**ADOPTION PRACTICE STANDARDS**

**PRACTICE STANDARDS – Adopter Recruitment & Assessment**

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| **Practice Expectations** | **Person Responsible** |
| Potential Applicants will receive a response to their enquiry within 1 working day and more detailed information about adoption within **10 working days** | R&A Duty SW |
| Where a potential adopter registers an interest in adopting a child a decision whether or not to accept this should be reached within **5 working days** from receipt of the ROI unless there are exceptional circumstances which mean that linger is needed. | Team Manager |
| The adoption agency must gather Stage One information and make a **pre-assessment decision** as to whether the prospective adopter may be, or is not, suitable to adopt a child, within a period of **eight weeks** from the date on which the prospective adopter registered their interest in adopting a child (unless there are good reasons to extend that time period). If the time period is extended, the reasons must be recorded on the prospective adopter’s case record along with supporting evidence. | Adoption SW  Manager |
| Where the pre-assessment decision (Stage One) is that the prospective adopters might be suitable to adopt, the prospective adopters has **six months** in which notify the agency they wish to proceed to Stage two – the Assessment Stage. | Adoption SW  Manager |
| The assessing Social Worker should prepare a draft Prospective adopters report, highlighting any issues of concern and submit to their team manager.  A referral document for the fostering team will be completed in stage 2 as soon as it is clear the prospective adopter is wishing to be considered for Early Permanence. A safer caring document should be prepared also ready once ADM has confirmed approval. | Adoption Social Worker  Adoption SW |
| Where there are issues of concern or where clarification is required, the manager may arrange for a second person to visit the prospective adopters to discuss these but must remain mindful of the time frame for stage 2. | Team Manager |
| If another visit is completed a second opinion report will be completed which must be signed and dated by the author and the team manager. It should also state their qualifications and experience and confirm they are suitably qualified to prepare the report. | Social Worker  Team Manager |
| The **decision** as to whether the prospective adopter is suitable to adopt a child must be made within **four months** of the date on which the agency received the prospective adopters notification that they wish to proceed with the assessment process (six months if there are exceptional circumstances.) Timescale includes the panel recommendation and Agency Decision. | Agency Decision Maker |
| **Fast Track Procedure** for approved foster carers and previous adopters who wish to adopt: The decision as to whether the prospective adopter is suitable to adopt a child must be made within **four months** of the date which the prospective adopter registered their interest in adoption a child.  Before attending panel the ASW will ensure a Family Finder has met with the prospective adopters to discuss matching.  Before attending panel the ASW will have organised a network meeting with family and friends of the adopters so this information is within Prospective Adopters Report. | Adoption SW  Manager  ASW  ASW |
| The assessing Social Worker will attend and inform the prospective adopters of the panel recommendation verbally within 24 hours of the panel meeting (or from the panel on the day)  Following ADM decision, the ASW will inform the adopters of this within 24 hours. They will also have a flyer complete to send round the FF team, so they are aware of the approval | Adoption Social Worker |
| **Prospective Adopter Matching Plan**  Where a prospective adopter has been approved to adopt a child, a matching plan must be prepared in consultation with the adopter, which includes:   * Information about the duties of the agency in respect of placements and reviews * Information about the role of the prospective adopters in identifying a child for whom they would be an appropriate adopter * Information about the process of making a representation (including a complaint); and * Any other matters that the agency consider relevant   This plan must be dated and signed by the adopters and Social worker within 5 working days of approval | Adoption  Social Worker |
| Adopters upload their profile to LINKMAKER at the end of Stage 2 and is checked by Adoption SW; all interest should be responded to within 1 working day. Profiles should be regularly updated and removed as soon as adopters have child matched. | Adoption SW |
| Adopters SW will share profiles of adopters with family finders once approved and then monthly at linking meetings. Adopters SW should also respond within 48 hours to a FF sharing a needs profile to indicate if any possible adopters to be considered. | Adoption SW  Team Manager |
| If the adopters are taking a child from an external Adoption Agency, the Adopters Social Worker should ensure receipt of the Interagency form for the financial Arrangement between the external agency as the placing agency and Buckinghamshire as the receiving agency. This should be before matching panel and sent to Team Manager for signature.  The ASW will attend matching panel and adopters will hear verbally from panel their recommendation.  During transitions the ASW will support the adopters as agreed in the plan which will include contact with the adopters outside of normal working hours. They will attend the APP and midway review. | Adoption SW  Team Manager  Adoption SW |
| To attend Review of Adoption Placement at 28 days and 3 monthly thereafter or at frequency set by IRO at review  The annex A (ASW parts) will be completed to enable the adopters to put their application in with the Annex A. If this is an Early Permanence or foster carers adopting they can put their application in from the APP. | Adoption SW  Adoption SW |
| **Review of Prospective Adopters Approval**: The Adopters approval will be reviewed at least annually by means of a report from the adopters SW, together with any comments on the report from the prospective adopters. This will be signed off by a manager.  Where the review identifies the need for a change of approval, the Adoption SW will prepare a Prospective Adopter’s Review Reports. The prospective adopter should be given a copy and 10 working days to comment before arrangements are made for the report to be presented to the panel. If the approval is still considered suitable, the prospective adopters should be notified in writing and a copy of the reports, minutes, decision and notification placed on their Adoption Case record. If the prospective adopters are considered no longer suitable, the same procedure should be followed | Adoption SW  Manager  Adoption SW |
| **ADOPTER RECORDS**  The Prospective adopters case record must be set up as soon as the registration of interest is accepted. LCS pathway must remain up to date and documents saved signed where needed in content server. It must contain:   * The Prospective adopter Stage One agreement * The information and reports obtained by the agency eg DBS, medical H and S, homework. * The prospective adopter Stage Two agreement * The prospective adopters report and the prospective adopters’ observations on that report * Preparation trainer reports and prospective adopter’s reflections * The written record of the proceedings of the adoption panel, it’s recommendation, the reasons for the recommendation and any advice given by the panel to the agency (for approval and match) * The record of the agency’s decision * The recommendation of any independent review panel * Where applicable, the prospective adopters review report and the prospective adopters’ observations on that report * The prospective adopter matching agreement * Any documents related to the match * Any documents relating to early permanence, reg 22c and reg 24 * Closure summary and letter including post order support leaflet; and * Any other documents or information obtained by the agency which it considered should be included in the case record. | Adoption SW |
| There must also be a record of every contact we receive expressing interest in adoption so in LCS the duty worker must create an expression of interest, note information session date, case note what they have done and add to the case summary with key events.  There should be a case summary for every open prospective adopter with key events noted. | R&A Duty |
| **Non-Agency Adoption**  Enquirers about adopting a stepchild or child of a relative should be given the following information by the duty social worker:   * Alternatives to adoption * The child’s need to know that they are adopted and to have information about their birth family * The requirement for the consent of parents with Parental Responsibility to be obtained * The role of CAFCASS * The need to notify the Local Authority of the intention to apply for an Adoption Order   This information should be given within **48 hours** of contact and if their interest remains followed up in a meeting with the applicant and resident parent. | Adoption SW |
| An adoption case record should be opened for the prospective adopter only for initial enquiries and then this is closed, and the child opened as soon as the Notification of Intent is received. A separate record should be created for the prospective adopter. | Adoption SW |
| The LA will have 6 weeks from receipt of notification from the court that an application has been lodged to submit their report or request an extension. | Adoption SW |
| Consent for checks to be carried out should be obtained and Statutory checks should be undertaken and recorded on the case file. Except where the application is by a stepparent in which case a medical is not required, the Social Worker will check that the applicant(s) and the child have received a medical examination before the adoption application is submitted. The Social Worker will supply the relevant forms and CoramBAAF medical forms for the applicant to complete. A DBS check is also required of the adult wishing to adopt. | Adoption SW |
| Adoption Social Worker will complete a report for the court including:   * Whether parental consent has been given * Interview with birth parent(s) and significance of their role in the child’s life so far * Wishes and feelings of the child. Exploring any confusion on the part of the child in relation to the understanding of/or implications of an adoption order * Strength and duration of any new family relationships * X3 references (1 family, 2 other) * Alternatives to adoption including how to achieve a change of name without an adoption order * The likely need for adoption support except in the case of stepparent adoption   The report will be read by the Team Manager before submission to court | Adoption SW  Team Manager |
| The social worker will attend the court hearing with the applicant(s). Finalise the case record with closure summary. They will also ensure the pathway is up to date on LCS. | Adoption SW |
| **Training**  It is the responsibility of the facilitator to ensure it is advertised whether as a mailshot or to recruitment team at least **6 weeks** before the event, that a venue/teams link is booked and the pre read is sent to attendees **a week** before the event along with joining instructions.  Each training course attended will require evaluation both feedback from attendees and of the content delivered making any changes in preparation for the next time the course runs. Also, a summary of facilitator’s observations of attendees on the course. For courses such as preparation course this is a requirement for prospective adopters report.  For preparation course the facilitator should compete their observation write up within **2 weeks** after the course ends. The allocated SW should ensure the attendees complete their required documentation within **2 weeks** of the course completing. The allocated SW should case note which course was attended and when. This same expectation is in place for the one day Early Permanence Skills to Foster course.  It is the allocated SW responsibility to ensure the prospective adopter is booked onto a preparation course before they attend panel.  For information sessions facilitators should ensure ‘scribble sheets’ containing attendees’ details are provided to business support within **24 hours** so they can input onto LCS and then duty worker to ring back **two weeks** after the session if they have not already contacted the adoption prior to this. | Adoption SW  Adoption SW  Adoption SW |
| **LA Checks**  Should the duty worker see a request in the mailbox for such a check they should immediately share this request with Business Support who can then prepare the letter and advise the team manager of the request. Team manager will review the request, add information to the letter and send back to Business Support to send to the enquirer. This will be done within 48 hours of receipt of the LA letter from Business Support. | Duty worker  Team Manager |
| **Escalations**  A manager should be alerted should there be any delay to the above being achieved. Any concerns about the prospective or approved adopter being raised that would impact or cause significant harm or likelihood of to any child in or to be placed in their care. | Adoption SW |

**PRACTICE STANDARDS – Family Finding**

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| **Practice Expectations** | **Person Responsible** |
| **The Family Finding team will be responsible for Monitoring the National Minimum Standards regarding timescales for adoption:**   * The length of time from the date the child becomes looked after (BLA) to the date the agency decision maker agreeing the plan for adoption should be no more than 6 months * The length of time from Placement Order to the date the Agency Decision Maker agrees the adoption match should be no more than 4 months * The length of time from a child becoming looked after to the date they are placed with their prospective adopters should be no more than 14 months * The later life letter and life story book must be delivered to the adopters within 10 working days of the celebration hearing | Team /ATM Manager  Family Finding Adoption SW |
| All children should have a Permanence Planning Meeting within 6 weeks of becoming looked after and regular reviews every 6 weeks thereafter until their plan for permanence is achieved.  A Family Finder will attend all PPM’s where adoption/SG may be the permanence plan. They will contribute to the planning, giving advice on requirements, process and timescales for achieving the plan. | Family Finding Adoption SW |
| All children with a parallel plan of adoption will have an allocated Family Finder by the 2nd Permanence Planning Meeting. | Manager |
| The Family Finder will draft a profile of the child and their needs following consultation with the child’s Social Worker and foster carer. Where appropriate the Family Finder will arrange for professional photographs to be taken to be used in family finding activities. | Family Finding Adoption SW |
| Family Finders will share profiles of children with colleagues Assessing and supporting Adopters and at each monthly linking meeting. | Family Finding Adoption SW |
| Adoption Allowance: Consideration of whether the child meets the criteria for an adoption allowance. Appendix 3 to be completed and submitted to Team Manager/HoS for *agreement in principle*. When profile is completed | Family Finding Adoption SW |
| Wherever possible children should be matched with our own (in-house) adopters, however where no suitable adopters are available national profiling should be undertaken without delay. Child’s profile to be uploaded to LINKMAKER; all interest should be responded to within 3 working days. Profiles should be regularly updated and removed once the child is matched. | Family Finding Adoption SW |
| Shortlisting and selection of adopters should be free from bias, prejudice or discrimination and based on their suitability for that child using agreed selection criterion and a clear framework for selection.  The Family Finder will arrange the selection meeting. Minutes of the selection meeting should be available within 3 working days. The selection meeting should agree an outline plan for matching that includes dates for the following; panel, the adopters to meet the agency medical advisor, the Life Appreciation day, for paperwork to be completed.  Family finder to arrange a means tested financial assessment to be completed for selected family for an adoption allowance if child meets criteria. | Family Finding Adoption SW  Manager |
| If the adopters are approved by an external Adoption Agency, the Family Finder should complete the Interagency form for the financial Arrangement between Buckinghamshire as the placing agency and the external receiving agency. This should be before matching panel and sent to Team Manager for authorisation of the IA fee. | Family Finding Adoption SW Team Manager |
| Matching paperwork for Panel:  The Family finder will coordinate writing of the Adoption Placement report/ Adoption Support Plan with the child’s Social worker and submit to panel 7 working days prior to panel. | Family Finding Adoption SW |
| All children with a plan of adoption will have an allocated Life Story Worker, prospective adopters should receive a moving-on book at the point of placement. The Life story book should be written in consultation with the foster carer, birth parent where possible and the adopter and presented no later than 10 days after celebration hearing (or 2 months after adoption where no celebration hearing is planned). | Life Story Worker  Social Worker supervisor |
| A Life appreciation day will be held for all children being placed for adoption (for Early Permanence cases this may be decided individually) To be co-ordinated by the Family Finder and a written record of the day will be saved to the child’s record. | Family Finding Adoption SW |
| Direct Life Story Work will be provided to children where this has been agreed as part of their Permanence Planning Process. | Life Story Worker  Social Worker supervisor |

