group of parents and we have some thoughts about how you can help children, young people and families in Sefton. Here's some things we think you can do to make a difference to our lives...

**"Give me realistic timescales; don't over promise."**

**"Listen to my views."**

**"Be on time for visits."**

**"Tell us if the social worker changes or is not available."**

**"Communicate with us and make sure we can communicate back."**

**"Give us a way we can reach you if our usual social worker is away."**

**"Be open and honest with us."**

**"Explain why things can't happen, explain the rationale."**

**"Read things about us before you come and meet us."**

## Dear Everyone...

We are a group of cared for children and we have some thoughts about how you can help us. Here's some things we think you can do to make a difference to our lives...

**"Tell me 'mate; we will help and get things sorted."**

**"Tell me if you are going on holiday, leave a name of someone else and give us our IRO phone number."**

**"Tell me if you are leaving and say goodbye - sometimes social workers just seem to disappear like a puff of smoke."**

**"Class charts sometimes say I am fostered and others find that out about me. I don't want to explain my personal information to others. Ask the school not to show this."**

**"Make sure you give us a copy of our cared for notes."**

**"Visit me and talk to me about positives in my life."**

**"Give me the name of someone I can speak to if you are leaving ."**

## Dear Everyone...

We are a group of cared for children and we have some thoughts about how you can help us. Here's some things we think you can do to make a difference to our lives...

**"Ask me how I am when you come and see me... tell me things will get sorted."**

**"Do more activities with us - get to know us."**

**"Let me know what time you are visiting - ask me what day is best- not straight after school when I am going to footy!"**

**"If you are visiting me in school, tell the teacher to say someone is here to see me - I don't want people to pull me out of class saying your social worker is here."**

**"Listen to me - don't forget to follow up on the things I ask you to do - let me know the outcome."**

**"Don't ask me the same questions over and over again! Read things about me before you come and meet me."**

## Dear Managers...

We know that your role is busy and complicated and that you are often pulled in different directions. We also know that you want to keep children and young people safe and at the heart of everything you do; so here's how we think you can MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

**"Ask why children have not seen their brothers and sisters. We were removed from our mum and dad; not each other."**

**"Ensure we are given the name of someone who we can contact if my social worker leaves."**

**"Before you speak with me; find out a bit about me; it's confusing when managers suggest things that have never been discussed before."**

**"Fact check information if you are speaking with me; paperwork has flaws."**

**"Listen to me, don't just read the notes; if you want to know something, ask how I feel."**

**"Listen to my views... if I ask for a change in a social worker or IRO, please listen to my reasons for this. Take my views seriously."**

**"Ask social workers in supervision if am happy where I live; if the answer is no; explore this more with the social worker."**

**"Can I know your name and see what you look like, so I know who you are; it's easier then if I meet you."**

**"Critically analyse, don't just focus on the presenting issue."**



## Dear Managers...

We know that your role is busy and complicated and that you are often pulled in different directions. We also know that you want to keep children and young people safe and at the heart of everything you do; so here's how we think you can MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

**"Sometimes, it would be good to hear difficult decisions from you – why things can't happen; why has funding not been agreed."**

**"Put yourself in my shoes."**

**"Be more visible to young people."**

**"Be more relaxed."**

**"Don't just be the bearer of bad news; try and meet me when things are going good too."**

**"If you are responding to a complaint – look into it properly; don't just look to protect the practitioner."**

**"Think about who knows me; if you are asking people to talk to me about important stuff."**

**"Help me feel safe, don't agree for me to see family members without me knowing about it; I might not want that."**

**"If you speak to me, ask me if how I want to be described."**

**"Don't just focus on little ones. I might be older and seem more settled but my needs still matter and planning for my baby sister impacts on me."**

**"Tell me things straight, no lies because you think that might make me feel better."**