



# Outstanding Practice Framework

Supporting our social workers and practitioners provide the best quality support to children and families in Wandsworth





# Welcome...

"I love working with children and families: I love joining with a family in their struggles and challenges and sharing the joy at family successes and triumphs."

We are so completely privileged to do the jobs that we do, and I wouldn't want to do anything else. I love my job, because it allows me to see every day the difference that we are making and gives me the motivation to try even harder to do more.

But to do our jobs well, we need strong and effective tools to help children and families achieve and thrive. We know that the needs of each family are different and at times complex. To navigate through this, we must take the time to build relationships with children and families and hear their voices to understand the help they need and let this be a driving force for how we practice.

I want our social workers and practitioners to feel confident in their practice and supported to manage the emotional demands of their role. Our shared vision and values to improve outcomes for children and families will drive practice. Our outstanding practice framework will support us collectively to do that. We want to apply solutions to complex problems in the simplest way. Having a robust practice framework will enable a shared language, understanding and value base from which we can all work creatively with children and families to achieve the best outcomes for them. All children and families deserve an outstanding level of practice, let's work together to provide them with the very best.

Rasheed Pendry

Director of Practice – Children's Services

**Our workforce is our  
greatest asset -  
together we will  
achieve the best  
outcomes for children  
and families**



A close-up photograph of three children. On the left, a girl with brown hair and a blue headband looks down. In the center, a girl with dark hair and a white headband looks forward with a focused expression. On the right, a boy with blonde hair is partially visible, looking down. They are all wearing white t-shirts.

**“Children are at the heart of everything we do”**



## CHILDREN'S SERVICES VISION

- Wandsworth is the best place to grow up. Children are at the heart of everything the Council does
- Every child will have access to an outstanding education. Children with special needs will have their education, health and care needs met in a timely and efficient manner. Priority will be shown to our most vulnerable children, recognising we need to improve outcomes faster
- Every child should have a good start in life, experience a positive childhood and receive the necessary help and support to become accomplished adults of the future.

# A CULTURE OF QUALITY

We want to be able to provide our social workers and staff with a shared understanding and a comprehensive set of tools for them to undertake their best work. This will enable us to provide a high-quality service that meets the varying needs of children and families and supports us to work better together.

By listening to feedback from children and families as well as feedback from partners and staff we can ensure that our work and approach is tailored and focused to the highest quality that meets their needs and helps us work better together.

## Children, families, staff and partners have told us what matters is that:



Practitioners build good relationships, are not judgemental about their circumstances and work with them to make changes to improve their lives.



Practitioners communicate respectfully, honestly, reliably, and clearly with people who use our services and other professionals who are working with them.



Practitioners recognise strengths, agree plans with them to make life better and clearly document their progress and achievement in doing so.



Practitioners value the role and expertise of other professionals working together in being accountable for improving children and young people's lives.



Staff are supported to do the best job they can and feel involved when their work is evaluated so they can learn and improve.



Practice should be demonstrably anti-racist, always asking the question: how do our ideas and beliefs about race influence the way in which we are working with each other and this family?



Wandsworth residents have confidence in Children's Services



'We listen and respond to children and families, ensuring we make a positive difference to their lives'



## Our core practice value

**“a family is the best place for a child or young person to thrive and meet their potential”**

## OUR SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE

Good quality practice is the key to safeguarding young people, enabling them and their families to create change and improve their lives. In Wandsworth, our social work practice is underpinned by our core value that:

**“a family is the best place for a child or young person to thrive and meet their potential”**

Families come in many different shapes and forms and are not just confined to those who live in the same home or those who are related to each other. A family is a nurturing, loving social unit that provides a supportive environment for those included to thrive and meet their potential, especially children.

Families are complex, so to help and support them in the best way we must always consider who families are, where they come from and where they are going or need to get to, so we can help them on their journey. The relationships we build with families is central to the help we can offer and how they will experience and receive this. This means that families need to be really heard. We will focus on the relationships families have with each other, their local community and professionals so we can tailor our support to their needs.

## NATIONAL PRACTICE FRAMEWORK

### Principles of children's social care:

- Children's welfare is paramount
- Children's wishes and feelings are sought, heard and responded to
- Children's social care works in partnership with whole families
- Children are raised by their families, with their families networks, or in family environments wherever possible
- Local authorities work with other agencies to effectively identify and meet the needs of children, young people, and families.
- Local authorities consider the economic and social circumstances which may impact children, young people and families.