**PRACTICE STANDARDS – POST ORDER SUPPORT**

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| **Practice Expectations** | **Person Responsible** |
| **Adoption & Special Guardian Post Order Support**  This includes any support likely to be required for an adoptive placement to endure through to adulthood and is applicable to both existing and new situations. LA’s must make arrangements, as part of their adoption service for the provision of a range of adoption support services.  The Duty Worker will provide information on the following:   * Assistance to adopters & Special Guardians and children to support the family * Assistance including mediation, with contact arrangements between adopted children or those subject to an SGO and their birth parents or others with whom they share a significant relationship. * Assistance to families where the placement breaks down or is a risk of breaking down. * Access to counselling information and advice for both parents, guardians and their children who may have complex needs. * Therapeutic services for children – CAMHS referral or Adoption Support Fund * Information about financial support incl Pupil Premium, adoption/ SGO Allowances * Link to the Post Order education worker in the Virtual School * Information on priority admission for school places * Workshops for adopters &Special Guardians * Newsletter * Social Events   The duty Worker will ascertain the enquirers eligibility for services and complete a referral for Team manager to make a decision on appropriate service. | Post Order Duty Worker  Team Manager |
| Post Order Support service will at the request of the Adopter or Special Guardian undertake an assessment of need. This is limited to the entitlement to services of the person making the request. This should follow the guidance set out in “Working together to Safeguard children” The assessment should take into account the adoption/Special Guardianship context, and where the assessment relates to the child, all the developmental needs of the child should be covered including health education, emotional needs and contact issues. Relevant partner agencies should be contacted as necessary.  An **ASSESSMENT of NEED** for Post Adoption or Special Guardianship Support will include all aspects of the child’s life, including their wishes and feelings. Parents and other relevant adults will be included in the assessment. The child’s preadoption/SG experience will be explored with the family and views of partner agencies will be obtained and included in the assessment. The assessment will be based upon the Strengthening Families model and will explore the family strengths and risks and explore what the grey areas or complicating factors are in order to identify the actions that are needed to ensure that the child is safe.  The AoN will conclude with a Support plan and recommendation for post order services incl Therapeutic interventions and/or referral to partner agencies.   * This will be allocated by the team manager within 2 weeks of request. * The Assessment will be completed within 6 weeks of allocation with a recommendation and support plan. * Report should be agreed by the Team Manager. * Copy of Assessment report, once approved, should be sent to the Adopter/Special Guardian of the child with notice of the outcome of the assessment * The Contents of the support plan will be shared with the family who then have 28 working days to agree or not with the proposed support plan. * Post Order Social Worker will coordinate implementation of the plan in consultation with the family and partner agencies/therapists/application to the ASF | Team Manger  Post Order Support Social worker |
| **Access to Birth Records:** Adopted people age 18 or over can apply for access to their records and a copy of their birth certificate. The procedure for dealing with any such application will differ on whether the adoption order was made before or after 30.12.2005.  The POS worker will check whether the adoption was arranged by Buckinghamshire or that they live in the LA area. Proof of identity should be obtained before any information is disclosed.  The POS worker will share information provided by the General Register Office and give the adopted person a form for them to obtain a copy of their Birth certificate.  The POS worker should advise them of the Adoption Contact Register, the right to seek their adoption case record and for those wishing for help in tracing members of their birth family, the availability of Intermediary Services -External agencies.  The adoption agency has the discretion to disclose to the adopted person material from the Adoption case Record. This should be discussed with the Adoption Team Manager before arranging any access.  The POS worker should place a clear record on the file of all information disclosed. Where copies of documents have been provided, this should also be recorded.  Any decisions regarding the disclosure of third-party information should be discussed with the team manager as to the relevance and benefit to the adoptee. All decisions to be recorded on the case file. | Post Order Support SW or C&F worker  Team Manager |
| Adoption Letterbox Exchange  The letterbox Co-ordinator will manage the database of letterbox exchanges and the following tasks:   * Set up the schedule for exchange of letters with the Adopters and birth parents/relative, ensuring they know how to participate and how to get help with their letters. * Scan and save to the Adopted child’s record letters received by their birth parent/relative for exchange. * Scan and save to the adopted child’s record letters received from them or their adoptive parents for exchange * Copy the letters from each party including photographs/drawings if applicable and forward with a covering letter. Timescale: within 5 working days of receipt. * All exchanges to be recorded on the child’s record with any feedback, advice or mediation given.   Direct contact: Where there is an arrangement in place for direct contact the co-ordinator will facilitate this with a venue booking/ reminder as part of an agreement in place. | Post Order Support SW or C&F worker |
| Support groups  Group facilitator to ensure participants are informed of venue, time and topic. A record of the group meeting should be kept by the group leader for feedback and group development. | Post Order Support SW or C&F worker |
| Workshops  The Workshop catalogue has an array of workshops that are SW/C&F worker lead. With funding from the Adoption Support fund there is also opportunity for therapeutic groupwork for adopters and special guardians. The lead Post Order Social Worker will do the following:   * Liaise with the Team Manager to Identify participants from Assessments of need. * Plan the course with the co leaders/therapist and invite the participants. * A record of their participation is to be placed on the child’s record as part of the delivery of support to the family. * An evaluation of the course/ workshop is to be provided to the Team Manager | Post Order Support SW or C&F worker |
| Post Order Support service to notify Head of Service of any young person who is going missing. Parents to notify the Police. MARF to be submitted by parent, POS or relevant agency | Manager |
| **Birth parent work.**  Group leaders for Drop in, Birth Mothers Group and the Lotus Group will arrange the venue/activity for the group, notify attendees and provide a record of the session. | Post Adoption Social worker  C&F Worker |
| **Play therapist:** Contact child within 5 Working days to meet family and set up plan for the therapeutic session with dates, times and venue. Complete LCS and reports.  **LSW:** Contact child within 5 Working days to meet family and set up plan for the therapeutic session with dates, times and venue. Complete LCS and reports. Provide Updated Life Story Book if required.  **Family Support and targeted work with children**: Contact child and/or parents within 5 Working days and set up plan for the direct work/ parenting support session with dates, times and venue. Complete LCS and reports. | Play Therapist  Post Order LSW  C&F Worker |

**KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS FOR ADOPTION**

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| ***ADOPTION SCORECARD REPORTING*** | |
| *A2* | *Average time (in days) between a local authority receiving court authority to place a child and the local authority deciding on a match to an adoptive family* |
| *A10* | *Average time (in days) between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family adjusted for foster carer adoptions* |
| *A20* | *Average time (in days) between entering care and placement order* |
| *A15* | *Number of Agency Decision Maker (ADM) decisions* |
| *A16* | *Number of new placement orders granted* |
| *A5* | *Children for whom permanence decisions has changed away from adoption* |
| *A17* | *Number of children in a Fostering for Adoption (FFA) / Concurrent Planning Foster Placement* |
| *A11* | *Number of approved adoptive placements waiting to be matched after 3, 6, 12, 18, months* |
| *A14* | *Total number of children not placed after placement order after 3, 6, 12, 18, months* |
| *A12* | *Percentage of adoptive families matched to a child who waiting at least 3 months from approval to matching decision* |
| *A13* | *Number of applications to become an adoptive family still to be assessed (not yet approved or rejected)* |
| *A21* | *Number of adopter approvals* |
| *A22* | *Number of applications commencing stage 1* |

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| **RECUITMANT & ASSESSMENT** | | |
| **Agency Assessments** |  |  |
| ACTION/TASK | **KPI** |  |
| Potential Applicants will receive detailed information about adoption | within **10 working days** of enquiry |  |
| where a potential adopter registers an interest in adopting a child a decision whether or not to accept this should be reached | within **5 working days** from receipt of the ROI |  |
| **pre-assessment decision**   * Stage ONE | within a period of **eight weeks** from the date of ROI |  |
| Adopters notify the agency they wish to proceed to Stage two | Within **six months** of stage one decision to offer assessment |  |
| **decision** as to whether the prospective adopter is suitable to adopt a child must be made | within **four months** of the date on which the agency received the prospective adopter’s notification that they wish to proceed with Stage TWO |  |
| **Fast Track Procedure** for approved foster carers and previous adopters who wish to adopt…… **decision** as to whether the prospective adopter is suitable to adopt a child must be made | within **four months** of the date which the prospective adopter registered their interest in adopting a child in their care |  |
| assessing Social Worker will inform the prospective adopters of the panel’s recommendation | verbally within **24 hours** of the panel |  |
| Review of adopter approval if a child not placed | **Annually** |  |
| **Non-Agency Assessments (stepparent)** |  |  |
| Enquirers to be given information regarding alternatives and process. Prospective applicant to be created on LCS | **Within 2 Working days** |  |
| On receipt of a NOTIFICATION of INTENT TO ADOPT an adoption case record should be opened for the child | **Within 1 Working day** |  |
| Annex A to be completed….. | **Within 6 weeks** of an application to adopt being made to the court (unless and extension is requested) |  |
| **FAMILY FINDING** | | |
| The length of time from the **date the child becomes looked after** (BLA) to the date the agency decision maker agreeing the plan for adoption | should be **no more than 6 months** |  |
| The length of time from Placement Order to the date the Agency Decision Maker agrees the adoption match | should be **no more than 4 months** |  |
| The length of time from a child becoming looked after to the date they are placed with their prospective adopters | should be **no more than 14 months** |  |
| The later life letter and life story book must be delivered to the adopters | within **10 working days of the celebration hearing** |  |
| All children should have a **Permanence Planning Meeting within 6 weeks** of becoming looked after and regular | reviews **every 6 weeks** thereafter until their plan for permanence is achieved. |  |
| All children with a parallel plan of adoption will have an. | allocated Family Finder by the **2nd Permanence Planning** Meeting |  |
| Adoption Allowance: Consideration of whether the child meets the criteria for an adoption allowance. Appendix 3 to be completed and submitted to Team Manager/HoS for ***agreement in principle***. | **Within 14 days of plan for adoption being confirmed** |  |
| Child’s profile to be uploaded to LINKMAKER; Profiles should be regularly updated and removed once the child is matched. | all interest should be responded to **within 3 working days**. |  |
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| **POST ORDER SUPPORT** | | |
| The duty Worker will ascertain the enquirers eligibility for services and complete a referral for Team manager to make a decision on appropriate service | Decision to be made **within 5 working days** |  |
| Assessments of Need will be allocated | **within 2 weeks of request** |  |
| The Assessment will be completed within 6 weeks of allocation with a recommendation and support plan. | **within 6 weeks** |  |
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**COMMISSIONING PRACTICE STANDARDS**

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**PRACTICE STANDARDS – Buckinghamshire Council PACT Values**

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| **Practice Expectations** | **Person Responsible** |
| **Proud**  You are motivated to make a positive difference for our people and communities and are proud to be part of Buckinghamshire Council.  **Be proud at work by:**  Showing you care for work and setting high standards.  Performing to your best every day.  Caring about customers and their needs.  Upholding the reputation of the council and your service.  Being proud of the role you play to deliver better outcomes for people in Buckinghamshire. | Team Manager  Assistant Team Manager  Commissioners |
| **Ambitious**  You are excited about our organisation and have confidence in our ability to meet the challenges ahead.  **Be ambitious at work by:**   * Being ambitious to learn, develop and fulfil potential at work. * Being keen to try out new ideas to make a positive difference for service users. * Looking for solutions rather than dwelling on problems. * Being creative and curious about doing things better. | Team Manager  Assistant Team Manager  Commissioners |
| **Collaborative**  You work well with others and across our partner organisations, making connections and understanding the bigger picture.  **Be collaborative at work by:**   * Happily lending a hand and getting involved if you can help. * Sharing ideas; asking questions and showing interest in the work other people do. * Making an effort to understand the bigger picture - to see how systems and processes join up. * Looking at things from different perspectives | Team Manager  Assistant Team Manager  Commissioners |
| **Trustworthy**  You take responsibility for your work and are trusted to perform your job to the best of your ability.  **Be trustworthy at work by:**   * Being accountable for your actions. * Being quick to respond and show initiative. * Being willing to speak up when things aren't right. * Behaving professionally and to professional standards. * Following our code of conduct and taking corporate standards seriously. | Team Manager  Assistant Team Manager  Commissioners |

**PRACTICE STANDARDS –** **Staffing Practice**

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| **Practice Expectations** | **Person Responsible** |
| **RAV’s**  The commissioning team are required to ensure the Risk Assessment Vehicle (RAV) is continually up to date while ensuring the RAV is inline with the LCS placement report.  RAVs are to be sent to the Operations Manager and the Commissioning ATM monthly. | Team Manager  Assistant Team Manager  Commissioners |
| **Emergency provider visits**  The allocated contractual managed commissioning team member is required to attend the provision on the same day as receiving the notification.  The visit must be as best planned as possible gathering lines of enquiry.  The Commissioning Team member is to ensure feedback is provided to the Operations Manager or the Head of Service on the same day or during the visit.  The Commissioning Officer will be required to identify the need to make an informed judgement regards to the safety of the person. This level of decision making will be jointly decided by senior managers | Team Manager  Assistant Team Manager  Commissioners |
| **Provider Monitoring visits**  Commissioners will monitor and develop action plans with providers creating improvements for quality of care, support and education while working closely with the provider for implementation.  Commissioners will view finances, and crucially quality of service user experiences and reach a view about whether outcomes are improving.  The Commissioner should involve data, young people and Social Care satisfaction, contract monitoring, audit, inspections, annual reviews, and reports.  The Commissioner is to review impact of service outcomes for young people which involves using management information systems, accessing appropriate legislation measuring how well the service is achieving its aims against the legislation. | Team Manager  Assistant Team Manager  Commissioners |
| **Report Writing**  All reports are required to be finalised within 10 working days of the site visit. Reports are to be professionally written, informative, provider comments regard to the visit, signed and agreed by the Operations Manager or the Commissioning Assistant Team Manager.  Commissioners are required to involve young people within their monitoring visit. This is to be sufficiently rigorous and to ensure good quality young people’s services  All reports where applicable are to be uploaded on CMA and CCRAG electronic Systems | Team Manager  Assistant Team Manager  Commissioners |
| **Developing a Local Market**  Commissioners will need to consider developing the local market as part of their overall approach to commissioning services for young people, by improving the options, outcomes, and value for money of young people’s services.  **Commissioners are to consider the following with providers:**    • Provide services which ensure a more efficient use of resources and better value for money  • Deliver a higher quality of service, allow greater flexibility, and innovate more than they otherwise would.  • Provide a range of tailored services instead of a one-size-fits-all approach, which offers consumers a greater choice  • Maximising the potential within Buckinghamshire locality. | Team Manager  Assistant Team Manager  Commissioners |

