

Social Work Practice Standards

SCOPE

The Social Work Practice Standards are designed to improve consistency of practice across the service, and to improve the quality of service provided to the children, young people and their families in Dudley.

This document seeks to describe and establish the standards required of Social Workers in relation to their practice, and includes key aspects and expectations for working with children and families in a variety of situations, and through a variety of processes. It highlights the importance of being clear about the wishes and feelings of children and what life is like for them in their family or care environment. Practice issues including recording, undertaking assessments of need, developing SMART plans, and the role of supervision, are considered.

This document has been developed using the Social Work England Professional Standards to reflect the standards necessary for safe and effective practice, and to make clear the expectations of what Social Workers must know, understand, and be able to do; and the Knowledge and Skills Statement for Child and Family Practitioners (Department for Education, 2018).

Social Work England Professional Standards

<https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/standards/professional-standards/>

Knowledge and Skills Statement for Child and Family Practitioners

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/knowledge-and-skills-statements-for-child-and-family-social-work>

Why do we need Social Work Practice Standards?

- To ensure that all practitioners, social workers and managers have clear guidance regarding their roles and responsibility as professionals;
- To ensure that there is a consistent approach to the social work task across all teams;
- To ensure that there are clear expectations for practitioners, social workers and frontline managers which they can measure themselves against;
- To ensure that we have a confident, professional service that is respected by families and other professionals that can champion the needs of children and challenge others where necessary to promote the welfare of the child;

- To quality assure our work.

Supporting Social Work Standards

To support the Social Work Standards there are:

- Supervision Standards;
- Manager Practice Standards;
- The Dudley Children's Services Procedures Manual - a clear set of processes for social work tasks that are easily accessible: [Dudley procedures online](#)
- Practice guidance, resources, and direct work tools that Social Workers can use in their work;
- Dudley's Quality Assurance Framework.

Values

Our Values:

- Children and young people's best interests will be of primary consideration in all areas affecting them. Children first, and at the heart of what we do;
- The safeguarding and welfare of the child is the focus for all that we do. The strengths of families as well as concerns will be assessed and used to safeguard any child;
- Families will be treated with respect and honesty and kept informed throughout any social work intervention;
- The work with children and their families will be based on the achievement of identified outcomes that are measurable;
- Our services will be delivered in partnership with families and young people and other agencies.

Every Social Worker in Dudley should know the answer to:

- Does the child feel safe?
- From the child's perspective, what does it feel like living in the family?
- How is our intervention impacting or improving the child's circumstances?
- How do we know – what difference are we making?

Dudley's Social Work Practice Standards

All Social Workers will ensure that all social work tasks for children and young people for whom the Local Authority has a responsibility, will be carried out in line with the standards set out in this document.

Practice Standard	Key Area
1	Assessments will be child-centered, proportionate and of a high quality. Focus will be on the child and young person.
2	Children in need of protection will receive an immediate response. Risk will be assessed and safeguarding action will put the child's needs first.
3	Children in need of protection will be kept safe through a clear plan and coordinated multi-agency intervention.
4	Children and families will be involved in well-planned interventions which will improve outcomes and keep children safe. Children and young people will know who their allocated worker is, and will see them at the frequency agreed within the child/young person's plan.
5	Children and young people who are unable to remain with their birth family will be looked after in a setting which meets their needs and delivers the best outcomes. Social Workers will ensure every child has an up to date plan which reflects how this will be achieved.
6	All information recorded about a child, young person or their family will be accurate, up to date, accessible and meaningful. Workers will record factually correct information and ensure this reflects the young person's views, wishes and feelings.
7	A child or young person's plan will present a detailed picture of a situation and those involved. It will also show what actions might be taken, and by whom, to meet assessed or identified needs.
8	'Effective leadership sets the direction of an organisation, its culture and value system, and ultimately drives the quality and effectiveness of the services provided.' (Laming 2009: 2:1). Social Workers will demonstrate effective leadership skills to promote the needs of the child/young person and organisation.

9	All social workers will contribute to effective case management by preparing for supervision and ensuring they comply with the standards set out in the Practice Standards Guidance.
10	All staff will have supervision contracts and annual appraisals in place that are being acted upon and progressed within agreed timescales.
11	Case audits involve reading the case record and checking whether or not standards are met as well as an opportunity to review the quality of practice and decision-making. Every case worker will contribute to the audit process as set out in the Practice Guidance and QAF Framework.

Practice Guidance;

Dudley Centre for Professional Practice has developed Social Work Practice Guidance that sits alongside these standards. This guidance helps all staff to understand how we complete our work with children and families, and why. The Practice Guidance references relevant national legislation and government guidance, in addition to 'good practice notes'. All Practice Guidance is available on Tri-ex.