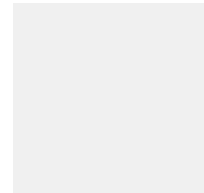


## **Social Worker Rights and Responsibilities**



### **SCOPE OF THIS CHAPTER**

This document sets out Walsall Children's Services expectations of social workers and what support social workers can expect to receive.

These rights and responsibilities will be reviewed on an annual basis.

### **AMENDMENT**

In August 2015, this chapter was amended throughout and should be re-read in full.

### **Contents**

1. [Introduction](#)
2. [Rights and Responsibilities](#)
3. [Expectations of Practice Managers](#)
4. [Expectations of Team Managers](#)
5. [Expectations of Child Protection Conference Chairs/Independent Reviewing Officer's](#)
6. [Expectations of Group Managers](#)

### **1. Introduction**

Walsall Children's Services wants to provide excellent services to children. An important aspect of achieving this is that staff understand our expectations for their work and are accountable for delivering them. This is not a one way process and so Children's Services accepts that staff have expectations of us – a staff charter lays out what Children's Services will offer to staff and to which it will be accountable. Essentially, all managers and staff will know what is expected of them and that

they are delivering an excellent service that safeguards protects and improves outcomes for children.

Our vision of 'Better Together for Children', recognises that Walsall children face significant disadvantage during their early years, particularly in relation to financial hardship, high levels of child poverty, weak employment prospects and high infant mortality rates. It is for these reasons that a multi-agency approach is required in striving to achieve better outcomes for children.

Social workers at all levels in Walsall will provide a professional service in adherence to the Social Work England Code of Practice and the Council's Code of Conduct. They will be ambassadors for the child and family, the profession and the Council. This document sets out our expectations of you at each stage of your career and what you can expect from us to support you in meeting the standards required by the Professional Capabilities Framework and your career development.

Each social work professional be registered with [Social Work England](#).

Each professional will need to ensure that they deliver against and work within the [Social Work England Professional Standards](#). The professional standards set out what a social worker in England must know, understand and be able to do after completing their social work education or training. The standards are underpinned by guidance intended to support social workers to understand the standards and to uphold them in their practice so that social workers can continue to meet the professional standards and maintain their registration.

See also **Social Worker Rights & Responsibilities Poster**.

## **2. Rights and Responsibilities**

To deliver excellent services for children and young people we recognise that our staff need to work within an environment that supports them to achieve this. This document details our offer to staff ~ their rights ~ and sets out the expectations that staff can have of this organisation ~ their responsibilities.

- Everyone has a right to be treated fairly;
- We will expect and will treat each other with consideration;
- We will afford you opportunities to develop your skills and expertise;
- We will recognise and celebrate good practice and significant achievements;
- We will support you to challenge poor practice when you recognise it;
- We will ensure your caseload or workload is realistic and reasonable in accordance with the workload management tool;
- We acknowledge that you should expect to have a reasonable work/life balance;
- We will offer you monthly supervision as a minimum;

- We will offer you an annual appraisal with fair, constructive and evidence - based feedback;
- We will keep you informed about performance, developments and future plans for the Directorate and the Council as a whole;
- We will be open to new ideas that support service improvements and encourage you to bring forward ideas and suggestions;
- We will offer you learning and development opportunities suitable for your level of experience and/or grade;
- We will ensure all newly appointed members of staff including agency workers are properly inducted into the Directorate in accordance with the induction policy.

**Standard: The child's interests will be of paramount importance**

**Social Workers will:**

- Respond to any allegation of abuse or **Neglect** in accordance with Walsall's Safeguarding Children Partnership requirements;
- Ensure that all assessments include a clear assessment of risk;
- Ensure work is carried out and recorded within the required timescales;
- Evidence the child's views in assessments and interventions and reviews;
- Ensure reports focus on each individual child;
- Respect the child's heritage, culture, race, religion and language and will use appropriate methods of communication to engage the child.