**PRACTICE STANDARDS –** **Our Vision and Strategic Objectives**

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| **Practice Expectations**  Buckinghamshire Council Children’s Strategic Commissioning will ensure; | **Person Responsible** |
| **Be successful**  Children have the best start in life; ensure they have access to high quality education, employment, and motivational training; go to school feeling inspired to stay and learn; and have good self-esteem and faith in themselves | Operations Manager  Assistant Team Manager  Commissioning Team |
| **Be Happy and Healthy**  Services are available to promote good health and prevent ill health; learn the importance of healthy, secure relationships and having a support network; have access to services to improve overall wellbeing, and easy ways to get active. | Operations Manager  Assistant Team Manager  Commissioning Team |
| **Be Safe**  Children are protected from all types of abuse and neglect; have a place to feel safe and a sense of belonging; access education and support about how to stay safe; and have access to appropriate housing. | Operations Manager  Assistant Team Manager  Commissioning Team |
| **Be Supported**  Children are empowered to know who to speak to when they need support and know that they will be listened to and believed; can access information in a way that suits them; have inspiring role models; and can talk to staff who are experienced and caring. | Operations Manager Assistant Team Manager Commissioning Team |

**PRACTICE STANDARDS –** **Strategic Aims and Principles**

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| **Practice Expectations** | **Person Responsible** |
| **Service Planning Principles**  All provision decisions (internal or external) will be based on best value and evidence of outcomes  The Children’s Commissioning Team will ensure pre-placement, unless completed already, the provider will provide a safe, stable & nurturing environment as local as possible that will meet the needs of the child  The Children’s Commissioning Team will focus on the young person’s Care Plan enabling children to exit the care system with appropriate support, where that is the right thing for them. | Operations Manager  Assistant Team Manager  Commissioning Team |
| **Children’s Needs & Placements**  Buckinghamshire Council Children’s Strategic Commissioning Team will work positively and collaboratively with existing and potential providers to develop a range of appropriate provision to meet the needs of Buckinghamshire children within County ensuring access to services, continuity of schooling, maintenance of support networks | Operations Manager  Assistant Team Manager  Commissioning Team |
| **Market Development & Support**  Buckinghamshire Council supports a mixed economy of provision, further developing both in-house and external provision  Children’s Commissioning Team will work in partnership with other agencies, external providers, and other local authorities to ensure sufficiency and maximise value for money  Buckinghamshire Council Commissioning is committed to continue working with external providers both IFA and residential to further develop services within Buckinghamshire | Operations Manager  Assistant Team Manager  Commissioning Team |
| **Feedback from Children**  The Children’s Commissioning Team will ensure the voice of the child should be heard more strongly, wherever they are placed  Children’s Commissioning Services aims are to strengthen and consult with children, involve them in decision-making and deliver its responsibilities as a Corporate Parent through the monitoring process. | Operations Manager  Assistant Team Manager  Commissioning Team |

**PRACTICE STANDARDS - Monitoring the wellbeing of Young People**

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| **Practice Expectations**  Graphical user interface, application, Word  Description automatically generated | **Person Responsible** |
| **Understand**  The Commissioning Team are required to recognise the outcomes they want to achieve, identify the needs, resources, and priorities, and agree what the desired outcome should be. This involves gathering the views of children, young people, so that services can be aligned most appropriately to address the providers needs within available resources.  Providers views of the needs of children, young people should be included, as well as their insight into what types of services and service structure may be most appropriate in response. This should consider and inform other needs assessment processes, especially the joint strategic needs assessment between Buckinghamshire Council and Buckinghamshire Council’s Health. | Operations Manager  Assistant Team Manager  Commissioning Team |
| **Plan**  Map out and consider different ways of addressing the needs identified. How can they be addressed effectively, efficiently, justifiably and in a sustainable way. Providers should be involved at this stage to add their expertise to the discussion.  Commissioning strategies should reflect the full use of  resources:   * finance * the workforce: what shape, skills or training might   be needed   * facilities: what needs to be in place and where | Operations Manager  Assistant Team Manager  Commissioning Team |
| **Do**  Make decisions based on the appropriate action identified in the ‘**plan’** stage. Implement commissioning strategies. | Operations Manager  Assistant Team Manager  Commissioning Team |
| **Review**  Monitor service delivery against expected outcomes and report how well it is doing against the plan. This is in effect asking, ‘Did our ‘do’ phase deliver on the ‘plan’ we put in place to deliver against what we ‘understand’ to be the needs?’ Part of the review role should include considering whether the strategic plans are addressing identified needs and monitoring whether all partner agencies are acting in accordance with the commitments they made. The review should feed into the next phase of commissioning as it is a key source of information for the ‘understand’ and ‘plan’ phases. Commissioners should actively seek to involve service users at each commissioning stage so that they become co-designers and co-producers of the positive outcomes which commissioning strives to achieve. | Operations Manager  Assistant Team Manager  Commissioning Team |

**PRACTICE STANDARDS -** **Outcomes-based commissioning**

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| **As a Children’s Strategic Commissioning Officer my practice standards and expectations will be the following.** | **Person Responsible** |
| **Provision Standards**  Implement sustainable contracting arrangements and ensure services meet the required quality standards and deliver outcomes for children and young people. | Operations Manager  Assistant Team Manager  Commissioning Team |
| **Provider Performance**  Work with key stakeholders and service users to analyse need and demand, understand market trends, identify gaps, and develop innovative and cost-effective service models which meet identified needs. | Operations Manager  Assistant Team Manager  Commissioning Team |
| **Good quality and cost-effective provision**  Lead on the development of strategies, which lead to the provision of efficient and cost-effective services reflecting best practice and de-commissioning existing services where appropriate. | Operations Manager  Assistant Team Manager  Commissioning Team |
| **Effective communication**  Liaise with all Buckinghamshire Council’s professionals, health specialists, young people, and providers to draw up service specifications to meet need, defining best value and measurable quality outcomes and ensuring services are provided in an efficient and cost-effective manner that is consistent with good practice. | Operations Manager  Assistant Team Manager  Commissioning Team |
| **Voice – Wishes and feeling**  Ensure that the voice of children, young people and families/carers are at the heart of the commissioning and review of services through effective mechanisms for involvement and consultation. | Operations Manager  Assistant Team Manager  Commissioning Team |
| **Contractual Management**  Manage and ensure compliance across contracts through effective communication, Social Workers, Health and Personal Advisers, procurement, legal and other internal and external agencies. | Operations Manager  Assistant Team Manager  Commissioning Team |
| **Service Knowledgeable and expectations**  Take a lead responsibility for managing and facilitating the commissioning of a wide range of services for children and young people in accordance with national standards, legislation, and relevant policy. | Operations Manager  Assistant Team Manager  Commissioning Team |
| **Cost effective**  Evaluate and review of contract arrangements and on negotiations and communications with providers relating to fees, contractual terms and conditions and quality outcomes | Operations Manager  Assistant Team Manager  Commissioning Team |
| **Commissioning processes**  Work within relevant commissioning and procurement processes, working closely with procurement and legal services and preparing or overseeing the creation of relevant reports to ensure compliance with governance arrangements and other statutory/legislative requirements. | Operations Manager  Assistant Team Manager  Commissioning Team |
| **Proactive professional relationships**  Work proactively with providers to develop effective working relationships and manage the market to ensure a robust, flexible, and sustainable economy of services and support. | Operations Manager  Assistant Team Manager  Commissioning Team |
| **Open and honest discussion**  Provide Team Managers, with information to enable them to make informed decisions regarding the development improvement of services and provider concerns and challenges | Operations Manager  Assistant Team Manager  Commissioning Team |
| **Analytical and quality recording**  Prepare high quality reports to inform decision making and attend and where required chair working groups and stakeholder events | Operations Manager  Assistant Team Manager  Commissioning Team |
| **Health and Safety**  To cooperate with their line manager and senior management, to work safely, to comply with health and safety instructions and information  • To report to their manager any health and safety concerns, hazardous condition or defect in the health and safety arrangements. | Operations Manager  Assistant Team Manager  Commissioning Team |
| **Safeguarding – Protection of Young people and adults**  To comply with the Interagency procedures of Buckinghamshire Council’s Safeguarding Partnership Board and Buckinghamshire Council’s policies for safeguarding children and safeguarding adults and is required: -  • To ensure they are aware of the signs that may suggest a child or vulnerable adult is being abused or neglected.  • To report to their manager, or other appropriate manager, any concerns they may have that suggest that a child or vulnerable adult may be being abused or neglected immediately | Operations Manager  Assistant Team Manager  Commissioning Team |
| **Inclusivity**  The Commissioning Officer will be accountable for carrying out all duties and responsibilities with due regard to the Buckinghamshire Council’s Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy. | Operations Manager  Assistant Team Manager  Commissioning Team |

**PRACTICE STANDARDS –****SEN Education Commissioning**

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| **Practice Expectations** |  |
| **Quality of provision**  Ofsted rating for both the education and residential provisions must be rated as Good or Outstanding for placement.  Where it is proving difficult to place, a provision that is rated Requires Improvement can be considered and commissioned subject to Head of Service/Director level approval. | Head of Integrated SEND  Area Team Manager  SEND Monitoring Officer  Children in Care Strategic Commissioning |
| **Measuring Outcomes**  Providers must deliver to the IPA listed EHCP outcomes including therapeutic deliveries, this progress is measured on a termly basis and at the EHCP Annual review. The IPA is reissued annually in line with the updated EHCP outcomes from the Annual Review. When an Annual Review has not been carried out, the IPA will be issued with the previous year’s outcomes. | Head of Integrated SEND  Area Team Manager  SEND Monitoring Officer  Children in Care Strategic Commissioning |
| **Effective monitoring**  Provisions are monitored annually either via CCRAG or commissioning. Where CCRAG monitoring is in place and the provision falls below good in either residential or education, a risk assessment will be a carried out and if appropriate (level of CYP’s needs, communication and capacity etc) an individual spot check carried out. | Head of Integrated SEND  Area Team Manager  SEND Monitoring Officer  Children in Care Strategic Commissioning |
| **Regulated Accommodation**  Where School accommodation is registered as a Children’s Home, all Children in Care standards are applied in the home as per Children’s Homes Regulations 2015, including regular independent advocacy visits, Reg 44 Inspections, Registered Manager, NVQ Level 3 trained staff, etc  Where school accommodation is non-Children’s Homes, that it complies with the Health and Safety and accommodation related standards expected in Children’s Homes | Head of Integrated SEND  Area Team Manager  SEND Monitoring Officer  Children in Care Strategic Commissioning |
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**PRACTICE STANDARDS – Professional Culture**

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| **Practice Expectations** | **Person Responsible** |
| **Preconditions for Good Practice**  Managers ensure staff work in a professional environment conducive to good professional practice. This includes support, challenge and bringing professional rigour to daily practice. | Head of Service  Managers |
| **Support**   * Managers will lead by example and cultivate a staff atmosphere that is mutually supportive and draws on the professional strengths of all staff. * Managers will provide good lines of communication, ensuring that important service policy and procedures are shared, understood, and acted upon. * Managers will provide meaningful supervision and annual appraisals that take account of staff strengths and areas for improvement and seek to ensure that the service continues to invest in staff’s professional development. * Managers will be approachable to staff and will encourage more experienced staff to support those with less experience to promote peer learning. | Head of Service  Operations Manager  Assistant Team Manager |
| **Constructive Challenge**   * Managers will monitor the quality of the service they are responsible for through regularly scrutinising practice and auditing children’s case recording and take steps to rectify poor quality when identified. * Managers will look for opportunities to bring about improvements in practice, and support staff in delivering those improvements. * The Practice Development Team will work to bring about improvements to practice and support senior managers in the development of staff skillset and knowledge. The Practice Development Team will review case files and escalate cases where unacceptable levels of risk are identified, or where the standard of social work practice is deemed to be below the Core practice standards identified within this document. The team will also provide coaching and reflective sessions with workers to aid their development. * Where concerns are identified by a Child Protection Advisor, Independent Reviewing Officer or Family Group Conference Coordinator in relation to practice, care planning, implementation of plans or decision making, they will attempt to resolve the issue with the allocated worker initially in an informal way (i.e., face to face discussion). * Should the concern be significant or not resolved to the point that the plan for the child is likely to drift; the concern will be escalated to the attention of managers using the agreed resolution process. | Head of Service  Operations Manager  Assistant Team Manager  Child Protection Advisor/Independent Reviewing  Officer/Family Group Conference Coordinator/ Social Worker |
| **Professional rigour**  Managers keep up to date on research findings in practice and policy documents relevant to their area of work. They will expect staff to develop their professional skills and expertise by keeping up to date with applied research. | Head of Service  Team Manager  Assistant Team Manager |
| All staff uphold their professional responsibility to be accountable for their own conduct, development, and delivery of a high-quality service. This includes being accountable within their own roles and responsibilities, supporting and holding others to account, and seeking appropriate assistance when needed. | All Staff |

