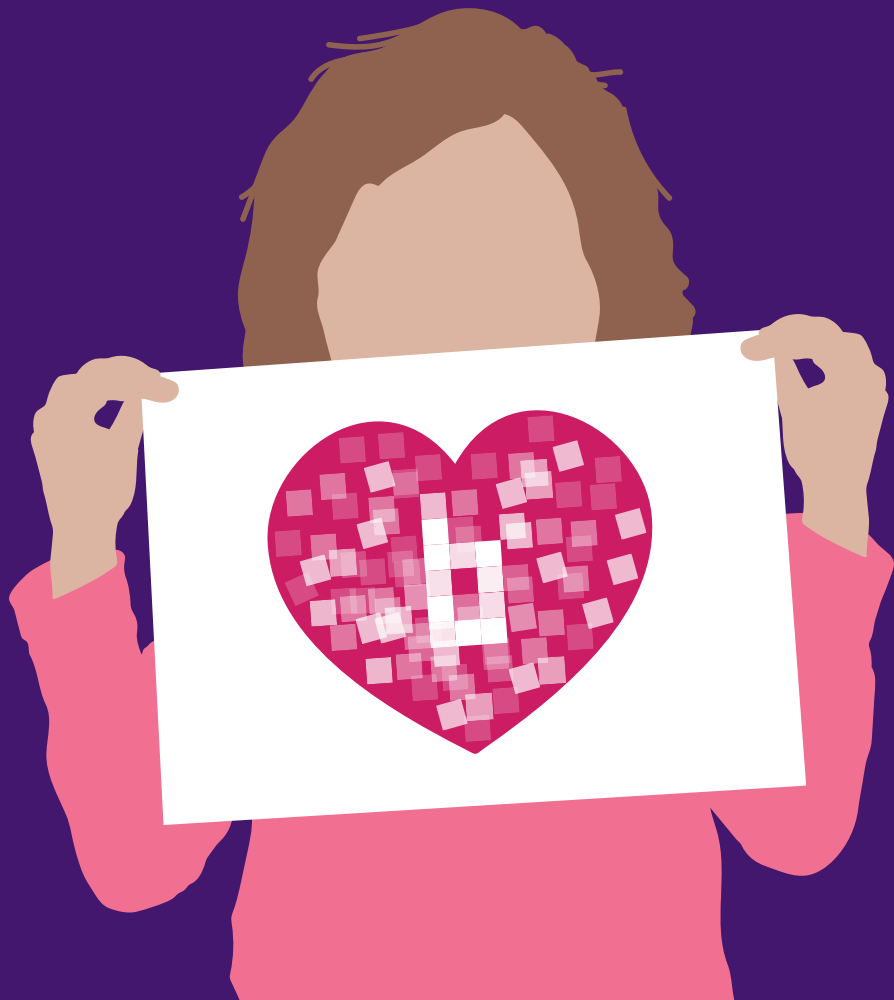


BRADFORD CHILDREN'S SERVICES PRACTICE MODEL



children AT THE
heart OF **all we do**



City of
BRADFORD
METROPOLITAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Children’s Services is committed to delivering a high quality service that is effective and has a positive impact on children, young people and families’ lives in the District of Bradford.



OUR VISION

is to ensure that children and young people are given the best start in life to be safe, healthy, happy and resilient.



OUR AIM

is to consistently deliver services with care and compassion to strengthen families through a positive working relationship.



OUR MISSION

is to always put children and young people at the heart of all we do.

This document will set out a shared language, understanding and approach, to working with children and families in Bradford.

Our operating practice model will remain aligned to Signs of Safety underpinned by an understanding of the impact of trauma and adverse experiences and by the developing of effective relationships with children, young people and families and also with colleagues.