### Enablers for children's social care:

- Multi-agency working enables effective practice and improves outcomes for children and families
- Leaders drive conditions for effective practice
- The workforce is equipped and effective

### Outcomes for children's social care:

- Outcome 1:** Children, young people and families stay together and get the help they need
- Outcome 2:** Children and young people are supported by their family network
- Outcome 3:** Children and young people are safe in and outside their homes
- Outcome 4:** Children in care and care leavers have stable, loving homes

# OUR PRACTICE INTERVENTIONS

## SYSTEMIC PRACTICE:

Systemic practice is our model of intervention that supports our core value that **a family is the best place for a child or young person to thrive and meet their potential.**

Families are resourceful and we want to support their capacity to change without creating an overdependence on our services. We are aware that when statutory services become involved with families there is a risk that we replace family interactions, leading to a loss in confidence and identities, such as being a parent. Systemic practice promotes that families and the individuals within it, have the capacity to make positive change and improve their circumstances. It focuses on relationships within a wider family context rather than a sole individual.

### What systemic practice looks like in our work:



## FAMILY SAFEGUARDING APPROACH:

Family Safeguarding strengthens our practice in line with our core value:

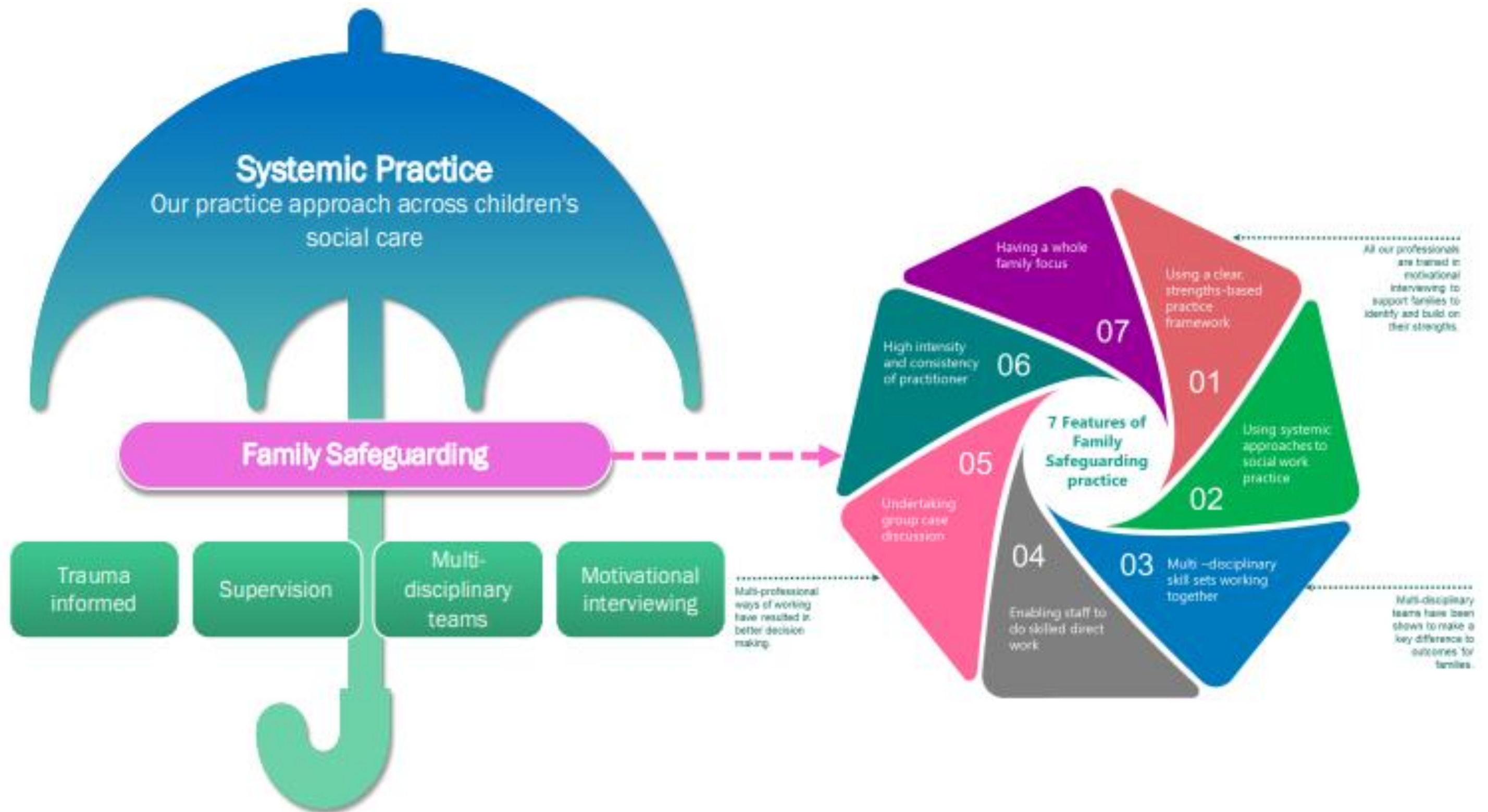
**“a family is the best place for a child or young person to thrive and meet their potential”**