**PRACTICE STANDARDS – Expectation of Managers**

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| **Practice Expectations** | **Person Responsible** |
| Work is allocated to suitably trained and qualified staff, with the necessary skills and capacity to undertake the task. When allocating cases, complexity and number of cases should be considered to ensure workable caseloads. | Operations Manager  Assistant Team Manager |
| **Key Performance Indicators and Trend Analysis**  ***Please refer to appendix 1 –***  Managers and Leaders are to use Key Performance Indicators which allows them to monitor the matters each month. | Operations Manager  Assistant Team Manager |
| **Quality Assurance**  Managers and leaders are required to establish the quality standards, procedures and monitoring the work of others to ensure Buckinghamshire Councils standards are met.    To ensure good quality practice standards, Managers and Leaders are responsible for ensuring consistent quality audits of supervision, C4P and all systems of documentation performed by the provision are conducted monthly to ensure good quality practises | Operations Manager  Assistant Team Manager |
| Supervision is held regularly. Supervision will take place on a minimum of a monthly basis.  The frequency of supervision sessions is also determined by the complexity of the work. There is a signed supervision agreement in place, reviewed annually. | Operations Manager  Assistant Team Manager |
| Supervision encompasses wellbeing, health & safety, professional development and standards, and casework supervision. | Operations Manager  Assistant Team Manager |
| Casework shows evidence of reflection, impact of intervention and management oversight. It includes clear case direction from the point of allocation, through to any transfers or closure. | Operations Manager  Assistant Team Manager |
| Managers will lead by example and support their staff to embed the Strengthening Families approach into their daily practice. This includes direct and written work. | Operations Manager  Assistant Team Manager |
| A record of supervision is available to both parties in respect of professional supervision, relevant sections of which (casework supervision) are recorded on the child’s file within one working day of casework supervision. | Operations Manager  Assistant Team Manager |
| Management oversight is recorded at all stages of work with a child and there is a clear audit trail of decision making. | Operations Manager  Assistant Team Manager |
| Management oversight ensures that timescales for visiting children are driven by the child’s situation and plan, and that published timescales are not just “targets to work to”. | Operations Manager  Assistant Team Manager |
| Managers check performance data and audit children’s records on a regular basis to have ensured that identified action is taken to improve practice where necessary. | Operations Manager  Assistant Team Manager |
| Managers maximise opportunities for training and development, overseeing that staff attend mandatory training, and participate in other agreed professional development as identified in supervision and appraisal. | Operations Manager  Assistant Team Manager |
| Formal observation of practice by the supervising Manager will be recorded in supervision at least once a year. This will inform the appraisal process. | Operations Manager  Assistant Team Manager |
| All staff have annual appraisals and agreed targets are reviewed through the year. Appraisal formally notes achievements in the past 12 months and records any actions needed to address development needs identified during ongoing supervision and case discussions. The appraisal sets goals for the coming year. | Operations Manager  Assistant Team Manager |

**App 1**

**Key Performance Indicators (KPI)**

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| **Safeguarding** |
| Missing Notifications (16+ Support living and Regulated Care settings) use HoS daily report |
| Bucks de-commissioned Services (Safeguarding) |
| Provider closure of business (General) |
| **Monitoring** |
| Number of 16+ leaving care monitoring visits in month |
| ***Number of 16+ monitoring reports signed for the month*** |
| Number of Children Homes Regulated provider visits in month |
| ***Number of Regulated monitoring reports signed for the month*** |
| Number of DOM Care provider Visits in the month |
| ***Number of DOM Care monitoring reports signed for the month*** |
| Number of SEN/ Residential visits in the month |
| ***Number of SEN monitoring reports signed for the month*** |
| Number of Action Plans implemented relating to provider quality and performance |
| **Provider Communication** |
| Number of block bed contractual meetings |
| Number of Stakeholder events **(Quarterly)** |
| Fee uplift requests |
| Number of Communication letters sent out to all providers |
| **Data Management** |
| CMA self-assessment of contract records and performance |
| Number of RAV’s up to date and sent to manager |
| Number of Business Continuity plans are in place and maintained for contracts as appropriate |
| Provider KPI’s returned in month |
| **Purchasing** |
| Providers Accredited with Commissioning Alliance DPV or 16+ Accreditation |
| Number of young people in a provision which are accredited with the Commissioning Alliance |
| Number of new providers commissioned |
| **HR and Training** |
| Number of Staff |
| Number of Staffing gaps/vacancies |
| Team Training hours completed |
| Team Sickness (in days) |
| Supervisions completed in month |
| C4P’s reviewed |

**RESIDENTIAL PRACTICE STANDARDS**

Timeline

Description automatically generated



**PRACTICE STANDARDS – Buckinghamshire Council PACT Values**

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| **Practice Expectations** | **Person Responsible** |
| **Proud**  You are motivated to make a positive difference for our people and communities and are proud to be part of Buckinghamshire Council.  **Be proud at work by:**   * Showing you care for work and setting high standards. * Performing to your best every day. * Caring about customers and their needs. * Upholding the reputation of the council and your service. * Being proud of the role you play to deliver better outcomes for people in Buckinghamshire. | Registered Manager  Responsible Individual  Assistant Team Manager  Care Workers |
| **Ambitious**  You are excited about our organisation and have confidence in our ability to meet the challenges ahead.  **Be ambitious at work by:**   * Being ambitious to learn, develop and fulfil potential at work. * Being keen to try out new ideas to make a positive difference for service users. * Looking for solutions rather than dwelling on problems. * Being creative and curious about doing things better. | Registered Manager  Responsible Individual  Assistant Team Manager  Care Workers |
| **Collaborative**  You work well with others and across our partner organisations, making connections and understanding the bigger picture.  **Be collaborative at work by:**   * Happily lending a hand and getting involved if you can help. * Sharing ideas; asking questions and showing interest in the work other people do. * Making an effort to understand the bigger picture - to see how systems and processes join up. * Looking at things from different perspectives | Registered Manager  Responsible Individual  Assistant Team Manager  Care Workers |
| **Trustworthy**  You take responsibility for your work and are trusted to perform your job to the best of your ability.  **Be trustworthy at work by:**   * Being accountable for your actions. * Being quick to respond and show initiative. * Being willing to speak up when things aren't right. * Behaving professionally and to professional standards. * Following our code of conduct and taking corporate standards seriously. | Registered Manager  Responsible Individual  Assistant Team Manager  Care Workers |

**PRACTICE STANDARDS - The Quality and Purpose of Care**

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| **Practice Expectations** | **Person Responsible** |
| **The Statement of Purpose**  The Statement of Purpose is of particular importance to this Standard. Homes are required to develop and keep under review a “Statement of Purpose”. The home’s Statement of Purpose should be child-focused, indicating how the home provides individualised care to meet the Quality Standards for the children in their care.  The information set out in the Statement of Purpose is an essential part of the process of agreement between the registered person and Buckinghamshire Council that a placement in that home is the right one for that child, and that the home will be able to respond effectively to the child’s assessed needs. Emergency admissions should not be taken unless the home’s Statement of Purpose and its capacity and support systems mean that it has the capability to care for children admitted at very short notice while continuing to offer high quality care to children already living in the home. | Registered Manager  Responsible Individual  Assistant Team Manager |
| **A welcoming environment**  Many children placed in homes may undergo a difficult transition and what should be simple aspects of their care take on a substantial significance in this context. Staff should provide a nurturing environment that is welcoming, supportive, and which provides appropriate boundaries in relation to their behaviour. Homes must also meet children’s basic day to day needs and physical necessities. Staff should seek to meet the child’s basic needs in the way that a good parent would, recognising that many children in residential care have experienced environments where these needs have not been consistently met – doing so is an important aspect of demonstrating that the staff care for the child and value them as an individual.  The registered person should ensure that children are provided with nutritious meals suitable for each child’s needs. Where appropriate, children should be involved in choosing and preparing meals and opportunities to sit together and eat should be promoted.  For Buckinghamshire children’s homes to be nurturing and supportive environments that meet the needs of their children, they will, be homely, domestic environments. Our Children’s homes comply with relevant health and safety legislations (alarms, food hygiene etc.); however, in doing so, homes should seek as far as possible to maintain a domestic rather than ‘institutional’ impression.  Just as in a family home, children should be able to access all shared areas of their home unless there are specific reasons why this would not meet a child’s needs. Limits on privacy and access may only be put in place to safeguard each child in the home. Any decisions to limit a child’s access to any area of the home and any modifications to the environment of the home, must only be made where this is intended to safeguard the child’s welfare. All decisions should be informed by a rigorous assessment of that individual child’s needs, be properly recorded, and be kept under regular review.  The registered person should ensure that staff are prepared and able to listen to children who want to talk about their past experiences. | Registered Manager  Responsible Individual  Assistant Team Manager  Care Workers |
| **A safe and supportive environment**  Children’s home staff should take every step to make sure that individual children and young people are not subject to discrimination, marginalisation or bullying from their peers by virtue of their gender, religion, ethnicity, cultural and linguistic background, sexual identity, mental health, disability or for any other reason.  Children in residential care may be worried about being stigmatised or bullied by their peers for being “different” because of where they live. The home’s environment and care should be designed to take account of this and staff should support children to talk about and help them address any concerns they have.  The importance of understanding who we are and where we come from is recognised in good social work practice, for example through undertaking life story work or other direct work. Staff in children’s homes should play a full role in work of this kind.  The relevant plan may include a strategy for a particular type of care, treatment, or intervention (for example therapy relating to neglect or abuse). The care staff will need to understand the purpose of any such care and the way in which the past experiences of abuse or neglect may manifest itself in the day-to-day life of the child. | Registered Manager  Responsible Individual  Assistant Team Manager  Care Workers |
| **Providing personal space**  Children in residential care within Buckinghamshire Council Homes live in a group environment, and so it is particularly important that they can spend time away from other group members. Staff should respect children’s privacy and support the other children living in the home to do so. Each child should have their own personal space which will usually be their bedroom.  Children should be provided with appropriate furniture, such as a lockable cabinet or drawers to securely store personal items, including any personal information. Children should have separate bedrooms and should not share a bedroom with an adult. Children should be given a choice about how their personal space is decorated  A child’s bedroom should not generally be entered without their permission, though it may be necessary to establish routines to allow for rooms to be cleaned regularly. Usually, rooms should only be searched if the child has been informed or asked for their permission. Immediate searching may be necessary where there are reasonable grounds for believing that there is a risk to the child’s or another person’s safety or well-being. | Registered Manager  Responsible Individual  Assistant Team Manager  Care Workers |
| **Choice and expression of preference**  Children should be supported to express themselves as individuals and should be given an appropriate degree of freedom and choice in relation to day-to-day arrangements for their care, depending on their individual needs and the setting in which they are cared for. This is in relation to both activities and personal items such as clothing, technology, and leisure items. Children’s reasonable preferences in relation to day-to-day arrangements should be met with consideration given to safeguarding, particularly in relation to the use of technology. Where a child’s preferences are unreasonable or cannot be met for safeguarding reasons, staff should discuss this with the child to help them understand why.  Children should be able to maintain and develop their cultural or religious beliefs as far as practicable and where appropriate, through participation and instruction, and by observing religious requirements including dress and diet. | Registered Manager  Responsible Individual  Assistant Team Manager  Care Workers |
| **Transition from the home**  Staff must help each child to prepare for any moves from the home, whether they are returning home, moving to another placement or adult care, or to live independently. This includes supporting the child to develop emotional and mental resilience to cope without the home’s support and, where the child is moving to live independently, practical skills such as cooking, housework, budgeting, and personal self-care.  As the home will have a day to day understanding of young people’s capabilities and needs, children’s homes staff will have a valuable contribution to make to the pathway planning process. They should actively seek to make the fullest contribution, working with other relevant persons.  Children Act 1989: Transition to adulthood for care leavers. | Registered Manager  Responsible Individual  Assistant Team Manager  Care Workers |