**Standard: The child's voice will be evident in all social work interventions**

**Social Workers will:**

- Ensure that the child is seen and seen alone (exceptions to this requirement to be recorded and authorised by the Practice Manager) to seek out their views, wishes and feelings;
- Ensure that assessments are child-centred and fully consider risks and strengths;
- Explain fully to the child why a Social Worker is involved in their life;
- Build a purposeful and honest relationship with the child;
- Make careful observations of a baby or pre-verbal child to inform the assessment;
- Ensure that recording is child-focused and reflects the child's views and be appropriate to share with the child;
- Ensure that intervention with the child is timely and responsive to risk and need;
- Ensure that the child's identity is promoted through life story work;

- Use an interpreter where appropriate.
- Consider and refer to advocacy or independent visitor services when appropriate.

**Standard: Work will be carried out in partnership with parents and carers to enable them to meet their responsibilities**

**Social Workers will:**

- Ensure that children are visited within the agreed timescales;
- Promote the child's upbringing within the family where possible in plans, interventions and decision making;
- Fully consider parental capacity for change;
- Ensure assessments and other work are planned in advance with the family;
- Always evidence the parents'/carers' view in the assessment;
- Share the final version of the assessment/report with the parents and their views on the assessment/report will be recorded;
- Ensure work is carried out in a timely manner e.g. assessments within the required timescales;
- Ensure parents are able to read the assessment/report at least 1 day before any significant meeting;
- For a **Child Protection Conference** the expectation is that parents are able to read the report at least 3 days before the conference;
- Share the report with the parents in person;
- Provide copies of completed assessments and service plans to parents and carers where appropriate;
- Ensure child care arrangements are made so that parents can concentrate on the meeting knowing their child is being cared for safely;
- Treat parents and carers with respect and encourage them to share their views;
- Advise parents and carers clearly about any concerns and what needs to change to safeguard the child effectively;
- Where possible, arrange to maintain contact between the child and their families and communities;
- Make professional judgments that are evidence-based and clearly articulated within reports;
- Ensure assessments always conclude with clear recommendations to inform the plan for the child.

**Standard: Records and reports are accurate, complete, accessible and up to date and demonstrate the decision-making process**

**Social Workers will:**

- Ensure assessments give full weight to all key incidents;
- Ensure recording is child specific and kept up to date. This means for all child protection activity and all statutory visits (child protection, looked after children and private fostering) within 3 working days of an event occurring. For all other activity this means within 5 working days;
- Ensure that specific records relating to siblings seen on the same day are recorded in their individual case record and that records relating to siblings do not appear in all sibling files;
- Ensure basic information about the child is accurate e.g. date of birth, spelling of name, and kept up to date e.g. address, school;
- Use the appropriate recording formats within the electronic social care recording system;
- Ensure contact with relevant agencies is recorded;
- Ensure case recording demonstrates the purpose and outcome of each contact and discussion concerning the child;
- Ensure recording is concise, analytical and distinguishes between fact and professional opinion;
- Ensure that a **Chronology** is started and/or maintained for every child in receipt of a service;
- Ensure that information about the child is written, stored and shared in accordance with Data Protection and Information Management requirements and Information Sharing Protocols.

**Independent Reviewing Officers will:**

- Ensure that recording of their conversation with each looked after child prior to the child's statutory review is recorded on the child's individual file within 5 working days.

**Standard: Professional integrity and accountability will underpin employment as a Social Worker in Children's Services**

**Social Workers will:**

- Maintain an electronic record of their working hours and maintain their electronic diary;
- Use lone working arrangements;
- Take responsibility for their professional learning and development in partnership with the Practice Manager;

- Accept a joint responsibility with the Practice Manager to ensure supervision takes place on a monthly basis;
- Ensure the Practice Manager and their team know their whereabouts;
- Play an active role in the appraisal process;
- Plan their work in advance;
- Attempt to resolve complaints/professional partnership disagreements to avoid the formal process for complaints or the Child Protection conflict resolution process;
- Participate in the complaints process when required;
- Assist with the induction of new staff/students into their team;
- Co-work cases with less experienced colleagues/students to help that worker develop their professional expertise.