SIGNS OF SAFETY IS A STRENGTHS BASED, SAFETY ORIENTATED APPROACH

RELATIONSHIPS WILL BE AT THE HEART OF PRACTICE

UNDERSTANDING AND RECOGNISING THE IMPACT OF TRAUMA AND INDIVIDUAL EXPERIENCES OF ADULTS AND CHILDREN

Signs of Safety is a strengths-based, safety-focussed model of practice which we have adopted to provide a clear framework for practice across Children’s Services. We will work in partnership and collaboratively with children, young people and families to conduct risk assessments and produce action plans to increase safety and reduce risk. We are committed to building positive relationships with our children, young people and families recognising and reinforcing their strengths and their community networks.

Our workforce will be supported to understand the impact of individual personal experiences and trauma and how these affect the behaviour of children and adults. This will enable our workers to be more effective in recognising the strengths within the family but also identify where additional support may be required to provide a platform for sustainable change.

We will deliver outstanding services for children, young people and families by having an effective Practice Model which is designed and informed by value-based practice, research and evidence. Our core principles determine the culture we want across Children’s Services and how this will be delivered and observable in practice.

PRINCIPLES	IN PRACTICE THIS MEANS
SAFETY AND WELLBEING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Everybody has a right to be safe from abuse or neglect. This includes having safety plans in place that work for children, young people, their families and their wider community. Understanding the needs of the child, young person and their family to make sure that children and young people are safe. Focus and emphasis on reducing the impact of parental / adult vulnerabilities and behaviour to safeguard and promote better outcomes for children and young people.
LISTENING TO THE VOICE OF CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS SO THAT WE UNDERSTAND THEIR LIFE JOURNEY TO ENGAGE THEM IN THE SERVICES THEY NEED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicating effectively with each child, young person and their families focusing on their individual experiences. Using simple and jargon-free language in all of our documents, assessments and plans. All assessments, plans and support focus on how services are making a direct impact on the lived experience of children and young people within their families and local communities. Consistently using Signs of Safety language and scaling tools with children and young people to know and show how life is improving for them over time. The wishes and feelings of children and young people should be evident through recordings and reports and we will understand the impact on them of their lived experiences and situations.



‘WE WILL DELIVER OUTSTANDING SERVICES FOR CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES BY HAVING AN EFFECTIVE PRACTICE MODEL WHICH IS DESIGNED AND INFORMED BY VALUE-BASED PRACTICE, RESEARCH AND EVIDENCE.’

PRINCIPLES	IN PRACTICE THIS MEANS
ACHIEVING PERMANENCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting families to stay together when safe and possible. Always taking time to find and support the naturally occurring networks around children, young people and families as we know this is where the vast majority of children are best cared for. Consistently using family trees and network meetings/family group conferences as part of Signs of Safety planning with individual families. Timely response and decision making to ensure that we get the right outcome for children and young people.
STRENGTHS BASED APPROACH TO WORKING WITH CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES, BUILDING ON THEIR SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with families to recognise and understand their relationships and support networks. Recognising how adverse childhood experiences and trauma can impact on the lives of adults and thus on the way that they parent their children. Valuing and respecting the diversity of children, young people and their families. Using strength based and motivational approaches to build on people's skills, knowledge and experience when developing plans with families. Facilitating support at universal and targeted levels from within communities. Focus on helping children, young people and their families build safe and on-going social connections and friendships in their local communities. Making assessments holistic and plans proportionate to need. Identifying and amplifying individual own goals and hopes for change using Conversations for Change.