**PRACTICE STANDARDS - Children’s Views, Wishes and Feelings**

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| **Practice Expectations** | **Person Responsible** |
| **Working in partnership with others**  The home will work in partnership with relevant people as appropriate to ensure that each child is provided with support (appropriate to their age and understanding) to communicate their views, wishes and feelings and participate as fully as possible in all aspects of their care planning and daily care. This may include the use of and support to use communication aids, equipment and/or any necessary language support.  For children who are looked after, including those placed in care under section 20 of the Children Act 1989, The Social Worker will have the level or type of family involvement that is appropriate in their care plan.  For children who are not looked-after the home should frequently seek the views and involvement of parents/carers and others with a significant relationship to the child as relevant persons in that child’s care. | Registered Manager  Responsible Individual  Assistant Team Manager  Care Workers  Social Worker |
| **Taking children’s views, wishes and feelings into account**  In some instances, a child may express wishes that are not always in their best interests or which may conflict with the views of other children in the home. In such circumstances, the responsible adults will have to balance the wishes of the child against what they judge to be in the best interests of the child and reach a reasonable view about the best way forward in the interests of all. The reasons for reaching any decision will need to be carefully explained to and understood by the child or children concerned.  Staff should have the skills and confidence to communicate easily and understand the importance of listening to, involving, and responding to the children they care for. Staff should understand that they have a responsibility to observe, notice and respond to children who are expressing their views, acknowledging that it is not the sole responsibility of the child to ‘tell’. They should also understand how children might communicate their feelings through their behaviour, or non-verbally especially where the child has a disability which does not allow them to communicate as others might.  Children must be consulted regularly on their views about the home’s care, to inform and support continued improvement in the quality of care provided. Due consideration should be given to the child’s cognitive ability in the development and implementation of any consultation processes. Children should be able to see the results of their views being listened to and acted upon.  Staff should ensure that each child understands the home’s procedures and policies for respecting their confidentiality and when it will not be possible to preserve this – e.g., where protecting a confidence puts themselves or others at risk.  Staff should encourage children to share any concerns about their care or other matters as soon as they arise. Children must be able to take up issues or make a complaint with support and without any fear that this will result in any adverse consequences. Regulation 39 sets out the requirements on the registered person to have a complaints procedure. Children must be aware of this procedure and be reminded of it, as necessary.  The registered person and the home’s staff should be familiar with the care planning process for looked-after children and must assist children to prepare for meetings in relation to this. Staff should play an important role in these meetings, including supporting the child and enabling a clear understanding to be reached about the child’s views, wishes, feelings, and expectations for their future. An independent advocate can also be called upon by the child or staff to support the child in their reviews.  The registered person should provide opportunities and support, where needed, for children to engage with WE DO CARE, which enable the views and experiences of children in care to be heard. | Registered Manager  Responsible Individual  Assistant Team Manager  Care Workers  Social Worker |
| **Independent advocacy and children’s rights**  All children must have access to appropriate advocacy support, and where possible this should be provided by a person that the child chooses. Looked-after children are entitled to an independent advocate to advise them and ensure they have the support needed to express their views, wishes and feelings about their care and lives.  Children’s home staff should complement any explanation given by the IRO by helping looked-after children to understand the role of an independent advocate and how they can access one. Staff should regularly remind children of their right to access an independent advocate, concerning any matter relevant to the child’s status as looked after.  The registered person must ensure that the children in their care understand their rights as a looked-after child, or child living in a children’s home. Children must be informed of how to contact the Office of the Children’s Commissioner for advice and assistance about their rights and entitlements.  Get it Sorted (2004) Guidance on providing effective advocacy services for children and young people making a complaint under the Children Act 1989. | Registered Manager  Responsible Individual  Assistant Team Manager  Social Worker |
| **Producing a children’s guide**  Buckinghamshire Children’s Homes will have a children’s guide which is made available to all children when their placement in the home is agreed or on arrival at the home.  The children’s guide helps children to understand:  What the day-to-day routines of the home are (‘what happens in the home’).  The Statement of Purpose of the home (the care they can expect to receive while living there).  How to make a complaint in line with the home’s complaints procedure.  How they can access advocacy support or independent advocacy if eligible; and  As part of reviewing and revising where appropriate the Statement of Purpose, the registered person should review and update the children’s guide as necessary, and make sure children are explained of any changes. | Registered Manager  Responsible Individual  Assistant Team Manager |
| **Children with communication difficulties**  Children who cannot or choose not to verbalise, have the right to have their views, wishes and feelings heard and respected in the same way as other children. There may be children whose abilities and understanding are such that they will need interpretation according to their individual circumstances in consultation with their social worker.  The registered person must not automatically use the views of parents as a substitute for children’s views. Children will have their own perspective and arrangements should be in place to engage with them directly. In some cases, the view of a relevant person, such as a social worker or IRO, might be included in discussions where the person is interpreting or advocating on behalf of a child. | Registered Manager  Responsible Individual  Assistant Team Manager  Care Workers  Social Workers |

**PRACTICE STANDARDS - Care Planning**

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| **Practice Expectations** | **Person Responsible** |
| **Working in partnership with others**  Effective care planning and strong working relationships between the staff of the home and the placing authority are essential to the success of placements within Buckinghamshire Council Residential Homes  The registered person should ensure that they and their staff engage proactively with the Buckinghamshire Council Social Care to contribute fully to the relevant plans for the child’s care on an ongoing basis. Homes should consider during this engagement, seeking appropriate permissions for the person conducting independent visits to access the relevant parts of the child’s records, as agreed with the child.  The registered person should only accept placements for children where they are satisfied that the home can respond effectively to the child’s assessed needs as recorded in the child’s relevant plans and where they have fully considered the impact that the placement will have on the existing group of children. The Statement of Purpose is an important document in the process of care planning as it sets out the needs of children the home is set up and equipped to care for.  The registered person must challenge who asks them to accept a child in the absence of a complete and current relevant plan, as the expectation that a placement of a child without the necessary information would go ahead. It is essential that homes understand what will be required of them before they accept responsibility for a child’s placement, to avoid disruption and instability for the child in future and for other children in the home. | Registered Manager  Responsible Individual  Assistant Team Manager  Care Workers  Social Workers |
| **Arriving at and moving on from the home**  Homes set up for emergency placement (Wenlock House) as indicated and detailed in their Statement of Purpose will require sufficient staff trained and skilled in in the admission and care of children, where their full background may not be known.  Registered persons must ensure there are procedures in place for welcoming and introducing each child to the home, and that they are sensitive to the needs of the child at the time of arrival. A warm welcome and introduction to the home is an entitlement for all children whether they are admitted in a planned way or in an emergency. Where possible other children and young people should be supported to contribute to the design of the welcome and introduction and where appropriate the welcome itself. The home has a key role in helping children to understand why they are living there and the plans for their future.  An effective introduction to a home will consider the child’s abilities and capacity to understand and retain information. Such an introduction may take place over a period and may be delivered in different formats according to the child’s communication and cognitive abilities. The registered person should ensure staff establish the child’s understanding of key information about living in the home and the expectations of their care to establish whether there are gaps in the child’s understanding.  As well as longer-term support for children to move on from the home effectively, the home has an important role in supporting each child leaving the home in the period immediately before their departure. The registered person should work with the placing authority to ensure that each child’s transition is planned and help each child to prepare for leaving both practically and emotionally. | Registered Manager  Responsible Individual  Assistant Team Manager  Care Workers  Social Workers |
| **Changes to care, and review**  Significant changes to a looked-after child’s care, such as a change of placement, should only take place following a statutory review of their care plan chaired by their Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO). The child should be actively involved in these important meetings and supported to express their views, wishes and feelings.  For looked-after children, the registered person should seek to ensure that the Social Worker regularly consults the child and the home about the child’s relevant plans. If the child raises concerns about the content of any of their plans, their implementation or the process of review, staff should advocate for the child and seek to ensure that their concerns are addressed.  Where the registered person considers that a child is at serious risk of harm, such as being persistently missing from their placement, they must contact the Social Worker to request a review of the child’s care plan.  If, in an emergency, the registered person must move a child out of the home to other accommodation, the accommodation must be suitable and meet the child’s needs. The Social Worker or out of hours should be contacted immediately. | Registered Manager  Responsible Individual  Assistant Team Manager  Care Workers  Social Workers |
| **Contact**  It will be in the interests of most looked-after children to maintain contact with their families and friends. Both the arrangements for contact and any contact details (telephone numbers etc.) must be included in the placement plan agreed between the registered person and the child’s placing authority and updated regularly.  There may be circumstances where children’s homes staff assess that restriction of contact is necessary in the interests of the child, to safeguard them or promote their welfare. This decision should not be taken lightly and must be agreed with the allocated Social Worker.  Children’s homes have a duty to provide access to a telephone that children can use privately. This can include the provision of a mobile phone where appropriate and safe for the child, if an alternative is in place for the child to make telephone calls in private if their personal mobile phone is lost, out of credit or broken.  Appropriate forms of contact should be promoted and facilitated for each child, including where appropriate visits to the child in the home; visits by the child to relatives and/or friends; letters, emails, and texts; use of social media and other forms of contact via the internet. | Registered Manager  Responsible Individual  Assistant Team Manager  Care Workers  Social Workers |
| **Records**  Children should be encouraged by staff to see the home’s records as ‘living documents’ supporting them to view and contribute to the record in a way that reflects their voice on a regular basis. Home Managers are to ensure quality audits are taken place; this should not substitute the REG 44 Independent Visitor. | Registered Manager  Responsible Individual  Assistant Team Manager  Care Workers |

**PRACTICE STANDARDS - Enjoyment and Achievement**

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| **Practice Expectations** | **Person Responsible** |
| **Working in partnership with others**  Each child’s placement plan should set out the permissions to the registered person. This should provide clarity on the home’s ability to give permission for school trips, sleepovers or the child’s involvement in sporting, leisure, and cultural activities. | Registered Manager  Responsible Individual  Assistant Team Manager  Care Workers |
| **Supporting children to enjoy life and have fun**  Children’s homes staff should seek to identify and provide appropriate opportunities for children to develop themselves in accordance with their wishes and feelings and as part of the home’s plan for their care. Each child’s talents and interests should be understood and nurtured, with children selecting activities based on their personal preferences and abilities, so far as is reasonable. Staff should also support children to try activities that are ‘new’ for them, where appropriate.  The registered person should ensure that children are offered a wide range of activities both inside and outside of the home (where appropriate) and are encouraged to participate in those activities. Staff should support children to take part in school trips, out of school and other clubs, volunteering and leisure activities.  Staff should ensure that children understand what local leisure and other cultural or religious services are on offer for them, support them to access any relevant leisure passes and encourage them to participate in activities in the community and wider if appropriate.  The home’s staff should recognise and celebrate the achievements of their children. | Registered Manager  Responsible Individual  Assistant Team Manager  Care Workers  Social Workers |

**PRACTICE STANDARDS – Education**

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| **Practice Expectations** | **Person Responsible** |
| **Understanding barriers to learning**  For some children who have experienced severe trauma, have mental health difficulties or have been excluded or out of education for significant periods, it may be necessary to address and work through their past experiences and present needs before they can positively participate in learning activities and formal education. Staff in children’s homes will play a key role in supporting these children in line with their personal education plan or EHC plan and recommendations from education and health professionals.  Staff need to understand the specialist support children may need to be able to engage positively and achieve in education. Staff must be aware of whether a child has an EHC plan and the information in it. An EHC plan details the education, health and social care support that is to be provided to a child or young person who has special educational needs or a disability. | Registered Manager  Responsible Individual  Assistant Team Manager  Care Workers |
| **Working in partnership with others**  As cooperate responsibility we have a duty to promote the educational achievement of looked-after children, which includes, supporting Buckinghamshire Council Education Services a school or other education setting that is best suited to the child’s needs.  Staff need to know, for every child in their care, what level of decision making has been delegated to them in relation to the child’s education. These delegations should be recorded in the child’s placement plan and it is the joint responsibility of the registered person and the placing authority to agree this at the time of placement. The Education Act 1996 defines ‘parent’ as including a person who has care of the child in question. Therefore, for a looked-after child, their residential care worker may be deemed a parent for the purposes of education law. This means that they should be treated like a parent with respect to information provided by a school about the child’s progress; should be invited to meetings about the child; and should be able to give consent to decisions regarding school activities and trips unless there are good reasons not to delegate these decisions to them. For further information see the Statutory guidance on entrusting decision making to carers of looked-after children  Staff should understand how schools’ function, including the processes for admission to schools, the role of designated teachers for looked-after children and the role of the Virtual School Head. If a looked-after child from a different local authority area is placed in the home, the Virtual School Head of that local authority remains responsible for promoting the child’s educational achievement.  Staff need to have the knowledge and skills to understand each child’s education and training targets and their next steps for learning. If a child’s progress is not in line with their agreed targets or next steps, staff should seek expert advice from education professionals, such as the Virtual School Head, SENCO, learning mentor or teacher. Staff must challenge the child’s education or training provider if the child does not receive sufficient support to progress as outlined in their relevant plans.  Children’s home staff should act as effective advocates for or on behalf of a child who may be experiencing difficulties with education or training matters including, but not limited to, attainment, admissions, attendance, or behaviour, as a good parent would do. | Registered Manager  Responsible Individual  Assistant Team Manager  Care Workers |
| **Participating in education or training**  The registered person must ensure the necessary support is given to children to enable them to access their education or training. Support may include, for example, putting in place practical arrangements such as transporting the child to school, support by staff to learn how to use public transport confidently and safely, or the use of technology to connect with on-line learning.  Children should be in full-time education whilst they are of compulsory school age unless their personal education plan contained within the care plan or other relevant plan states otherwise. The home must aim to support full time attendance at school unless the child’s relevant plan indicates this is not in their best interests.  Where children placed in a home are not participating in education because they have been excluded or are not on a school roll for some other reason, the registered person and staff must work closely with Buckinghamshire Council Virtual School so that the child is supported and enabled to resume full-time education as soon as possible. In the interim, the child should be supported to sustain or regain their confidence in education and be engaged in suitable structured activities. | Registered Manager  Responsible Individual  Assistant Team Manager  Care Workers  Social Worker |
| **The home learning environment**  The ethos of the home should support each child to learn, emphasising the value of independent study and reading for enjoyment. The home must make available suitable facilities, equipment, and resources for learning and ensure that the home’s routines do not form barriers to children wishing to use the homes resources to study. Staff must support children with home study by encouraging them to learn independent study skills and helping them to practice those skills.  Children should have access to a computer and the internet to support their education and learning unless there are specific safeguarding reasons why this would be inappropriate. In such cases, the home should consider whether and how it can support the child to access a computer and the internet safely. | Registered Manager  Responsible Individual  Assistant Team Manager  Care Workers |