**In addition to working to the standards for Social Workers, ASYE Social Workers will:**

- Work towards successful completion of the ASYE programme by undertaking any written work, training days or other development activity within required timescales;
- Acknowledge their inexperience and seek and accept guidance for areas of work which are new or where sufficient practice in that area has not been gained or formally acknowledged within the ASYE portfolio;
- Discuss any Child Protection concern on a case immediately with the Practice Manager (or any other Manager in the absence of the Practice Manager);
- Ensure familiarity with the Capabilities Framework and the Social Work England Code of Practice;
- Take increasing responsibility throughout the ASYE year for identifying and meeting own learning and development needs;
- Co-work cases with a more experienced Social Worker where directed to do so;
- Participate in a task and finish group/working party where appropriate.

### **3. Expectations of Practice Managers**

#### **3.1 Staff Issues**

**Practice Managers will:**

- Be the first line of guidance on practice and procedural issues for workers in their team;
- Maintain an electronic record of their working hours and maintain their electronic diary;

- Supervise staff on a minimum monthly basis and ASYE Social Workers weekly for the first six weeks of their employment, fortnightly for the subsequent six months and thereafter;
- Ensure management oversight of quality, analysis and case direction is evident within the case records as required;
- Carry out direct observations of the practice of their staff in accordance with requirements;
- Organise and lead a team meeting to cascade information and collate information for senior managers;
- Monitor sickness absence of staff and enact procedures required;
- Monitor the performance of all staff in their team;
- Carry out an appraisal of all staff on an annual basis and review every 6 months;
- Carry out practice observations as required;
- Ensure all staff attend Council training and development as well as bespoke training for staff/team as an outcome of an appraisal or special interest/need;
- Enable the team to create a culture of professionalism and respect as a learning organisation;
- Participate in the recruitment of staff and make every effort to retain them;
- Lead practice development sessions in conjunction with the Team Manager for their team at team meetings, away days and assist in the development of ASYE workers/students.

### **3.2 Performance Management and Quality Assurance**

#### **Practice Managers will monitor and track to ensure:**

- The quality and timeliness of assessments;
- Chronologies are opened and updated on all cases;
- Plans are current, outcome-focused, measurable and in place for all cases;
- Child Protection cases are progressed; **Core Group** meetings are held, statutory visits take place in line with CP and LAC **Care Plans**;
- All **Care Proceedings** are progressed in line with the Care Plans for the children;
- Children are visited within the specified timescales;
- The timely receipt of cases moving between services and the timely closure of cases when the work is completed;
- Consistent application of thresholds for service;
- Cases transferring between services have all required work in place prior to transfer;

- That once permission is given for PLO/Care Proceedings, appropriate action is put in place within 1 week;
- Stepping up/down of cases, CIN to CP and/or PLO, CP to CIN, LAC to CIN and closure occurs in a timely way;
- All children **Looked After** have LAC health assessments, and **Personal Education Plans** in place and reviewed within required timescales;
- Admissions monitoring forms are of an appropriate quality;
- Through use of the Supervision Policy, Quality Assure the assessments, plans and reports relating to children and families;
- Participate in peer case auditing in accordance with the Quality Assurance Framework;
- Scrutinise and quality assure all requests to admit a child into public care or to initiate PLO process prior to presentation to the PLO/Gateway Panel.

#### **4. Expectations of Team Managers**

##### **Team Managers will:**

- Undertake monthly supervision with Practice Managers;
- Undertake annual appraisals with Practice Managers;
- Attend management meetings;
- Attend service away days and play an active role by engagement in planning or by delivery of a session;
- Maintain an electronic record of their working hours and maintain their electronic diary;
- Support Practice Managers in identifying and attending training and learning and development opportunities;
- Use the weekly performance overview report with the Team to ensure performance maintains a positive trajectory;
- Participate in peer case auditing in accordance with the Quality Assurance Framework;
- Model calm approachable behaviour to staff and others;
- Effectively manage budgets within agreed parameters;
- Challenge managers who do not take necessary actions;
- Be knowledgeable about policies and procedures;
- Carry out practice observations as required;



