

NORTH SOMERSET COUNCIL

Practice Framework



North Somerset Practice Framework

Our Framework provides an evidence-based structure within which knowledge, learning and good practice can be shared. It gives a common language to communicate across teams, and enables us as practitioners to further explore the theories and approaches that shape the way we work.

Our Framework gives shape to the complexities of the work we do, our professional relationships and the different approaches and ways of working we adopt in our interactions and interventions with our children, young people and their families.

Our Framework will help to 'centre' our practice, ensuring that the work we do across our service is grounded by our shared values, principles and beliefs and with interlinked theories and approaches.

Our Framework encompasses theories and models of practice which support the principles

and values which we have identified as forming the basis for our practice. We recognise that a single model or approach will not meet the differing and complex needs of our children and their families and that we need to be able to support flexible and dynamic responses to need.

Our Framework and approach to practice is designed to give professional license and flexibility, supporting accountability, responsibility, and recognise the skills and experience we have in our service.

Our Framework has been developed with your input. We are on a journey and it will continue to develop and evolve over time; setting an expectation for how we will work with children, young people and their families, providing an anchor, guiding us and challenging us as we continue to grow.

Our vision:

In North Somerset we have a clear vision for Children's Services.

'To make North Somerset a truly great place for children and young people to thrive; where all have the best possible life and opportunities, including those who are vulnerable, disadvantaged and/or have special educational or additional needs.'

We strive for high quality, consistent practice, valuing feedback and being open to continual learning.



Principles and beliefs:

- We listen and respond to the voices of our children, young people and their families and seek to understand their experience and what their life is like
- We will work to offer families the Right Help at the Right Time, adopting a whole family approach in our interventions
- We will work with families only for as long as is necessary supporting independence
- We will work openly, honestly and respectfully and create an environment where we can support and challenge ourselves to continue to develop
- We will work to build strong relationships with all those we work with, based on the belief that there are strengths to be built on
- We are curious and value different perspectives
- We value diversity and difference and are inclusive.

Our outcomes

We will ensure our children and young people are:

- happy, healthy and resilient
- safe and secure – physically and emotionally, in their relationships
- learning and achieving to the best of their potential and are ready for adult life
- confident that we are supporting their parents to identify and make changes to enable them to care for them and meet their needs
- supported to remain safely within their families and local communities wherever possible.



Our approach

We recognise the need to be able to adopt a variety of models and methods and adapt our approach according to need.

Our overarching approach to practice is strengths and relationship based and is trauma informed with the complimentary approach of Signs of Safety.

Strengths based:

A strengths-based approach focuses on identifying the strengths, or assets, as well as the needs and difficulties of children, young people and their families.

A fundamental point of a strengths-based approach is that it is an 'approach', not an outcome or a process. It is less about 'what the end result is', or 'what we do', and more about 'how we do' and our behaviour.

Strengths-based practice is a collaborative process between the person supported by services and those supporting them, allowing them to work together to determine an outcome that draws on their strengths and assets. Fundamentally it is about the quality of the relationship that develops between those providing support and those being supported, as well as the elements that the person seeking support brings to the process.

Relationship based

We focus on working in partnership with families, involving them in decision making and supporting them to identify what needs to change and how to develop resilience. This helps to provide children with safety, stability, and connection through relational continuity and enable them to see that we want to help their family to make the changes identified.

We respect family as people with wisdom to share as they know themselves best. We use language and methods of communication which can be understood. We strive to understand motivation and enable choices.

We recognise that all families do some things well and have signs of well-being and safety.

We build supportive and constructive relationships to assist families in meeting the needs of their children.

Trauma informed

Trauma-informed practice is a strengths-based approach which seeks to understand and respond to the impact of trauma on people's lives. Our children, young people and their families may be living with the legacy effects of overwhelming stress (trauma) and trauma can affect the way people approach relationships.

Being trauma-informed is about supporting people to feel safe enough in their interactions with services to build trust and to help them overcome any barriers to an effective, helping relationship. This is a golden thread throughout our Framework and approach to practice.

Key principles of trauma-informed practice:

1. **Safety:** We strive to ensure the physical and emotional safety of those we work with and alongside.
2. **Choice and Clarity:** We cultivate meaningful choice and a voice in the decision-making process of the organisation, its services and those we aim to help.
3. **Collaboration:** We recognise the value of overcoming challenges and improving the systems through obtaining feedback, participation and a commitment to work through challenges and competing demands.
4. **Trustworthiness:** We ensure transparency exists across our culture, with the objective of building trust and confidence with those we work with, our colleagues and our wider community.
5. **Empowerment:** We make a sincere efforts across our the organisation to share power, to collaborate effectively and give

our children, families and practitioners a strong voice in the decisions that affect and influence their lives.

6. **Inclusivity:** We actively seek to recognise and address inequalities, oppression and exclusion. People's diverse needs are identified (e.g. gender, age, ability, sexuality, ethnicity, cultural) and responded to sensitively and with humility.

Signs of Safety

Signs of Safety has been embraced by North Somerset Children's Services as the overarching practice model with children and families.

Signs of Safety is a strengths-based, whole system approach. The model focuses our intervention to work in partnership; it helps build on strengths to create safety for children.