**PRACTICE STANDARDS - Health and Well-being Standard**

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| **Practice Expectations** | **Person Responsible** |
| **Supporting children’s health and well-being**  Children’s homes staff should encourage children to take a proactive role in looking after their day-to-day health and well-being. Where children have specific health needs or conditions, they should be supported to manage these subjects to their age and understanding. When a child needs additional health or well-being support, staff should work with allocated CAMHs worker to enable proper and immediate access to specialist medical, psychological, or psychiatric support required.  Homes have a key role in organising and ensuring each child’s attendance at the necessary primary and secondary health services. Most health services that a child needs to access will be provided by other organisations. If these services are not accessible, or are withdrawn, staff should inform and engage with Social Worker, CAMHs to ensure their health needs are met.  The registered person must ensure that staff have the relevant skills and knowledge to be able to: respond to the health needs of children; administer basic first aid and minor illness treatment; help children to manage long-term conditions and where necessary meet specific individual health needs arising from a disability, chronic condition, or other complex needs.  At least one person on duty at any given time in a children’s home must have a suitable first aid qualification. First aid boxes should be provided and maintained.  Each child should have permission for staff to administer first aid and non- prescription medication from a person with parental responsibility for them recorded in their relevant plan. For looked-after children, this permission should be sought and arranged by the child’s social worker. Where appropriate, the child’s family should be involved in supporting their child’s health needs as well as in providing permission for treatment. | Registered Manager  Responsible Individual  Assistant Team Manager  Care Workers  Social Worker  CAMHs allocated professional |
| **Administration of medicines**  Care must be taken to ensure prescribed medicines are only administered to the individual for whom they are prescribed. Medicines must be administered in line with a medically approved protocol. Records must be kept of the administration of all medication, which includes occasions when prescribed medication is refused.  The registered person to ensure that they make suitable arrangements to manage, administer and dispose of any medication. These are fundamentally the same sorts of arrangements as a good parent would make but are subject to additional safeguards. Where the home has questions or concerns about a child’s medication, they should approach an expert such as a General Medical Practitioner, community pharmacist or designated for looked-after children.  Children who wish to keep and take their own medication should be supported to if they are able to do so safely. Staff should be mindful that children holding their own prescribed medication must only use it for themselves in accordance with the prescription. | Registered Manager  Responsible Individual  Assistant Team Manager  Care Workers  Social Worker  CAMHs allocated professional |
| **Advice, support, and guidance**  The registered person should ensure that, in line with their individual health plans and the ethos of the home, children are offered advice, support and guidance on health and well-being to enhance, and supplement that provided by their school through Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE). Staff should have the relevant skills and knowledge to be able to help children understand, and where necessary work to change negative behaviours in key areas of health and well-being such as, but not limited to, nutrition and healthy diet, exercise, mental health, sexual relationships, sexual health, contraception and use of legal highs, drugs, alcohol, and tobacco. | Registered Manager  Responsible Individual  Assistant Team Manager  Care Workers  Social Worker  CAMHs allocated professional |

**PRACTICE STANDARDS – Positive Relationships**

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| **Practice Expectations** | **Person Responsible** |
| **Building positive relationships with others**  The expectations on staff in building a positive relationship with each child and helping the child develop skills to have positive relationships with others is one of the key practice standards. This includes individuals both inside and outside the home such as other children in the home, staff, family members, siblings, previous carers, and friends (in accordance with their relevant plans).  Children should be supported to understand how to build friendships with other children. They should be able to spend time with their friends in the local community, in their home area, and by having friends visit them at the home, in line with the child’s plans, age and understanding.  Staff should be skilled in understanding the range of influences that friendships can have and should encourage those with a positive impact and discourage those with a negative impact. Homes that care for children who have, or are likely, to sexually offend should establish the extent to which friendships can be supported, in line with the child’s relevant plans and subject to the safety of all concerned.  Decisions about overnight stays with friends should be delegated to children’s homes staff by the Allocated Social Worker. This should be recorded in the placement plan. Where children wish to stay overnight with friends, staff should carry out the same kind of checks that responsible parents might make in similar circumstances to seek reassurance that the child will be well cared for and safe.  Staff should understand and help children to understand what makes a healthy, nurturing relationship. Staff should be skilled to recognise the signs and provide support to children in danger of or involved in exploitative or damaging relationships with others and where possible prevent these types of relationships. | Registered Manager  Responsible Individual  Assistant Team Manager  Care Workers  Social Worker |
| **Positive behaviour**  Expectations of behaviour should be high for all staff and children in the home. These standards should be clear and unambiguous. Children should be supported to develop understanding and empathy towards each other. Positive behaviour and relationships should be reinforced, praised, and encouraged; poor behaviour should be challenged and discussed. The development of safe, stable, and secure relationships with staff in the home should be central to the ethos of the home and support the development of secure attachments that, where appropriate, persist over time.  Where positive relationships exist between children and staff this should be respected and maintained as far as possible when making any decisions to alter staffing arrangements. The registered person should respond to children’s views about changes to staff and be aware of the potential impact this may have for the child’s stability and emotional well-being.  Staff should understand factors that affect children’s motivation to behave in a socially acceptable way. Staff should encourage an enthusiasm for positive behaviour using positive behaviour strategies in line with the child’s relevant plans.  The capacity and competence of staff to build constructive, warm relationships with children that actively promote positive behaviour, provides the foundations for managing any negative behaviour. Staff should have the skills to respond to each child’s individual behaviour. Where necessary they should manage conflict, maintain constructive dialogues, and react appropriately if challenged by a child in their care.  Staff supervision must enable staff to reflect and act upon how their own feelings and behaviour may be affected by the behaviour of the children they care for. | Registered Manager  Responsible Individual  Assistant Team Manager  Care Workers  Social Worker |
| **Bullying**  Staff should understand what they must do to prevent bullying of children by other children or adults. Staff should be able to recognise and address different types of abuse such as peer abuse, cyber-bullying and bullying in day-to-day relationships in the home.  Registered persons must ensure that procedures for dealing with allegations of bullying are in place and staff have the skills required to intervene, protect, and address bullying behaviours effectively. | Registered Manager  Responsible Individual  Assistant Team Manager  Care Workers  Social Worker |

**PRACTICE STANDARDS – Protection of Children**

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| **Practice Expectations** | **Person Responsible** |
| **Managing risk**  Staff should continually and actively assess the risks to each child and the arrangements in place to protect them. Where there are safeguarding concerns for a child, their placement plan, must include details of the steps the home will take to manage any assessed risks on a day-to-day basis.  As children will spend significant periods of time away from the home, for example in education or training, at appointments with the YOT or for engagement in leisure activities, any assessed risks should be shared with the education provider or service the child is attending if appropriate, so that the service is clear on the action they must take if the child puts themselves at risk while using their service.  Children’s home staff should take reasonable precautions and make informed professional judgements based on the individual child’s needs and developmental stage about when to allow a child to take a particular risk or follow a particular course of action. Staff should discuss the decision with the allocated Social Worker where appropriate. If a child makes a choice that would place them or another person at significant risk of harm, staff should assist them to understand the risks and manage their risk-taking behaviour to keep themselves and others safe. | Registered Manager  Responsible Individual  Assistant Team Manager  Care Workers  Social Workers |
| **A safeguarding culture and ethos**  The registered person should build a strong safeguarding culture in the home where children are listened to, respected, and involved in both the development of the home and decisions about the home.  Children must feel safe and be safe. Staff should support children to be aware of and manage their own safety both inside and outside the home to the extent that any good parent would. Staff should help children to understand how to protect themselves, feel protected and be protected from significant harm.  Staff skills for safeguarding should include being able to identify signs that children may be at risk, and support children in strategies to manage and reduce any risks. Staff should encourage children to express their views about whether they feel safe both within and outside the home. Staff should support children to understand how to ask for help to stay safe and that the home is an environment which supports this.  All staff should strive to build positive relationships with children in the home and develop a culture of openness and trust that encourages them to be able to tell someone if they have concerns or worries about their safety. Staff should make available in the home, information in an appropriate form which enables children to contact their placing authority to call for a review of their care plan if they have concerns about their safety or welfare. Homes should encourage children to understand they can speak to an independent advocate, Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs), Ofsted inspectors or other relevant persons if they have concerns about their safety.  Staff need the knowledge and skills to recognise and be alert for any signs that might indicate a child is in any way at risk of harm. The registered person should ensure that skills in safeguarding are gained, refreshed, and recorded in the home’s workforce plan.  Children should be encouraged to develop positive relationships with others both in and outside the home as set out in the positive relationship’s standard. However, staff should be alert to the possibility that children may be at risk from such relationships including with other children in the home, staff, family members, friends, and others outside the home, and they therefore should take appropriate steps to protect a child where there are concerns for a child’s safety.  Supervision of staff practice should ensure that individual adults in the home are engaged in the safeguarding culture of the home so they understand what they would need to do if they found other staff misusing or abusing their position to the detriment of the safety of a child.  As part of the policies for protection of children, the registered person should include information about Buckinghamshire Council whistle blowing, with clear procedures for how a staff member should report to an appropriate authority any concern they have about a child within the home being either at risk of, or already experiencing significant harm. | Registered Manager  Responsible Individual  Assistant Team Manager  Care Workers  Social Workers |
| **Children missing from the children’s home**  Buckinghamshire Council have a ‘Missing Children Practice Guidance’ (Feb 2021) agreed with local police and other partners.  Where there is a possibility that a child will run away or go missing from a children’s home placement, their placement plan should include a strategy to minimise this risk. If the child is looked after, their care plan should include such a strategy.  If there is a risk that a child may run away or go missing, staff should do their best to help them understand the risks and dangers involved and make them aware of how to seek help if they do run away.  The registered person must specify the procedures to be followed and the roles and responsibilities of staff when a child is missing from care or away from the home without permission and how staff should support the child on return to the home.  When a child returns to the home after being missing from care or away from the home without permission, the home will provide an opportunity for the child to have an independent return home interview with RUSAFE. Homes should take account of information provided by such interviews when assessing risks and putting arrangements in place to protect each child.  Records must be kept detailing all individual incidents when children go missing from the home. This information should be shared with the allocated social worker. The registered person will conduct an evaluation of missing incidents to identify any gaps in training, skills, or knowledge for staff or to record and retain evidence of what worked well. This evaluation should inform the review of the quality of care.  Where a child runs away persistently or engages in other risky behaviours, such as frequently being absent from the home to meet with inappropriate adults, the allocated Social Worker, and the registered person, should organise a risk management meeting to develop a strategy for managing risks to the young person. | Registered Manager  Responsible Individual  Assistant Team Manager  Care Workers  Social Workers |
| **Control, discipline, and restraint and behaviour management**  Each Buckinghamshire Council home is to prepare and implement a behaviour management policy. This policy should describe the home’s approach to promoting positive behaviour and the measures of control, discipline, and restraint which may be used in the home. These measures should be set in the context of building positive relationships with children.  The behaviour management strategy should be understood and always applied by staff and must be kept under review and revised where appropriate.  The registered person should ensure that all incidents of control, discipline and restraint are subject to systems of regular scrutiny.  Staff should understand the system for rewarding and celebrating positive behaviour and recognising where children have managed situations well. Equally, staff should understand the system for rewarding and celebrating positive behaviour and recognising where children have managed situations well. | Registered Manager  Responsible Individual  Assistant Team Manager  Care Workers  Social Workers |

**PRACTICE STANDARDS – Allegations and complaints**

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| **Practice Expectations** | **Person Responsible** |
| **Allegations against staff**  All allegations will be reported to the Registered Home Manager, Head of Service Sandra Carnall, Operations Manager Noel Beaumont (RI) and Bucks LADO.  Staff MUST act on every allegation; all repeated allegations must be treated as new and carefully assessed and investigated. Staff who are the subject of an allegation have the right to have their case dealt with fairly, quickly, and consistently and to be kept informed of its progress.  Staff should refer to the guidance for staff who have the allegation made against them provided for what to do in the event an allegation is made against them. | Head of Care Services  Registered Manager  Responsible Individual  Assistant Team Manager  Care Workers |
| **Allegations against the (Head of Service or Registered Manager)**  All allegations must be reported to:    Operations Manager Noel Beaumont (RI), Director Children’s Services Richard Nash.  Allegations made will then refer the matter to Bucks LADO and notify their line manager  [Noel.beaumont@buckinghamshire.gov.uk](mailto:Noel.beaumont@buckinghamshire.gov.uk)    [Richard.Nash@buckinghamshire.gov.uk](mailto:Richard.Nash@buckinghamshire.gov.uk) | Head of Care Services  Registered Manager  Responsible Individual  Assistant Team Manager  Care Workers |
| **Allegations against the Operational Manager / RI**  Any allegations linked to the site, must be reported to Head of Service Sandra Carnall and Registered Home Manager of the site who will make the initial referral to LADO.  [Sandra.Carnall@buckinghamshire.gov.uk](mailto:Sandra.Carnall@buckinghamshire.gov.uk)  [Andy.pearsall@buckinghamshire.gov.uk](mailto:Andy.pearsall@buckinghamshire.gov.uk) | Head of Care Services  Registered Manager  Responsible Individual  Assistant Team Manager  Care Workers |
| **Allegations against any other Senior Leader**  Any allegations linked to the Home, must be reported to the Registered Home Manager, Operations Manager Noel Beaumont and Head of Service Sandra Carnall who will make the initial referral to LADO. Following this, the allegation should be passed to the identified senior person to follow through with LADO and subsequently act in line with agreed course of action.  [Andy.pearsall@buckinghamshire.gov.uk](mailto:Andy.pearsall@buckinghamshire.gov.uk)  [Noel.beaumont@buckinghamshire.gov.uk](mailto:Noel.beaumont@buckinghamshire.gov.uk) | Head of Care Services  Registered Manager  Responsible Individual  Assistant Team Manager  Care Workers |

**PRACTICE STANDARDS – Staffing Practice**

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| **Practice Expectations** | **Person Responsible** |
| **Responsibility and Accountability**  Staff are personally responsible and accountable for their actions or omissions. | Registered Manager  Responsible Individual  Assistant Team Manager  Care Workers |
| **Honesty and Integrity**  Staff are honest, act with integrity and do not compromise or abuse their position. | Registered Manager  Responsible Individual  Assistant Team Manager  Care Workers |
| **Respect and Courtesy**  Staff respect the rights of all individuals. Staff act with self-control and tolerance, treating young people and colleagues with respect and courtesy. | Registered Manager  Responsible Individual  Assistant Team Manager  Care Workers |
| **Equality**  Staff act with fairness and impartiality. They do not discriminate on the grounds of sex, race, colour, language, religion, or belief, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, disability, age, sexual orientation, property, birth, or other status. | Registered Manager  Responsible Individual  Assistant Team Manager  Care Workers |
| **General Conduct**  Staff, on shift, act in a professional way. Staff do not behave in a manner which brings, or is likely to bring, discredit on the council or that undermines or is likely to undermine public confidence in the council, whether on or off duty. Staff report any action taken against them for a criminal offence, conditions imposed by a court or the receipt of any penalty notice. | Registered Manager  Responsible Individual  Assistant Team Manager  Care Workers |