PRINCIPLES	IN PRACTICE THIS MEANS
EARLY SUPPORT AT THE RIGHT TIME, BUILDING RESILIENCE AND INDEPENDENCE FOR A HEALTHY, HAPPY LIFE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing information and advice which is easy for families to navigate so they only have to tell their story once. Providing a range of accredited parenting programmes that are accessible to adults with a variety of different needs. Developing and targeting earlier interventions that can respond quickly to risks and vulnerability to avoid or prevent escalation. Supporting partner agencies to become confident in their role as Lead Practitioners and in coordinating a multi-agency response to whole family needs. Joining up and improving accessibility through the Gateway, Families Information Service and SEND Local Offer. Working more closely with settings and schools in neighbourhoods where outcomes need the most improvement. Applying a model of support which builds resilience in individuals, families and communities. Being clear about support and intervention within the continuum of need.
INFORMATION SHARING AND CONSENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Being clear with children, young people and families about what information will be shared and with whom. Seeking and recording consent clearly to avoid delay in accessing services. Sharing information with professionals and family members when required. Clearly evidenced support from managers when making decisions to dispense with consent when a child, young person or adult is at risk.
EFFECTIVE MULTI-AGENCY WORKING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working towards jointly assessing families so that support is timely, proportionate and relevant. Working together with agencies to share information, knowledge and resources to avoid duplication for children, young people and their families. Appropriate sharing of information to support working relationships so that everyone is clear regarding roles and responsibilities. Joint work builds on partners' skills and knowledge to support children and families. Listening and valuing the views and opinions of colleagues.

ASSESSMENTS AND EVIDENCE-BASED TOOLS

Our philosophy and approach will only be as effective as the assessments we do and strengthening our understanding through reflection and analysis. Fundamental to the assessment and on-going work with families is developing a deeper understanding of their 'story' and relationships and the collective impact of our work with them.

There are three primary types of assessments used across Bradford depending on the level of need and help required:

- Early Help Assessment (All agencies)
- Child and Family Assessment (Children's Social Care)
- ASSET assessment for the Youth Offending Service.



A good assessment is one which investigates and captures the voice and needs of the child set within the family response and context and considers them holistically. It is important that assessments are on-going and not just a one-off event. Assessments can be used to measure progress and impact as well as provide an understanding about who is the right person to be working with the child, young person and family.

Our assessments will be informed by the voice of the child and discussions with the family and wider network to understand what is happening for the family within their community. Tools are important to strengthen and deepen our understanding of needs, risks and resilience factors, whilst providing an evidence based approach to our work. The following is a table of which tools are available to support the assessment process. These tools are examples and it maybe that other tools are better suited to some of our children, young people and families; professional judgement should inform this so that intervention is proportionate to each individual case.

MANDATORY	WHAT IT IS AND WHEN TO USE IT? WHAT IMPACT IT WILL HAVE?
CASE CHRONOLOGY SIGNIFICANT EVENTS (YOS)	This is a document that provides an overview of significant events in a child's life and helps assessment and review process to understand the child's individual experiences and journey.
GENOGRAM	A genogram is a graphic representation of a family tree and provides a forum to explore the family relationships and dynamics.

TO BE APPLIED TO EACH CASE DEPENDING ON SPECIFIC ISSUES

THE NEGLECT TOOLKIT	<p>The Neglect Toolkit supports in identifying and assessing children who are at risk of neglect. It can be used when there are concerns about the quality of care given to a child suggesting that their needs are being neglected.</p> <p>This tool helps to reflect on the child's circumstances and will assist to put concerns into context and identify strengths and resources,</p> <p>The Neglect Toolkit can be used to inform decision making assessments and support planning.</p>
STRENGTHS AND DIFFICULTIES QUESTIONNAIRE	<p>Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) is a brief emotional and behavioural screening questionnaire for children and young people. SDQs capture the perspective of children and young people, their parents, education and health.</p> <p>SDQs support workers to understand emotional and behavioural needs of children and young people to ensure the right intervention and support can be put into place. For some children in care, the completion and regular review of their SDQ is a mandatory requirement.</p>
DASH ASSESSMENT	<p>DASH stands for domestic abuse, stalking and 'honour'-based violence. The purpose of the DASH risk checklist is to give a consistent and simple tool for practitioners who work with adult victims of domestic abuse in order to help them identify those who are at high risk of harm and whose cases should be referred to a Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) in order to manage their risk.</p> <p>The tool will help understand individual experiences and inform safety planning.</p>
CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION RISK ASSESSMENT	<p>Young Person's DASH assessment – a tool that is similar to the adult DASH but the terminology is more young people friendly and professional input and opinion can also be added.</p> <p>These are then used to improve personal safety of children and young people.</p>
CYCLE OF CHANGE	<p>The cycle of change addresses the readiness of the family to change and can assist with contingency planning.</p> <p>This enables individuals to reflect and measure any changes that are taking place to inform plans for children and young people.</p>

