



Practice Standards for Practitioners and Managers

Improving Outcomes for Children in Northamptonshire



**Northamptonshire
Children's Trust**

Introduction

Keeping children safe and giving them a voice

Our job in Northamptonshire Children's Trust is to make sure we protect children from harm. They must feel as safe and secure as possible in their lives. We also need to ensure that children understand:

- what we are worried about;
- what's working well;
- what we are going to do next;
- and that we will listen to what they are saying.

Our Strategic Framework



Strategic Framework

Vision

**Children, Young People and Families at the heart of all we do
- in every action we take and every decision we make.**

Our
Commitment

(co-produced with children
and young people)

**What we do today affects your tomorrow, we promise to
walk side by side with you**

Outcomes
Framework



Conditions
for Success



Key messages from the Practice Standards

- Children's voices are listened to, recorded and impact decision making;
- The safeguarding, welfare, experiences and outcomes of the child is the focus for all that we do as practitioners and managers;
- The children and families we work with are treated with respect and honesty, and kept informed throughout any social work intervention;
- The strengths of families, as well as concerns, will be assessed and used to safeguard children;
- The work with children and their families will be based on the achievement of identified improved outcomes that are measurable so that the child sees an improvement in their circumstances and feels safe
- We support delivery of the local area Co-Production Charter and its values
- We support delivery of the local area strategic plans, for example SEND and Inclusion

Our Equalities Commitments to Our Children and Young People

We have spoken to our children and young people, who have told us what they would like equality and diversity to look like at Northamptonshire Children's Trust. We promise our children and young people that we will:

- Treat them with kindness and respect and make them feel comfortable, valued and welcome;
- Be reliable, aware and alert to their personal needs, including any special educational needs or disabilities, and support them as much as they need us to in the way in which they need us to;
- Be mindful of how we communicate with them and what we say and write to and about them;
- Reflect, acknowledge and apologise if we discriminate against or offend them;
- Constantly update our knowledge about children and young people's equality and diversity rights and needs so we can always support them in the best way possible and ensure equal access to support their needs

Social GRRRAACCEEESSS will also be reflected in our work.



Policies, Procedures the practice model and Practice Standards

Our Practice Standards are a summary document, and do not replace policies and procedures. We must adhere to the policies and procedures available from the [Northamptonshire Children's Trust Procedures Manual](#) and the [Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children's Partnership Procedures Manual](#). Our Practice Standards are underpinned by our [Practice Model](#). Our Practice Model brings together the core approach (and other models) we use when working with children, young people and families.

Practice Standards



Signs of Safety is embedded in practice

All practitioners participate in Signs of Safety training relevant to their roles

Practice Champions support practitioners to use Signs of Safety effectively

Signs of Safety underpins our practice and engagement with children and families

All practitioners have a clear understanding of Signs of Safety principles and know how to use Signs of Safety resources to enhance their practice



Good quality communication to ensure positive engagement

Race, religion, gender identity, sex, sexuality, age, disability, marital status and parental status is respected when communicating with children and families

Interpreters, specialist workers or tools are used whenever required to enable good communication with children and families

The way we communicate meets everyone's needs

Signs of Safety and our commitments to our children, young people and families are reflected in our communications



Practitioners use a holistic approach to assessments

Assessments reflect the lived experiences of children and takes into consideration the journey of the child

Assessments are analytical and concise and are informed by current research

All assessments are completed in a timely manner and shared with families in good time before meetings

Children and Parents/carers contribute to assessments in a meaningful way

The voice of the child is clear throughout assessments

Families' history, culture and experience are respectfully discussed and inform assessments



Visits are meaningful and purposeful

All children are spoken to alone when appropriate

Visits are recorded in a timely manner and evidence the child's voice

All children are visited within timescales and in accordance with procedures

Practitioners visit when they say they will and are on time

Visits are planned in advance and are purposeful

Visits are completed with dignity and respect and are non-judgemental



All children have an outcome focused plan that reflects the assessed level of need and / or risk

Children's plans are written and shared in a way that can be understood by all

Plans are SMART - specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely

Plans are developed with children and families and are regularly reviewed

Plans are multi agency and the most appropriate professional is the lead

Children and families are supported in their plans to achieve and sustain agreed outcomes