**PRACTICE STANDARDS – Leadership and Management**

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| **Practice Expectations** | **Person Responsible** |
| **Preconditions for Good Practice**  Managers ensure staff work in a professional environment conducive to good professional practice. This includes support, challenge and bringing professional rigour to daily practice. | Head of Service  Operations Manager  Registered Managers  Assistant Team Manager |
| **Support**   * Managers will lead by example and cultivate a staff atmosphere that is mutually supportive and draws on the professional strengths of all staff. * Managers will provide good lines of communication, ensuring that important service policy and procedures are shared, understood, and acted upon. * Managers will provide meaningful supervision and annual appraisals that take account of staff strengths and areas for improvement and seek to ensure that the service continues to invest in staff’s professional development. * Managers will be approachable to staff and will encourage more experienced staff to support those with less experience to promote peer learning. | Head of Service  Operations Manager  Registered Managers  Assistant Team Manager |
| **Constructive Challenge**   * Managers will monitor the quality of the service they are responsible for through regularly scrutinising practice and auditing children’s case recording and take steps to rectify poor quality when identified. * Managers will look for opportunities to bring about improvements in practice, and support staff in delivering those improvements. * The Practice Development Team will work to bring about improvements to practice and support senior managers in the development of staff skillset and knowledge. The Practice Development Team will review case files and escalate cases where unacceptable levels of risk are identified, or where the standard of social work practice is deemed to be below the Core practice standards identified within this document. The team will also provide coaching and reflective sessions with workers to aid their development. | Head of Service  Operations Manager  Registered Managers  Assistant Team Manager |
| **Supporting children**  The registered person is responsible for leading a team which provides high quality care for all children living in the home. They must lead and manage the home in a way that delivers the ethos, outcomes and approach set out in the home’s Statement of Purpose. They should also play a key role in shaping the ethos of the home through developing a culture of high aspiration for children which is demonstrated through the care, resources and opportunities offered to the children.  The registered person should support staff to be ambitious for every child in the home and to gain skills and experience that enable them to actively support each child to achieve their potential. To ensure that staff understand and can meet each child’s needs, in line with their responsibilities, the registered person themselves will need to have a high level of understanding of the needs of the children in their care.  The registered person should seek to establish a diverse staff team with a range of interests, skills, and experiences. They should lead staff to share those interests, skills, and experiences with children to enrich the children’s lives. | Head of Service  Operations Manager  Registered Managers  Assistant Team Manager  Care Workers |
| **Work force**  Contingency plans should be prepared in the event of a shortfall in staffing levels. If it is likely that there might only be one member of staff on duty at any time the manager should make a formal assessment of the implications for children’s care, including any likely risks.  The registered person should monitor and review the patterns and trends of turnover of staff, whether agency or directly employed, and be able understand and where possible, address any negative trends.  The registered person is responsible for ensuring that all staff consistently follow the home’s policies and procedures for the benefit of the children in the home’s care. Everyone working at the home must understand their roles and responsibilities and what they are authorised to decide on their own initiative. There should be clear lines of accountability. Each home must have clear arrangements in place to maintain effective management when the manager is absent, off duty or on leave. | Registered Manager  Responsible Individual  Assistant Team Manager |
| **Monitoring and review**  The registered person should oversee the welfare of the children in their care through observation and engagement with each child; the home’s staff; each child’s family/carers where appropriate; and professionals involved in the care or protection of each child including their social worker, Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO), teachers, clinicians, and other health professionals etc.  The registered person should actively seek independent scrutiny of the home and make best use of information from independent and internal monitoring (including under regulations 44 and 45) to ensure continuous improvement. They should be skilled in anticipating difficulties and reviewing incidents, such as learning from disruptions and placement breakdowns. They are responsible for proactively implementing lessons learned and sustaining good practice. | Registered Manager  Responsible Individual  Assistant Team Manager  Care Workers |
| **Quality Assurance**  Managers and leaders are required to establish the quality standards, procedures and monitoring the work of others to ensure Buckinghamshire Councils standards are met.    To ensure good quality practice standards, Managers and Leaders are responsible for ensuring consistent quality audits of supervision, C4P and all systems of documentation performed by the provision are conducted monthly to ensure good quality practises | Responsible Individual  Registered Manager  Assistant Team Manager |
| **Professional rigour**  Managers keep up to date on research findings in practice and policy documents relevant to their area Children’s Homes Regulations 2015. They will expect staff to develop their professional skills and expertise by keeping up to date with applied research. | Head of Service  Operations Manager  Registered Manager  Assistant Team Manager |
| **Children's Home - Managers Key Performance Indicators and Trend Analysis**  ***Please refer to appendix 1 –***  Managers and Leaders are to use Key Performance Indicators which allows them to monitor the matters at least once every six months. The Leaders should undertake a review that focuses on the quality of the care provided by the home, the experiences of children living there and the impact the care is having on outcomes and improvements for the children. | Operations Manager  Registered Manager  Assistant Team Manager |
| All staff uphold their professional responsibility to be accountable for their own conduct, development, and delivery of a high-quality service. This includes being accountable within their own roles and responsibilities, supporting and holding others to account, and seeking appropriate assistance when needed. | All Staff |

**Children's Home - Managers Key Performance Indicators and Trend Analysis**

***Please refer to appendix 1 –***

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**FOSTERING PRACTICE STANDARDS**

Are you asking questions? Do you know what the child’s lived experience is?

8

**We will be professionally curious about all families we work with to ensure we know and understand them and their lived experience.**

Do you know how the child feels about where they live?

Do your assessments reflect this?

Do your carers feel well supported?

Do you discuss the care plan with the carer?

Are your records well written and timely?

Have you had reflective supervision? Has your manager checked that your work is meeting the practise standards?

Are you using this approach?

**Use the Strengthening Families approach to resolve issues and improve children’s outcomes.**

7

**Every child is supported by timely management oversight of the professionals’ working with them. Including reflective supervision; checking that work has been done to agreed standards; seeing what difference it is making; and what needs to happen next.**

6

**All case records are analytical, well written and timely, so everyone can understand significant events that have happened; what the plan is; the purpose of actions and contacts; and what difference has been made so far for the child.**

5

**Foster carers have a working knowledge of the child’s care plan and their role in this.**

4

**Carers are trained and supported to meet the needs of the children in their care.**

3

**Carers are assessed and reviewed to ensure that the care they provide to children meets fostering standards.**

2

**Children live in foster homes that meet their needs and where they feel valued and cared for.**

1

**PRACTICE STANDARDS – WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND CARERS**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Practice Expectations** | **Person Responsible** |
| All foster carers will have an allocated supervising social worker. They will establish a visiting and supervision pattern with the carer that is clearly recorded on their LCS file (this includes case summaries and supervision notes). The frequency of supervision will reflect the level of support required, which may vary dependent on the number of children, and/or the type of fostering undertaken.  Social workers have a clear purpose and focus for visits and use them to build knowledge about the carers and what outcomes need to be achieved.  Supervisory visits will be recorded with clear actions and shared with the foster carer within one week. | Fostering Social Worker  Manager |
| Children with temporarily approved foster carers will be visited by the Child’s Social Worker:  • Weekly until the first review  • At the first Child Looked After review a decision to be made in conjunction with a Manager and Independent Reviewing Officer in regards to whether visits can be reduced to a maximum of 10 working days thereafter until the carer is approved or the final hearing completed.  Supervising social workers can support with the visiting schedule and need to ensure the Child’s Social Worker is aware of the visiting schedule and that this is adhered to. | Child’s allocated Social Worker  Manager |
| A minimum of one annual unannounced visit will be completed to all foster carers homes, a report of which will be included in the Annual Household Review.  Unannounced visits to be completed as a safeguarding measure and if there are concerns which have been identified.  All carers will also have a minimum of one unannounced visit during assessment. This includes the assessment of Connected Person’s. | Fostering Social Worker |
| Supervising social workers will provide regular additional support as required and will always follow up any phone call from a carer or request for a service within 24 hours, if the SW is unavailable then the duty SW to follow up. | Fostering Social Worker |
| Carers will be provided with full information about the children they are caring for. The Supervising Social Worker will convene a placement planning meeting within 5 days of the child moving in. Delegation of authority will be discussed and agreed and the carer provided with a copy of the child’s care plan and placement plan. | Fostering Social Worker |
| For short breaks, Early Permanence and Parent and Child arrangements a planning meeting will be arranged by the Supervising Social Worker and will always need to be held in advance and responsibilities agreed. | Fostering Social Worker |
| All foster carers will have a foster carer agreement that is signed and renewed annually. | Fostering Social Worker |
| When looking at carers for children consideration will be given to matching criteria and the carers approval. Exemptions and variations will be put in place where required prior to the child moving to the carer. | Duty worker  Fostering Social Worker  Manager  Head of Service |
| All carers will have a current and up to date safe caring policy for each looked after child living in the household, which will be updated once a year or if there is a significant change in the household. This assessment will cover their household members and any children in their care. | Fostering Social Worker |
| Risk assessments are put in place where required, for example to cover children who are self-harming and bedroom sharing. | Fostering Social Worker    Manager |
| Carers recordings are checked on every visit. Any concerns are flagged with the child’s social worker and the records will be uploaded to LCS. | Fostering Social Worker |
| Allegations made against carers are escalated and responded to on the same day with immediate plans made to ensure the safety of the child. | Fostering Social Worker  Manager |
| Allegations are dealt with in a timely manner in line with safeguarding procedures. | Manager |
| Carers are clearly advised when the national minimum standards are breached, they are told what changes they need to make and the consequence of not addressing this. This is clearly recorded in the Fostering supervision records and shared with the carer. | Fostering Social Worker |
| Carers are encouraged and supported to attend forums, support groups and attend training. Carers are supported to complete their mandatory training and to complete the TSD standards within the required timescale. Learning is discussed with carers at each supervision.  Training is provided by the service that reflects the needs of the children and the learning needs and styles of all carers. | Fostering Social Worker  Manager |
| Fostering Social Workers work closely with the children’s social workers and communicate effectively to ensure that they are kept aware of any issues in respect of the child or the carer. | Fostering Social Worker |
| The child’s care plan and health plan and the carers role in promoting this will be discussed and reviewed with the carer. This is to include contact, education, health and identity. The Fostering Social Worker will promote therapeutic approaches to parenting. | Fostering Social Worker |
| Fostering Social Workers will ensure that permanence is progressed for children and that carers are supported to consider long term fostering and SGO for children in their care. | Fostering Social Worker  Manager |

**PRACTICE STANDARDS - ASSESSMENT AND REVIEW**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Practice Expectations** | **Person Responsible** |
| Assessments and reviews (including Connected Persons Assessments) are child centred and keep the child’s needs and views at the forefront. Fostering Social Workers should be able to clearly and accurately answer the question “what is life like for this child in this foster home?”. | Fostering Social worker  Managers |
| Prospective connected foster carers are made aware of the implications of becoming foster carers and are given clear information relating to the processes around screenings, initial visits and full assessments. | Fostering Social Worker |
| All prospective carers, connected and mainstream are given clear information around the roles and responsibilities as set out in the Foster carers agreement. | Fostering Social Worker |
| Checks and references on carers and household members are completed and renewed within the appropriate timescales. Information received in checks that is contrary to a fostering approval is escalated and addressed accordingly. For example, a DBS where content is identified will need a risk assessment. | Fostering Social Worker  Manager  Head of service |
| Requests to assess a potential regulation 24 situation are responded to on the same day. Regulation 24 arrangements are agreed following the outcome of a viability assessment that addresses any current and historical risks to the child with reference to the Fostering Standards. | Social Worker  Manager  Head of Service |
| All carers have an annual Household Review which includes feedback from the child, the IRO and the child’s Social Worker. The first review will be heard at fostering panel as will subsequent reviews where there has been a significant change in circumstances or following a Standard of Care investigation. | Fostering Social Worker  Manager |
| Assessments of potential mainstream foster carers are progressed to panel within 6 months from application. | Fostering Social Worker  Manager |
| All Carers are given the right to attend panel | Fostering Social Worker |
| All assessments and reviews are evidence based, analytical and show evidence of professional curiosity. | Fostering Social Worker  Manager |

**PRACTICE STANDARDS - RECORDING**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Practice Expectations** | **Person Responsible** |
| Information is written and stored in line with information sharing protocols of Buckinghamshire Council and the principles of the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR): *fairly and lawfully processed; for a clearly defined, legitimate and limited purpose; adequate, relevant and not excessive; accurate and where necessary kept up to date; processed in accordance with the data subject’s rights; stored with appropriate technical and organisational security.* | Fostering Social Worker |
| Social workers ask adults for written consent in respect of information gathering/sharing (such as when completing Connected Assessments) and permission is clearly recorded on the applicants? | Fostering Social Worker |
| LCS is kept up to date including case summaries case notes, visit tab and complaints tab. | Fostering Social Worker |
| Carers are provided with a copy of all meeting minutes, assessments and any other relevant forms which relate to their approval and any children in their care. This is provided to carers in a timely manner (such as before being submitted to fostering panel) and any factual inaccuracies rectified. | Fostering Social Worker |
| Reports and children’s records are written in plain language, free from acronyms and jargon, so they can be understood by the child and carer. Documents can be translated into other languages or presented in different formats to make them accessible. | Fostering Social Worker |
| Assessments, plans, records of visits and of direct work with the child include the child’s voice. The way the child’s voice has been gained is clearly recorded. | Fostering Social Worker |