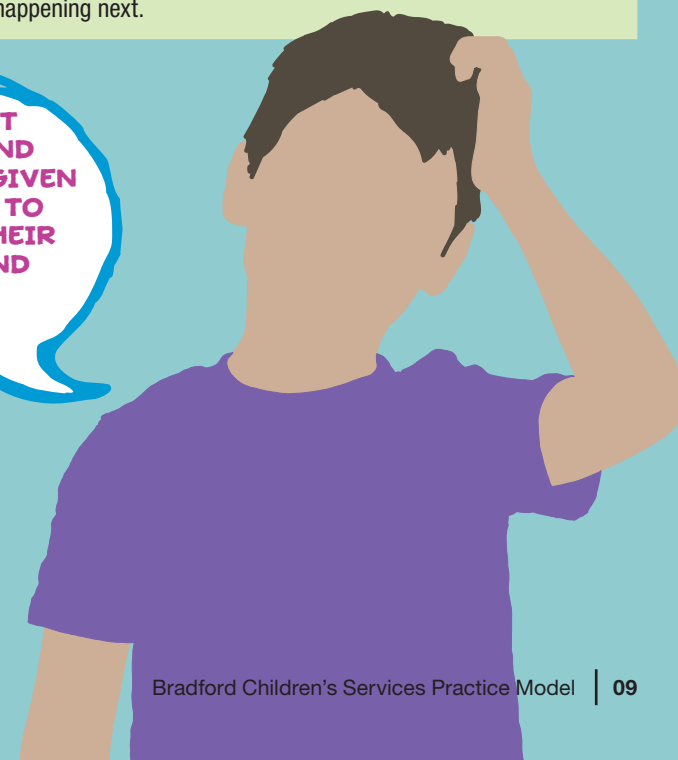
DIRECT WORK WITH CHILDREN

It is important that children and young people are given the opportunity to make sure that their voice, wishes and feelings are heard. This can be done in a number of ways and should be planned and completed in accordance with the child or young person's age, understanding and ability. Many different tools are available to enable staff to engage with children and young people positively so that they can contribute to what needs to happen. The following are core tools that form a key part of the Signs of Safety Framework. It is important to highlight and recognise that these tools will not always be applicable and that each tool used with child or young person should be reflective of age, individualised need and circumstances.

MANDATORY	WHAT IT IS AND WHEN TO USE IT
THREE HOUSES	<p>The child's views, wishes and feelings are explored with them using the three houses which captures the child's House of Good Things, House of Worries and House of Dreams. This approach mimics the three key assessment questions of the Signs of Safety Framework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are worried about? • What's working well? • What needs to happen? <p>This direct work tool helps to understand the child's judgement on where life is for them in an open and transparent manner. It is a good tool to capture the child's words and pictures to take back to parents and other professionals to see the situation from the child's perspective.</p>
THE SAFETY HOUSE	<p>The Safety House extends the 3 houses and visually engages children and young people in safety planning. The key elements are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What will life look like in the safety house and which people will live there? • Who the child thinks should visit and how they should be involved • People the child sees as unsafe • Rules of the Safety House <p>This direct work tool helps to understand how the child or young person feels the situation should be changed to support them to feel safe, understanding their safe people whilst contributing directly to the safety plan.</p>

