

Relationships First Practice Model & Practice Standards



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Bitesize Workshop

- Our ongoing improvement journey
- Relationships First – Our Practice Model
- Practice Standards



Our Journey So Far...

2017
Introduction of
Signs of Safety

Signs of Safety
becomes embedded
within our practice

2022
Start of Trauma
Informed Training

Family
Seeing

2023
Blended Practice
Homework

Creation of Our
Bridge of Practice
Model

You Said,
We Did.

Family Time development
and staff focus groups

Launch of Pre-Birth
& SAFE teams

Creation of new
'Relationships First'
Practice Model to support
our vision of:
*Relationships that
Connect; Building our
Communities*

November 2023
New Practice Model,
Practice Standards
& Illustration

November 2023
Assessment Guidance
Toolkit Launched

May 2023
Staff Event

Consultation with
Have Your Say Group &
staff



Continuing Our Journey

&
exploring
other
streams

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Relationships First – Our Practice Model

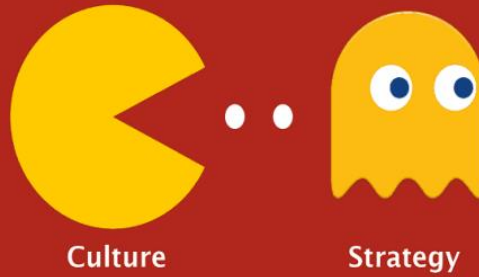


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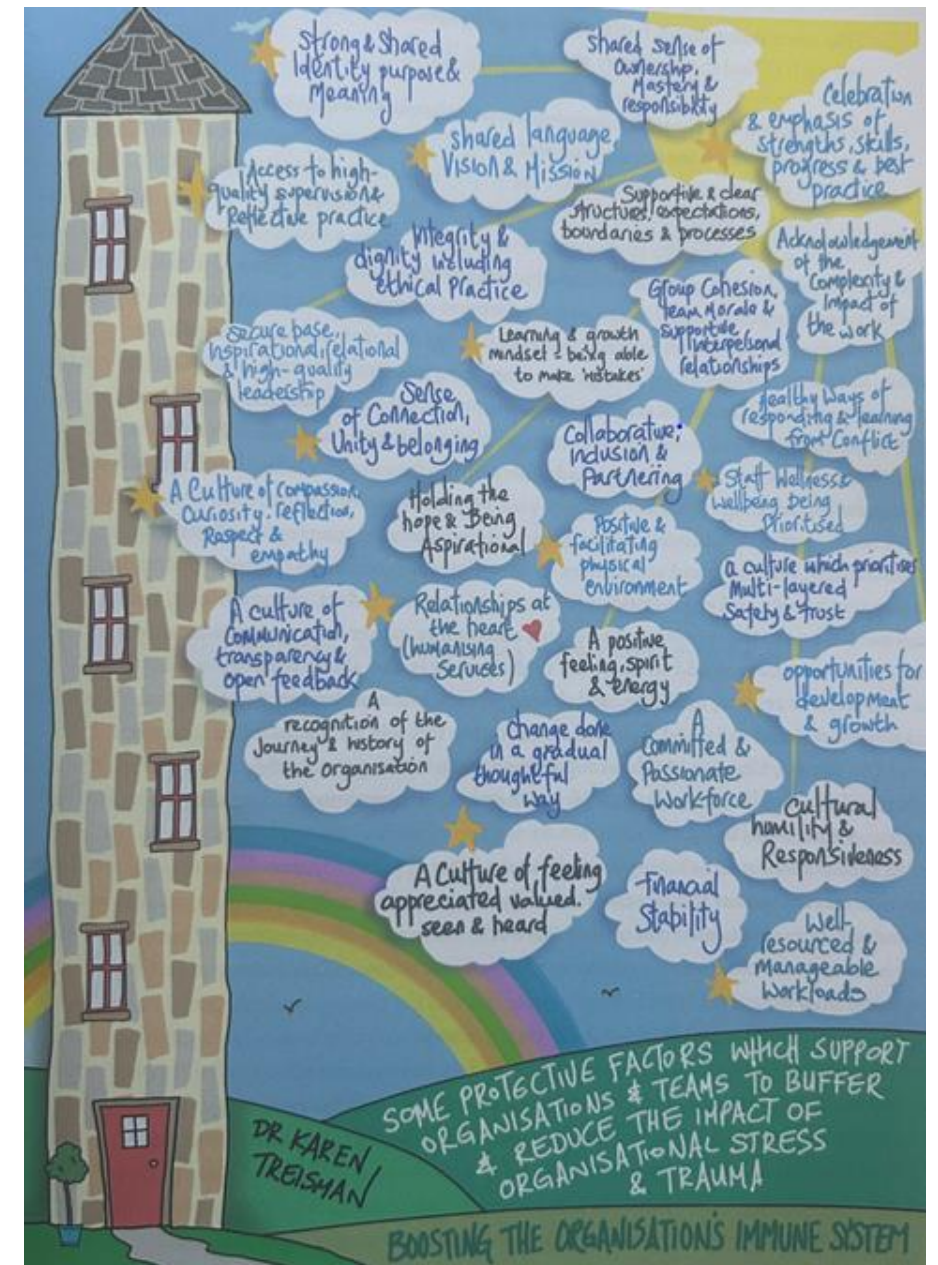
HOW DO WE WANT PEOPLE TO FEEL WHEN WORKING IN OUR ORGANISATION / USING THE SERVICES WE PROVIDE?