- Acknowledge good practice;
- Ensure complaints are responded to within 10 day timescale;
- Maintain up to date staffing lists on a monthly basis;
- Ensure all new staff including agency workers are properly inducted into the service;
- Through use of the Supervision Policy, Quality Assure the assessments, plans and reports relating to children and families;
- Scrutinise and quality assure all requests to admit a child into public care or to initiate PLO process prior to presentation to the PLO/Gateway Panel;
- Ensure all final Care Plans are submitted to Group Managers for signature 5 days prior to Court submission dates;
- Inform the Group Manager/ Head of Service of cases where there are areas of significant inter-agency disagreement or Councillor Involvement, or where the service or Council could suffer reputational damage e.g. negative press attention, LGO and **Ofsted** referrals.

## **5. Expectations of Child Protection Conference Chairs/Independent Reviewing Officer's**

### **CP Conference Chairs and IRO's will:**

- Maintain an electronic record of their working hours and maintain their electronic diary;
- Use lone working arrangements;
- Take responsibility for their professional learning and development in partnership with the Group Manager;
- Accept a joint responsibility with the Group Manager to ensure supervision takes place on a monthly basis;
- Ensure the Group Manager and their team know their whereabouts;
- Play an active role in the appraisal process;
- Plan their work in advance;
- See children within the required timescales;
- Attempt to resolve complaints/professional partnership disagreements to avoid the formal process for complaints or the Child Protection conflict resolution process;
- Participate in the complaints process when required;
- Assist with the induction of new staff/students into their team.

## 6. Expectations of Group Managers

### Groups Managers will:

- Maintain an electronic record of their working hours and maintain their electronic diary;
- Undertake monthly supervision with Team Managers or CP Conference Chairs/IRO's;
- Undertake annual appraisals with Team Managers or CP Conference Chairs/IRO's;
- Through use of the Supervision Policy, Quality Assure the assessments, plans and reports relating to children and families;
- Attend, support, contribute and chair as requested management meetings/working parties/task and finish groups;
- Ensure partnership interface meetings are held regularly;
- Support Team managers or CP Conference Chairs/IRO's in identifying and attending training and learning and development opportunities;
- Use the weekly performance overview report with Team Managers or CP Conference Chairs/IRO's to ensure performance maintains a positive trajectory;
- Assist the Assistant Director on a monthly basis with "telling the story" behind performance data for their service area;
- Audit case files in accordance with the Quality Assurance Framework;
- Work as required on elements of the delivery plans/strategic improvement plan/service plans;
- Carry out practice observations as required;
- Ensure complaints are responded to within 10 day timescale;
- Ensure learning from complaints/compliments is understood and followed through:
  - At individual worker and manager level;
  - At service level;
  - At directorate level where appropriate.
- Scrutinise and quality assure all requests to admit a child into public care or to initiate PLO process prior to presentation to the PLO/Gateway Panel;
- Sign all final care plans prior to submission to Court;
- Maintain up to date staffing lists on a monthly basis;
- Ensure all new staff including agency workers are properly inducted into the service;

- Inform the Assistant Director/ Head of Service of cases where there are areas of significant inter-agency disagreement or Councillor involvement, or where the service or Council could suffer reputational damage e.g. negative press attention, LGO and Ofsted referrals;
- Ensure activity is related to the delivery plans and that team plans are in place;
- Ensure staff understand their role in relation to team and delivery plans;
- Undertake surveys with service users when requested;
- Keep teams up to date with external developments;
- Model calm approachable behaviour to staff and others;
- Effectively manage budgets within agreed parameters;
- Deliver activity within the required timescales;
- Challenge managers who do not take necessary actions;
- Be knowledgeable about policies and procedures;
- Acknowledge good practice;
- Deal with complaints, member and MP enquiries within required timescales;
- Give team managers opportunities to develop/try out new ideas/different approaches;
- Keep clear records of meetings which aim to achieve problem resolution.