Plans are based on strengths and focus on sustainable change



**We will work honestly and openly
with families and partner agencies**

All partners and contributions are valued equally

**We develop and maintain proactive multi-agency
relationships that encourage strong support and robust
challenge**

**Practitioners build trusting and effective relationships
with families to achieve positive change**

**Difficult conversations are managed with dignity and
respect**

**We always seek consent unless this compromises a
child's safety**

**We do not accept or tolerate discrimination and we
challenge it when we see it**



Professional development will equip all with the skills and knowledge to perform effectively

All must take responsibility for their own professional development

Managers will actively support the workforce attending training and other Continuing Professional Development activities

Learning from Continuing Professional Development will be reflected in our practice

Social Workers will ensure their Social Work England Continuing Professional Development record is updated



Direct work will be undertaken with creativity and respect

Direct work is undertaken with children and families

Direct work informs our assessments and planning

Direct work is evidenced on children's files

Direct work uses tools to aid communication and understanding such as Signs of Safety tools

Direct work will reflect the voice of the child

Direct work will be creative with children and young people



The workforce receives high quality supervision

Supervision is regular and prioritised

Supervision evidences reflective practice

Managers provide effective, timely management oversight, including rationale for decisions, which is clearly recorded on children's files

A written Collaborative Reflective Supervision Agreement is in place

Supervision supports practitioners to develop their best practice

Peer Group Supervision is used to enhance learning

Supervision provides a secure base to encourage and support innovative practice

The workforce feels supported



Managers provide leadership

Managers lead their teams to keep children, young people and families at the heart of all we do – in every action we take and every decision we make

Managers provide regular feedback which is constructive and purposeful

Managers lead by example by demonstrating continuing learning and development of knowledge and skills, both in terms of the social work profession and the management of people and resources

Managers ensure feedback is obtained, considered and acted upon

Managers regularly observe practice and review impact for children to inform supervision and continuous improvement

Quality Assurance is an integral part of a manager's role



Managers provide leadership continued

Managers set clear practice expectations

**Managers provide supervision in line with the
supervision policy**

**Managers are responsible for responding to and learning from
complaints and adhere to the Complaints, Compliments and
Representations procedure**

**Managers are responsible for managing resources
and budgets based on the principle of value for
money**

**Managers will provide good lines of communication that
ensure the workforce share, understand and act upon policies
and procedures so services for children are consistent and of
good quality**

**Managers will use induction, team meetings and supervision
to ensure the workforce know how to access and use the NCT
Procedures Manual and the NSCP Procedures Manual**



Meetings have a clear focus that inform, engage, inspire and achieve progress

Meetings are effectively chaired and recorded. Records are circulated to participants in line with relevant procedures

Meetings are planned, time limited and focused

Meetings will identify needs, build on success, discuss progress and establish clear actions

Everyone's contribution is valued and encouraged



Children and families receive the right intervention at the right time

Interventions are timely, purposeful and at the right level to meet children's and families' needs

All decisions are made in the best interests of the child

Families are empowered with the knowledge and skills to access additional services and ongoing support

The workforce is professionally responsible and accountable for the quality of their work



All are entitled to carry out their duties without fear or risk to their own personal safety

All are provided with a good induction

All are made aware of and follow our safe working practices and take personal responsibility for health, safety and wellbeing

Managers have a duty to protect the health, safety and wellbeing of those they manage and those who come into contact with our services

Managers ensure those they manage have a named contact when working away from the office

Risk assessments are completed when required and are applied



Voice of the Child

We make it as easy as possible for children to share their views and feelings

We ensure the views of children drive our service improvement

We are creative in how we communicate and work with our children, taking account of their individual communication needs

We ensure that children have accessible information

Children's voices influence our assessments and plans

We build quality relationships based on respect, trust and honesty



Policies and Procedures

We know how to access and use the NCT Procedures Manual and the NSCP Procedures Manual

We have registered for updates – click here for the NCT Procedures Manual and here for the NSCP Procedures Manual

We take personal responsibility to ensure that we know how to locate all the policies and procedure that affect our work

We take personal responsibility to ensure that we understand and apply policies and procedures