**PRACTICE STANDARDS - MANAGERS**

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| --- | --- |
| **Practice Expectations** | **Person Responsible** |
| Work is allocated to suitably trained and qualified staff, with the necessary skills and capacity to undertake the task. When allocating work, complexity and the number of carers/ children should be considered to ensure manageable workloads. | Manager |
| Supervision is held regularly. This means, for newly qualified social workers fortnightly for the first 6 months, and thereafter a minimum of monthly. For other practitioners, supervision will take place on a minimum of a monthly basis.  The frequency of supervision sessions is also determined by the complexity of the work. Additional supervision to be provided as and when needed to workers. There is a signed supervision agreement in place, reviewed annually. | Manager |
| Supervision encompasses wellbeing, health & safety, professional development and standards, and casework supervision. | Manager |
| Casework shows evidence of reflection, impact of intervention and management oversight. It includes clear case direction from the point of allocation, through to any transfers or closure. | Manager |
| Managers will lead by example and support their staff to embed the Strengthening Families approach into their daily practice. This includes direct and written work. | Manager |
| A record of supervision is available to both parties in respect of professional supervision, relevant sections of which (casework supervision) are recorded on the carer’s file within one working day of casework supervision. | Manager |
| Management oversight is recorded at all stages of work with a carer and there is a clear audit trail of decision making. | Manager |
| Managers check performance data and audit carer’s records on a regular basis to have ensured that identified action is taken to improve practice where necessary. | Manager |
| Managers maximise opportunities for training and development, overseeing that staff attend mandatory training, and participate in other agreed professional development as identified in supervision and appraisal. | Manager |
| Formal observation of practice by the supervising Manager will be recorded in supervision at least once a year. This will inform the appraisal process. | Manager |
| All staff have annual appraisals and agreed targets are reviewed through the year. Appraisal formally notes achievements in the past 12 months and records any actions needed to address development needs identified during ongoing supervision and case discussions. The appraisal sets goals for the coming year. | Manager |

**PRACTICE STANDARDS - PROFESSIONAL CULTURE**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Practice Expectations** | **Person Responsible** |
| **Preconditions for Good Practice**  Managers ensure staff work in a professional environment conducive to good professional practice. This includes support, challenge and bringing professional rigour to daily practice. | Head of Service  Managers |
| **Support**   * Managers will lead by example and cultivate a staff atmosphere that is mutually supportive and draws on the professional strengths of all staff. * Managers will provide good lines of communication, ensuring that important service policy and procedures are shared, understood and acted upon. * Managers will provide meaningful supervision and annual appraisals that take account of staff strengths and areas for improvement, and seek to ensure that the service continues to invest in staff’s professional development. * Managers will be approachable to staff, and will encourage more experienced staff to support those with less experience to promote peer learning. | Head of Service  Managers |
| **Constructive Challenge**   * Managers will monitor the quality of the service they are responsible for through regularly scrutinising practice and auditing carer’s case recording, and take steps to rectify poor quality when identified. * Managers will look for opportunities to bring about improvements in practice, and support staff in delivering those improvements. * The Practice Development Team will work to bring about improvements to practice and support senior managers in the development of staff skillset and knowledge. The Practice Development Team will review case files and escalate cases where unacceptable levels of risk are identified, or where the standard of social work practice is deemed to be below the Core practice standards identified within this document. The team will also provide coaching and reflective sessions with workers to aid their development. * Where concerns are identified by a Child Protection Advisor, Independent Reviewing Officer or Family Group Conference Coordinator in relation to practice, care planning, implementation of plans or decision making, they will attempt to resolve the issue with the allocated worker initially in an informal way (i.e. face to face discussion). * Should the concern be significant or not resolved to the point that the plan for the child is likely to drift; the concern will be escalated to the attention of managers using the agreed resolution process. | Head of Service  Team Manager  Assistant Team Manager  Practice Development Team  Child Protection Advisor/Independent Reviewing Officer/Family Group Conference Coordinator/Social Worker |
| **Professional rigour**  Managers keep up to date on research findings in practice and policy documents relevant to their area of work. They will expect staff to develop their professional skills and expertise by keeping up to date with applied research. | Head of Service  Team Manager  Assistant Team Manager |
| All staff uphold their professional responsibility to be accountable for their own conduct, development and delivery of a high quality service. This includes being accountable within their own roles and responsibilities, supporting and holding others to account, and seeking appropriate assistance when needed. | All Staff |

**PRACTICE STANDARDS - MISSING**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Practice Expectations** | **Person Responsible** |
| Any allocated child who is reported missing will be visited by their allocated worker within 24 hours of their return. This is to be considered as a separate visit to the Return Home Interview. | Social Worker |
| Return Home Interviews will be completed by RU Safe for all children over the age of 10 who go missing within Buckinghamshire. For children under the age of 10, these Return Home Interviews will be completed by a social care member of staff. | Social Worker  Social Care staff |
| Return Home Interviews for allocated children who are placed (as a Child Looked After) within 20miles of the Buckinghamshire borders will be offered by RU Safe. The Social Work team responsible for the child will refer to RU Safe within 24 hours of the child being found. | Social Worker  Manager |
| All Return Home Interviews will be completed within 72 hours of the child’s return. | Social Worker |
| The Return Home Interview form will be read by the allocated social worker and any identified risks acted upon. A safety plan will be formulated to address these concerns and the child’s Child In Need/Child Protection/Child Looked After plan will be updated with relevant actions to be taken. | Social Worker  Independent Reviewing Officer/Child Protection Advisor/Manager |
| Strategy meetings will be held as per the missing protocol. | Manager  Social Worker |
| Need to Know notifications will be completed for the high risk missing children, as per the missing protocol. | Manager |

**KPIs**

• Fostering recruitment targets to be met.

* All fostering enquires to be responded to within one working day.

• All reg 24 enquires to be progressed within one working day.

* All private fostering initial safeguarding visits to be completed within 7 days.
* Private fostering full assessment to be signed off within 42 days.
* Private fostering visits to be completed every 6 weeks and after 2 years every 12 weeks.
* All form F’s to be under 6 months from point of application to panel.
* All court and panel deadlines for viabilities and full assessments to be met.
* Placement planning meetings convened and recorded within 5 days of placement.
* All carers have minimum yearly unannounced visit and at least one whilst in assessment.• All carers have supervision in accordance with their agreed supervision schedule.

• All carers yearly Household Review Completed on time.

• Health and Safety Check up to date (reviewed at least yearly and after any significant change such as building work).

• General household Safer Caring Policy reviewed at least yearly and after any significant change. A safe caring for each specific Looked After child to be completed within 5 days of moving to a new carer.

• Bedroom risk assessments, variations and exemptions completed prior to placement where required.

• Clear risk assessments are in place and robust safety plans where necessary

**CYP PLACEMENT TEAM PRACTICE STANDARDS**

Are you speaking to the right professionals?

Does your search ensure this?

Does the placement referral request form reflect this?

Does the Placement worklog reflect this?

Does the Placement Referral and Placement worklog reflect this?

Has your manager checked that your work is up to standard and you are meeting timescales to avoid drift and delay?

Are you having case consultations to gather positive matching information?

Use the Strengthening Families approach to resolve issues and improve children’s outcomes.

7

Every child is supported by timely management oversight of the professionals’ working with them. Including reflective supervision; checking that work has been done to agreed standards; seeing what difference it is making; and what needs to happen next.

6

All case records are analytical, well written and timely, so everyone can understand significant events that have happened; what the plan is; the purpose of actions and contacts; and what difference has been made so far for the child.

5

All children have a placement referral which explains what needs to happen; by when; by whom; what outcomes we are seeking together; how risk is managed; and what the contingency plan is.

4

All children in need of a placement or support will have their wishes, feelings, needs taken into account, the capacity of parents and carers; enabling them to fulfil their responsibilities**.**

3

To identify the best possible placements for Children and Young People to ensure improved outcomes for Children and Young People.

2

To provide expert knowledge on appropriate placements and care packages to social care professionals.

1

**Buckinghamshire CYP Placement Team Procedure**

**Introduction**

This procedure applies to all placements of children in to foster care, planned and unplanned, including placements with Independent Fostering Agencies.

This procedure aims to ensure that each child or young person for whom a placement is requested is matched with an appropriate carer who is capable of meeting his/her assessed needs. This procedure provides guidance about the way in which to identify essential and desirable elements for any proposed placements.

This procedure recognises that it is not always possible to achieve a perfect match and that as a result some children have been made to wait for too long for a placement. Delay can be harmful and this procedure sets out to ensure that all relevant factors are considered and balanced against one another when matching decisions are made.

**Approval for a Placement**

Children become looked after following an assessment of their needs or in an emergency situation i.e. by under police protection or via court with an Emergency Protection Order.

Requests for a child to become looked after will be presented to the Children's Resource Panel.

Following an emergency as a result of an assessment of need the decision to admit children into care can only be made by either a Head of Service or a Team Manager. Where a child is to become looked after following police protection or a court order the Head of Service must be informed.

**Requests for Placements**

Following approval a placement request is to be made to the Placement Team in the first instance a search for appropriate in house Foster Carers will be carried out. If approval has been given for an independent placement then the request is to be made to the Commissioning Team's Placement Officer.

The child's Social Worker is to record all relevant information on the Placement Request form. This identifies both the child's needs and any risks the child may present to carers.

The Placement Request form is to be kept 'open' for further inputting by the Placement Team.

**In House Placements**

**Placement Request**

As soon as the request for placement has been received the Placement Team, the Placement Officer will in all circumstances seek to match the child with an appropriately matched placement and will record this information on the Placement Worklog.

The Social Worker with the support of the Placement Officer is to establish the Foster Carer's willingness to take the child and where there is a child already in that placement, the viability of any potential new child's being introduced to that placement is to be discussed with the child already in placement's Social Worker.

The child's Social Worker is to establish the Child's wishes and feelings of any proposed match where possible.

All foster placements will have an up-to-date Safer Caring Family Agreement in place .

Following the offer of an in house placement the child's Social Worker in consultation with their Team Manager will make the decision whether to accept or reject the placement.

If it is considered that the placement is not a suitable match than discussions will take place as to whether the possibility of additional support services can be provided to support the placement offered or a further search of in house placement is to be undertaken.

All Foster Carers who have been considered and all potential suitable placements are to be recorded on the Placement worklog.

Once a match has been agreed then the child's Social Worker is to confirm acceptance of a placement with the relevant Placement Officer.

If additional support to compensate for any gaps in the match is identified and relates to a risk to the child, the Safer Caring Individual Agreement and Family Agreement will be updated by the Fostering Supervising Social Worker and the Risk Assessment and child's Care Plan is to be updated by the child's Social Worker.

**Matching Considerations**

Matches of children into foster placements are to be achieved by means of information sharing and consideration between:

* The child and their family;
* Potential Foster Carers and their families;
* Other children in placement;
* The child's Social Worker;
* The Supervising Social Worker for the Foster Carer;
* Team Managers for both the childcare team and Fostering Service;
* Health and Education staff as appropriate;
* Placement Officer

Positive matching information must be included in the placement referral form. If specific matching information for a child is needed this must be included in the placement referral form in required, this must include:

Education

Race, culture and language

Faith and religion

Disability

Health

Bedrooms

**Independent Agency Placements**

**Placement Approval**

Independent Foster Agency and Residential placements can only to be used where there are no suitable in house Foster Carers. No child is to be placed in the Independent Sector without prior approval of the Children's Resource Panel or the Head of Service.

The Placement Officer will only proceed with a search once the appropriate approval has been received from a Head of Service. This needs to be sent, via e-mail, to the Placement Team at [cypplacements@buckinghamshire.gov.uk](mailto:cypplacements@buckinghamshire.gov.uk)

**Placement Process**

The child's Social Worker is to complete a Placement Request form which set out clear outcomes that the placement will aim to achieve for the child. This should be emailed to: [cypplacements@buckinghamshire.gov.uk](mailto:cypplacements@buckinghamshire.gov.uk)

The Placement Team will use access the Placement Request form directly from LCS and use the Commissioning Alliance, Care Place portal for carrying out placement searches. The Commissioning Team will apply the following timescales:

During this process the Placement Officer is to:

* Collate the Expressions of Interest from any potential agencies.

The Placement Officer is to forward the Expressions of Interest to the child's Social Worker, Team Manager and Service Manager within 24 hours of the pre-agreed deadline.

The child's Social Worker is to provide feedback to the Placement Team on any unsuitable placements offered.

If a suitable placement is found, confirmation from the social worker is required and confirm acceptance with the provider.

If no suitable placement is found wider placement searches will be carried out.

The Placement Team is to forward all Expressions of Interest to the child's Social Worker within 24 hours of the pre-agreed deadline. 

**Additional Support where Identified**

If additional support s required for a child in a placement, such as additional contact, therapy or traval this must be agreed with Head of Service.

The child's Social Worker is to contact the Commissioning Team for advice, as many additional costs are already covered by the Individual Placement Agreement. The Commissioning Team will undertake any negotiation to identify the cost of any additional services.

Any additional costs agreed as being outside the remit of the Individual Placement Agreement are to be stated clearly in writing by the child's Social Worker and presented to Resource Panel for approval. When approved these are to be paid from the additional costs budget. If the agreed additional costs are to be ongoing these may be written into the Individual Placement Agreement.

**Approval and Contract Signing**

When approval is received for the placement, the Placement Office will raise a finance form and obtain signed approval within 24 hours of the placement being agreed by Children's Resource Panel

**Ongoing Placement Issues**

All placement changes require Head of Service authorisation

In the event of any safeguarding concerns, the Commissioning Team will liaise with any safeguarding officers / teams and undertake a contractual investigation to ensure compliance with regulations and contract terms.

Performance management of independent placements is the responsibility of the Commissioning Team and Social Workers will be asked for ongoing information to support this process.

**Ending Placements**

When it has been decided to end a placement, the CYP finance team must be notified within 24 hours.