Signs of Safety recognises that situations can change and families are essential to that change, supporting families to find their own solutions to the issues they face. It involves practitioners being aspirational for families and treating every encounter as an opportunity for change.

Signs of Safety is a questioning not an expert approach. It focuses on using thought provoking and reflective 'powerful' questions as tools for intervention. It requires respectful, professional

curiosity coupled with skilful and respectful use of authority.

Systemic practice

We apply systemic practice to our leadership, supervision and engagement with children and families. Systemic practice and trauma informed practice complement one another.

Systemic practice is a way of acting, thinking and making sense of the world which focuses on relationships and recognises that individuals are always embedded in their social context.

Systemic practice seeks to make sense of the world by relationships, focusing on the whole family system rather than individuals. Through a systemic approach, change can be achieved through exploring relationship patterns and understanding how they impact on children.

Motivational interviewing

Motivational interviewing is a highly effective, strength-based approach which helps people make behavioural or attitudinal change. It is especially effective with people who are reluctant to engage or who have been coerced into changing. At its centre, motivational interviewing builds a collaborative approach. It has roots in the field of substance use, but has now been

successfully used in a multitude of settings, including youth offending and child protection.

Dyadic Developmental Practice (DDP) and Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity and Empathy (PACE)

Dan Hughes' therapeutic model of Dyadic Developmental Practice involves assisting children (and their parents) to understand their troubled past while also enhancing their ability to form trusting relationships with their adoptive parents or carers. DDP is the underpinning model, it is an approach which allows carers to get beyond the defences and blocked trust of children in their care by developing an attitude of Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity and Empathy (PACE). PACE is a way of thinking, feeling, communicating and behaving that aims to make the child feel safe. It is done by communicating the four elements of PACE together flexibly, not as a step-by-step process. PACE is a trauma-informed approach to supporting children and young people, the approach focuses on building trusting relationships, emotional connections, containment of emotions and a sense of security.



Child centred

The child or young person's voice, needs, safety and wellbeing are central to everything we do.

We recognise children as valued members of our society and their rights and best interests are our paramount consideration.

We consider the critical timeframes in childhood and adolescence based on the developmental needs of children and young people and take this into account in our decision making for children.

We respond to problems as early as possible and make timely decisions based on the needs of the child or young person.

We create opportunities for children and young people to participate in decision-making by promoting collaborative approaches and opportunities for co-production.

We value relationships that matter to a child.

Shared responsibility

Children, young people, and their families do better when they are placed at the centre of their own care and can develop a strong sense of identity and belonging. Children, families and carers are supported by their community and services working together.

We connect, work together and share information with other professionals and services to ensure that the needs of our children are met.

We support and empower those working closest to children and families to make decisions and work together to collectively hold and manage risk. We challenge and support each other to collaboratively achieve the best outcomes.

We work towards more integrated services through shared visions, goals, language, and training.

Creativity

We will be creative in our approach to ensure that we are solution focussed and have considered all options.

We will have workloads that support our ability to be creative.

We step into what is uncomfortable and help others to create, within themselves, new ways to grow through active participation.

Our work will flow naturally from our compassion and understanding.

We will create space for clear, solution focused, rational planning and precision in our work. This will require the space and time to reflect and hypothesise both individually and collectively.

We will adopt a critical perspective and think divergently; meaning we will define and redefine the problem and experiment with various solutions to adapt to the needs of the family.

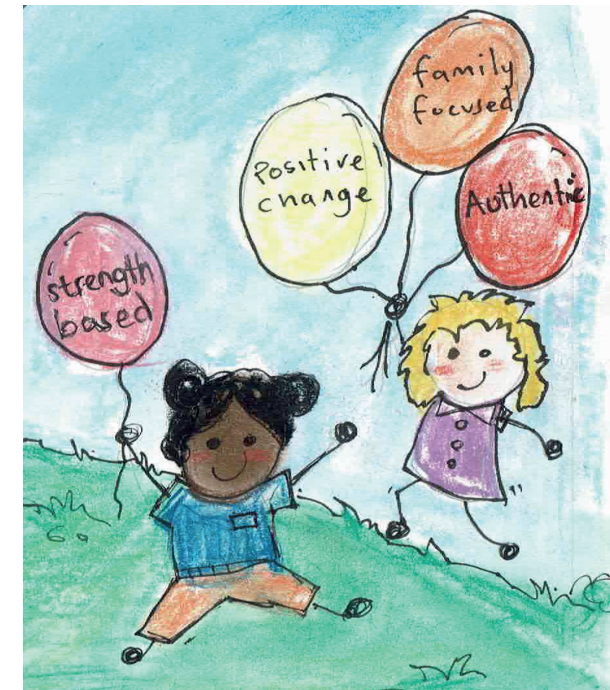
Parents, children, and partner agencies will engage with us and alongside us to strengthen creativity in growing minds and self-determination for the adults that care for them.

How will we know when we are making a difference?

Through feedback from our children, young people and their families.

Through feedback from you and your colleagues across the service and our partnership.

Through our Quality Assurance Framework which will tell us what is working well, what we need to be worried about and what needs to happen.



This publication is available in large print, Braille or audio formats on request.

Help is also available for people who require council information in languages other than English.

For all enquiries please contact 01275 884 262

