

What are Manager Practice Standards?

It is important that the manager standards document is read in conjunction with the operational procedures and practice standards.

Management of Practice

In a practitioner's absence, colleagues need to be able to access the records and know quickly what has been happening in the child's/family's life and how best to respond to any need arising. Information needed should be available from the summary update, recent reports, and the latest records, plan, reviews and summaries. This allows for the most accurate and swiftest response to an urgent or emerging safeguarding concern.

Managers are responsible for ensuring that there are systems in place to monitor and review the performance of staff and provide protection, support and professional development for practitioners - so that they can deliver the best possible services, and 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 good or acceptable practice, or to address unacceptable performance where it is identified.

These manager practice standards are intended to assist managers in providing and evidencing consistent scrutiny, support and supervision, and ensuring transparent and purposeful decision-making. It will also help practitioners understand better what the manager can reasonably expect from them when evidencing their child care practice through accurate and up to date records.

Standards: General Management

All managers will ensure that all managerial responsibilities for children/young people and families for whom the local authority has a responsibility, will be carried out in line with the standards set out in this document.

Senior managers should be confident that decision making, communication and information sharing within and between each of the local services is effective in keeping children safe, even when those services are under pressure. In turn they should support and value first line managers, ensuring that management oversight of decision making is rigorous, and that the lines of communication between senior managers and frontline child protection staff are as short and effective as possible.

(Laming, 2009: 2.12)

Successful leaders are credible and highly visible, and inspire staff to perform well. They set high standards for workers and develop a culture which is supportive and challenging, while acknowledging risk and the need for clear accountabilities.

(Ofsted Report 'Joining the Dots' 2015)

Standard 1: Management Oversight

- a. All children and young people for whom the local authority has a responsibility will have evidence in their records of manager's review and reflections on practice, to make sure decisions are made in the best interests of the child/ young person or family, and are properly recorded.
- b. Managers will ensure all recording and reports are of good quality, incorporate a reflective and analytical style that is informed by the practice model and are completed in a timely manner.
- c. Managers will ensure thorough enquiries are undertaken which produce good quality assessments and analysis of needs, leading to considered and evidenced recommendations for actions to be taken.
- d. Managers will observe and give constructive feedback to practitioners.
- e. Management oversight and scrutiny of practice will be evidenced through case audit, supervision and observations. It is important that observation of practice is a constructive and learning activity for practitioners.
- f. Managers ensure that each child/young person who is assessed as requiring allocation is swiftly informed of their new social worker, personal advisor to undertake direct work, complete assessments informed by direct work and create and update plans that meet needs and plan for good outcomes.

Standard 2: Management Supervision

- a. Regular reflective supervision is a requirement for managers to deliver, ensuring that staff receive the appropriate guidance and reflective space to undertake purposeful work with children and young people and are supported to apply the practice model. Supervision should be an enabling protected space.
- b. The supervision record is a key management tool. It must be used in every supervision session and must include
 - The purpose of allocation
 - Expectations of the practitioner's intervention, including the purpose of home visits.
 - The application of the practice model and tools to facilitate direct work, assessment and planning.
- c. Supervision will also address:-
 - The recording of management reflection and decisions outside of supervision that will be included in management oversight.
 - Induction support and review
 - Risk assessments for practitioners and plans.
 - Training and support needs within and in addition to the learning and development plan.
 - All staff will have supervision contracts, work plans that are linked to service plans and half yearly and annual appraisals are undertaken and acted upon and progressed within agreed timescales.
 - Effective supervision and support, holding practitioners to account, can substantially reduce the risk of poor or under-performance by practitioners. Where poor or under performance by the practitioner is identified, managers must seek support and guidance from their own line managers and their human resources service.
 - Development and retention of staff will be linked to good support, performance management and learning and development opportunities. Which must be a common thread throughout the supervisory and appraisal approach.

Standard 3: Service Culture and Support

- a. All managers will lead their staff group and ensure that staff work in a professional environment that is conducive to delivering good professional practice. This includes having a staff culture that brings support, constructive challenge and professional rigour to daily practice.
All staff groups work best when there is a culture of mutual support, management leadership, good communications and clarity in defining and acting on shared understandings of professional responsibilities, standards and expectations.
- b. Managers need to ensure there are regular POD and Service meetings so that staff understand what is happening in the organisation and the expectations of them. Managers need to model the expected standards for their teams which includes:
 - Presenting professionally
 - Being on time for meetings
 - Being prepared for meetings and briefings
 - Demonstrating self-care and promoting staff wellbeing.
 - Taking action as required in a timely way
 - Having a good knowledge of the cases within the team
 - Both supporting and challenging appropriately
 - Role modelling through behaviour and language the culture of the organisation and practice model approach.
- c. Managers are required to be familiar with key messages from the Corporate Plan, Improvement Plan and translate this into effective and meaningful service plans and work plans. This creates consistency with an organisational understanding of priorities.
- d. Staff need support from their managers that demonstrates commitment to their professional development and opportunities to innovate, that provides the practical means to work in a supportive physical environment, and gives protection so that the workload is manageable.

Standard 4: Leadership

- a. All managers will lead their staff group and service. They are responsible for directing priorities, managing morale and ensuring the wellbeing of children, young people, families and staff are managed without drift or delay.
- b. Managers will keep up to date on research findings in practice and policy, and guidance documents relevant to their area of work. They will routinely access research and other materials provided through practice development such as the Research in Practice website and publications, available to all practitioners and managers in 2019.
- c. Managers will expect staff to develop their professional skills and expertise by keeping up to date with applied research.
- d. Managers will ensure that all staff at all times conduct themselves in a professional manner in terms of their dress, language and behaviours.
- e. Managers will ensure that they prioritise their own learning and development with regard to management and leadership and develop their knowledge and skills as required by the Health and Care Professions Council or/and any other relevant governing body.

Below are indicators of when the practice standards are being applied well and when they are not.

Standard	Good application of Standard	Standard has not been applied
Management oversight	Evidence of regular management oversight of case records to ensure that practice standards are met routinely. Evidence of follow up of action.	Little or no management oversight of case records and practice. Little or no evidenced understanding of the quality of the service.
Regular supervision	Evidence that regular quality supervision is taking place with all staff within the supervision policy, procedures and standards.	No or little evidence of regular supervision or it is sporadic and does not meet staff professional development needs and time given for reflection and guidance.
Managing and leading the cultural development	Evidence of regular team / service meetings are taking place which are purposeful. Evidence of group or equivalent supervision sessions taking place.	No or little evidence of regular team / service meetings. Little evidence of them being purposeful when they are held. No or little evidence of group or equivalent supervision taking place. Little evidence of positive impact and outcomes when they are held.
Effective leadership.	Manager keeps up to date with key policy and practice development and uses this in supervision and team/service development.	Little evidence that manager keeps up to date with key policy and practice and doesn't use this to develop individuals or the service.

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