MANDATORY	WHAT IT IS AND WHEN TO USE IT
FAIRY AND WIZARD TOOL	<p>The Fairy and Wizard are practical tools that ensure a child or young person is actively involved with and at the centre of the assessment and planning process.</p> <p>Like the three houses this mirrors the three key assessment questions of the Signs of Safety Framework. This is another format to capture the child's understanding of their world.</p> <p>This works well with younger children.</p>
WORDS AND PICTURES	<p>A method by which you help children and young people to understand what is happening, being clear about the child protection concerns in a way that is age appropriate. This is different to life story work and should be completed with the children and young people as issues/concerns arise.</p> <p>The explanation should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be balanced and not just focus on the negatives • be interspersed with meaningful positive events in the child's life that fit and add to the overall story • give age appropriate explanations without trivialising or minimising the seriousness of the child protection concerns. <p>When possible, the explanation should be completed with parents/carers so that everyone has an agreed shared understanding of what has happened and what will be happening next.</p>

‘IT IS IMPORTANT THAT CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE ARE GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE SURE THAT THEIR VOICE, WISHES AND FEELINGS ARE HEARD.’





DIRECT WORK WITH ADULTS (FAMILIES, PARENTS AND CARERS)

Effective work with the adults who impact on a child's life is at the core of good practice across all of our services. To conduct assessments, to plan and to intervene successfully, all practitioners need to be skilled in communicating and engaging with adults in order to provide a safe environment for a child or young person. It will also be important that we are able to understand and recognise the impact of trauma and adverse childhood experiences on parents and carers. As part of our work with the significant adults in a child or young person's life, practitioners will need to provide interventions that will include talking, listening, signposting, challenging views or approaches, advocacy and parenting support. Workers may need to engage additional, specific support services for adults including specialist assessment or therapy or via a range of accredited parenting programmes that are delivered within the service and by partner agencies. Having an understanding of what local services are available and what our communities need will be critical to providing effective interventions at different levels of need.

CORE TRAINING, LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

To deliver the practice model, all practitioners who work directly with children, young people and their families will be supported with their learning and development to enable this approach to be at the core of their work. This will support a consistent approach across all services that enable the child or young person to be central to decision making and planning. Ongoing training and development will be provided for experienced staff. The exact training that is provided to staff will depend on their individual or service specialisms, roles and responsibilities.



This will be underpinned further by supervision that offers high support and high challenge. Supervision will be reflective and restorative, building relationships between practitioners, colleagues and managers. This will allow for individuals to be supported with their resilience and professional confidence to allow them to be best placed to meet the needs of children and young people and their families.

CORE LEARNING

WHAT IS IT?

SIGNS OF SAFETY TRAINING

All practitioners who work directly with children, young people and families will receive this training. Understand the key principles of signs of safety including overview of the direct work tools alongside building and understanding family networks and community.

TRAUMA INFORMED PRACTICE TRAINING

All practitioners who work directly with children, young people and families will receive this training. Understand the key principles of trauma informed practice, recognising the impact of early experiences on the lives of the individuals we work with and understanding how this impacts on their behaviour and beliefs.

ASSESSMENT AND RISK

All practitioners will develop confidence in recognising and assessing risk factors identified in the child's circumstances or environment. Assessments will analyse the risk and consider the impact on the child and others, to enable the development of appropriate interventions to keep individuals safe. Practitioners will receive different training based on their specific roles and responsibilities and the type of assessments that they need to undertake.

CASE MANAGEMENT

Understand why and how good case management prevents drift and delay for children and young people and leads to good decision making based in evidence.

WORKING WITH ADULTS

All practitioners who work with adults within families will learn effective tools that build respectful relationships with adults and facilitate positive change and will understand that working alongside families is paramount when working with strength based models. This will vary dependent on the roles and responsibilities of individual parts of the service; for example within the early help arena practitioners will receive training to deliver accredited parenting programmes.

WORKING WITH CHILDREN

All practitioners who work directly with children will receive training in how to work with children and build relationships so that there is a good understanding of their daily lives and what they think about this and what they want to happen to make things better. Develop confidence in using different direct work tools to have conversations with children to understand the impact of their experiences. Practitioners who work in specialised fields may receive additional training dependent on their role; for example people who work in the YJS and people who work primarily with disabled children.

This leaflet is available in other formats such as large print or braille. For more information call 01274 435600.