

To: **Gail Hancock**  
**Interim Director for Children's Safeguarding and Care**  
Shire Hall  
Westgate Street  
Gloucester,  
GL1 2TG  
email: [gail.hancock@gloucestershire.gov.uk](mailto:gail.hancock@gloucestershire.gov.uk)

Please ask for: Gail Hancock

Phone: 01452 425775

Our Ref: GH/dh

Your Ref:

Date: 19<sup>th</sup> May 2020

Dear Colleagues

**Re: Launch of GCC Children's Services 'Practice Fundamentals'**

Today, we are launching the GCC Children's Services Practice Fundamentals across our department. There are four key points to be aware of in relation to these Fundamentals:

- Provenance
- Purpose
- Connectivity
- Sustainability

**1. Provenance:**

Research indicates that on an improvement journey to becoming a 'Good' or 'Outstanding' local authority, the starting and finishing points should be firmly fixed on the basics of our practice. In Gloucestershire we have drawn these basics together into our 'Practice Fundamentals' which is attached for you to see. The Practice Fundamentals have been compiled from: GCC's Practice Standards (which are drawn from national best practice, Ofsted guidance and local learning); from the Essentials Programme principles; the Post-Qualifying Statements (the KSS from the DfE/NAAS); our Performance and Quality Assurance frameworks; and our improvement lessons.

**2. Purpose:**

As the Practice Fundamentals are the 'bottom-lines' or 'givens' of our professional practice, the attached has been designed as a simple tool, or aide memoire, for us to compare our practice against to ensure that we are meeting the expectations of the profession and delivering good social work with local children, young people and families. As we deliver work directly with children and families, arrive at decisions, and finalise our recording, we become individually and collectively accountable for it. As accountable professionals we will ensure that we are meeting these Practice Fundamentals in pursuit of good outcomes for children, young people and families. Until our work meets these expectations we should not be signing it off and putting our name, and the name of Gloucestershire County Council, to it.

**3. Connectivity:**

The Practice Fundamentals will be a central point of focus. As such, they connect to local initiatives like 'Language that Cares', the development and delivery of future Academy learning, the

new Essentials 3.0 Programme which is being developed and the actions arising from GSCE Serious Case Reviews. We encourage their use in supervision as we reflect on our practice, and will connect future thematic Quality Assurance activity to them. They should be the touchstone that our work keeps coming back to.

#### **4. Sustainability:**

As mentioned above, the basics of our practice remain the focus for improving authorities even when they are rated 'Good' and 'Outstanding'. The Practice Fundamentals will therefore remain a priority in GCC for many years to come. They are already woven throughout our revised improvement planning activity, and will be pivotal within our Continuing Professional Development and career progression routes.

When you receive this letter, please take the time to read and reflect on the detail of the Practice Fundamentals. Discuss them with your colleagues in team meetings and with your supervisor in 1:1 supervision. We will be producing the Practice Fundamentals in a similar format to the Essentials Programme Tools as we know from staff feedback that this is helpful. In the meantime, whilst most of us continue to work remotely, please save or print the attached copy of the Practice Fundamentals and keep it somewhere handy for you to refer to. All the key messages have been brought together in one place so that everyone is able to work together to improve the quality of our practice.

Please use the Practice Fundamentals Tool to control and assure the quality of your practice when you are visiting children and families and undertaking direct work, when you are assessing needs, risks and circumstances, planning and reviewing support and intervention and recording what you have done as well to support supervision and management oversight. Remember - if your practice or the practice of someone you supervise doesn't reflect the Practice Fundamentals - go back, make changes and improve it until it does.

We are really excited by the publication of these Practice Fundamentals as they represent a simple and easy to access reference point for so much of what we do. We look forward to hearing from you about how you are using them in your practice, and in seeing their impact on improving outcomes for children and young people as we strive to deliver better social work practice every day.

Kind regards



Gail Hancock

**Interim Director for Children's Safeguarding & Care**