Family Safeguarding is a whole system change that is focused on supporting children at risk of abuse and neglect to remain safely within their families by identifying and meeting need, rather than focusing on identifying risk. Family Safeguarding brings together the professionals working with a family into multi-disciplinary teams where specialist adult practitioners in domestic abuse, mental health and substance misuse are co-located with social workers to facilitate improved dialogue and shared decision-making. Multi-disciplinary teams use a range of tools, including motivational interviewing, to work with families to address the 'trio of vulnerabilities' that are known to cause harm to children: domestic abuse, parental substance misuse and parental mental health.

Family Safeguarding ensures families' needs are met in a more holistic way, leading to reduced risk and better outcomes for children and families.



## OUR PRACTICE ON A PAGE



# OUR PRACTICE VALUES

Our core practice value that **a family is the best place for a child or young person to thrive and meet their potential** is set around professional values that guide our work and practice with children and families. We will:

- Make a difference to positively contribute to children’s lives
- Empower children and families. Showing compassion and empathy
- Provide an ethical service based on respecting and promoting the rights of children, young people and their carers
- Collaborate with children, their families and our partners

# OUR PRACTICE STANDARDS

To help our social workers and practitioners support and work with families and in the best possible way, aligned to our core values, vision and obsession, we have developed a set of **practice standards**.

Our practice standards support practitioners with what is helpful guidance and information about what works. Each section contains useful resources, practice guides, links to statutory guidance and direct work tools. Our practice standards can be found alongside other policies and procedures on Wandsworth online hub <https://wandsworthchildcare.proceduresonline.com/>

Our 10 practice standards cover:

- |  |  |   |  |
|--|--|---|--|
| 1. The beginning of our work with families | 2. Building positive relationships with families                             | 3. Assessing a child and family’s needs     | 4. Working with children, young people, families, and partners to plan and achieve good outcomes |
| 5. The interventions we offer              | 6. Being the best parent for our children in care and care experienced young | 7. Child focused recording                  | 8. Culturally competent and self-aware practice  |
|  | 9. Effective supervision and management oversight of high-quality practice   | 10. Effective quality assurance of practice |  |

# WANDSWORTH 5

When we are confident that the foundations of our practice and recording are solid, we can truly focus on great, transformative, creative practice with children and families. To support practitioners and social workers to do this, we have produced a simple checklist of the Wandsworth 5 to ensure these foundations become embedded into our everyday practice in a way that is even stronger.

### The Wandsworth 5

every child or young person’s case record will have an up to date.....

- 1. Case summary
- 2. Chronology
- 3. Smart Plan
- 4. Visit record
- 5. Supervision record





# HIGH SUPPORT, HIGH CHALLENGE

Our social work practice with children and families is so important. It can be both incredibly challenging and hugely rewarding. The responsibility of working with families where the decisions you make and the power of your influence has the ability to shape and change lives, can be difficult. We will support you in your practice and decision making so you never feel alone.

Our culture of high support, high challenge provides our workforce with relevant training and learning to undertake great practice and creates spaces for them to learn from others and receive appropriate challenge to help ensure that the decisions they make are the right ones for children and families. This also drives a shared understanding of practice expectations and provides a forum to seek support, ask questions and escalate issues

We do this through:

- Regular training, webinars and learning events offered from the social care academy

Learning and Development



- Attended by Assistant Directors, social work teams and chaired by the Director. Space to review practice and performance data to determine the quality of practice and improved outcomes for children and young people

Bi-Monthly Performance and Practice Clinics



- Our policies, procedures, practice guidance, national legislation, and regulations support consistency in practice

Dynamic Policies and Procedures



- Learning Episodes evaluate the experiences and progress of children, alongside practitioners, and including feedback from young people, parents, carers, and other involved professionals. A learning conversation is at the heart of LE's, and themes are looped back into the Learning and Development Programme

Learning Episodes



- Monthly meeting of Assistant Directors and Service Managers chaired by the Director. This is a wider forum evaluating the quality and impact of practice, discuss and share learning and assess the difference it is making for children and families.

Practice Focussed Sessions



- Chaired by the Executive Director of Children's Services and attended by wider Children's senior management team to zoom into key areas of focus. Service areas invited to present based on theme. Supports cross departmental work, line of sight, challenge, and escalation/mitigation.

Improvement and Transformation Board





**Children's needs  
are changing.  
So are we.**