WHAT MESSAGES & VALUES DO WE WANT PEOPLE TO READ / FEEL / HEAR / NOTICE?

Organizational culture eats strategy for breakfast, lunch and dinner



WORDS CREATE WORLDS
the language we use shapes
the culture we lead



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Blended practice model / Bridge of Practice homework, January 2023

Everyone attending thought **'relationships'** were key, be that relationships we have with each other, relationships with partner agencies or with the children, young people and their families that we seek to support.



Sector Led Improvement Staff Engagement Event, May 2023



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Relationships First

Relationships that **C**onnect; **B**uilding our **C**ommunities

Our Mission: When the people that love and care for you are having difficulties, we support them to keep you safe and make changes that last. If they can't, even when we and the people in your life that love you have given your carers all the help we can, we will work to put in plans so that you are loved, happy, safe and supported.

Systemic

This means that we think about individuals and understand difficulties in the context of their relationships and connection within the world that they live. We work in a relational way recognising the strengths and stories of others. We understand that we are unlikely to create sustained change without a relationship with the child and their family, and without their support. We value the relationship that we have with others – children and young people, their families and our colleagues. We build relationships first. We put relationships first.

Signs of Safety, Wellbeing & Success

Trauma informed

Family Focused

Voice of the child / young person

Relationships, Networks & Communities

Assessment of Need

Planning and review to achieve outcomes

Management and oversight

Manage risk with safe uncertainty

Use restorative interventions that protect and heal

Make lasting change

Children have safe and loving homes

Nurture lifelong relationships and connections

Curiosity

Compassion

Creativity

Commitment

Collaboration

Child-centred

1 guiding principle

3 Strengths based approaches

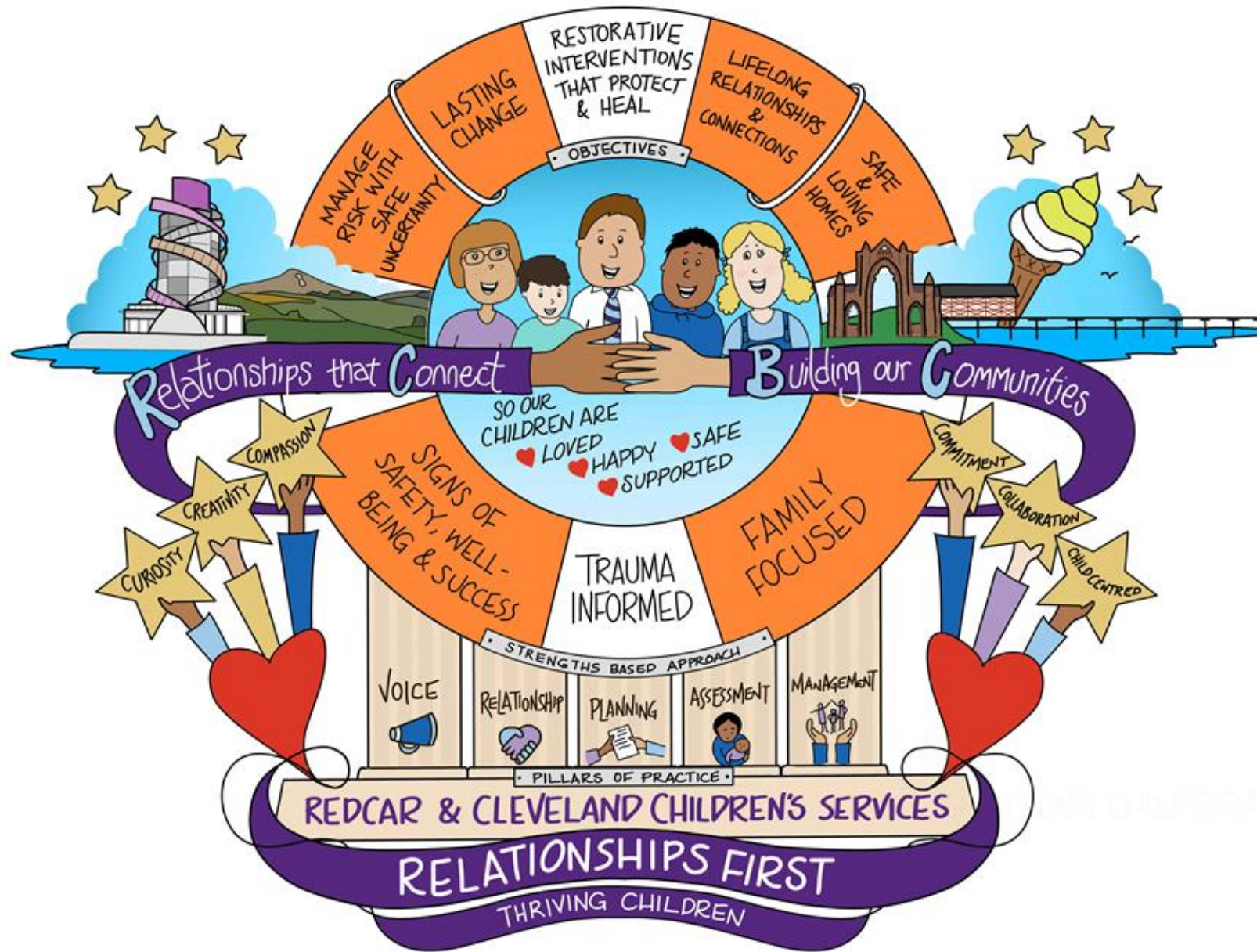
5 Pillars of Practice

5 Objectives

6 Values



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Strengths-based approaches



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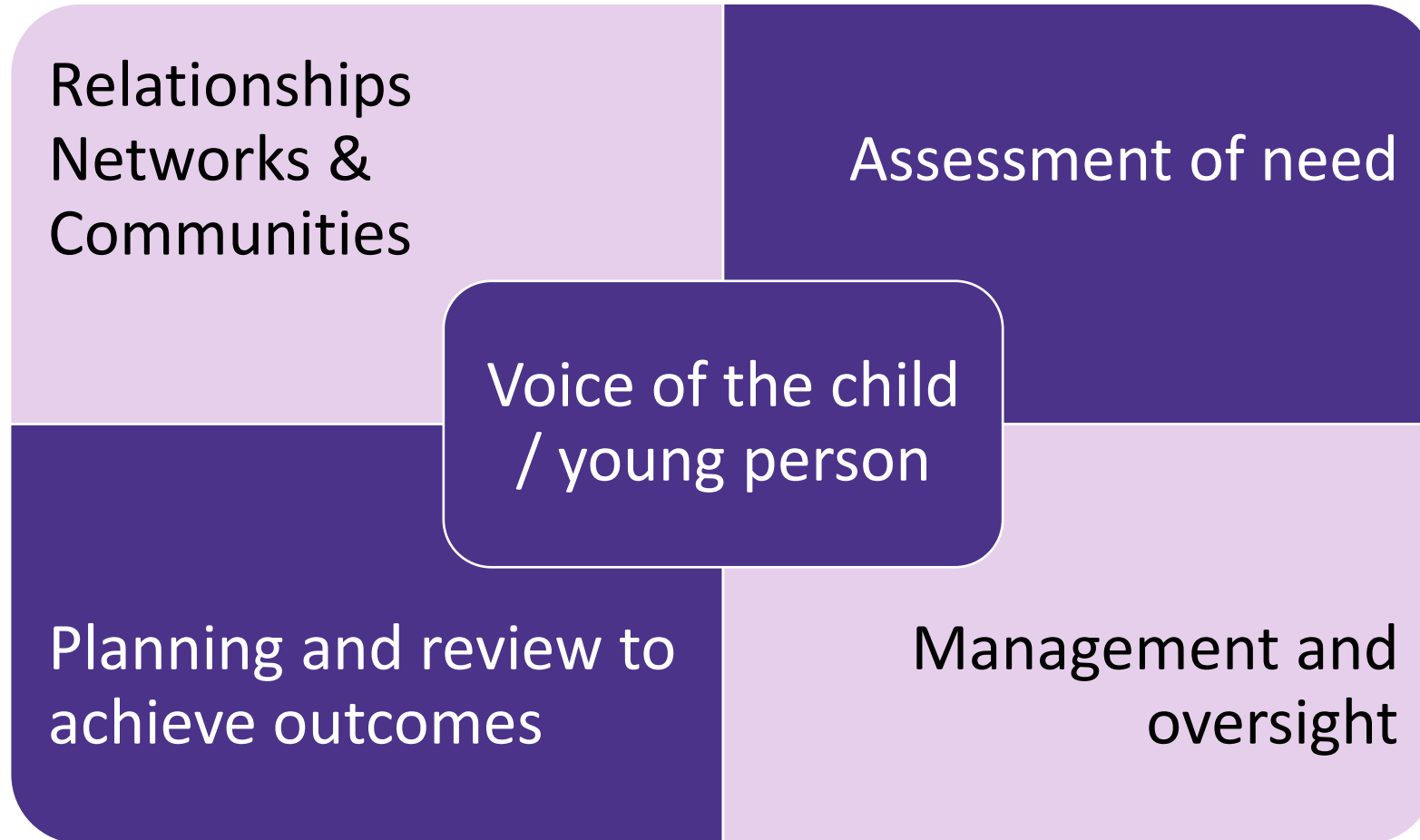
Objectives

- **Manage risk with safe uncertainty**
- **Use restorative interventions that protect and heal**
- **Make lasting change**
- **Safe and loving homes for children**
- **Nurture lifelong relationships and connections**



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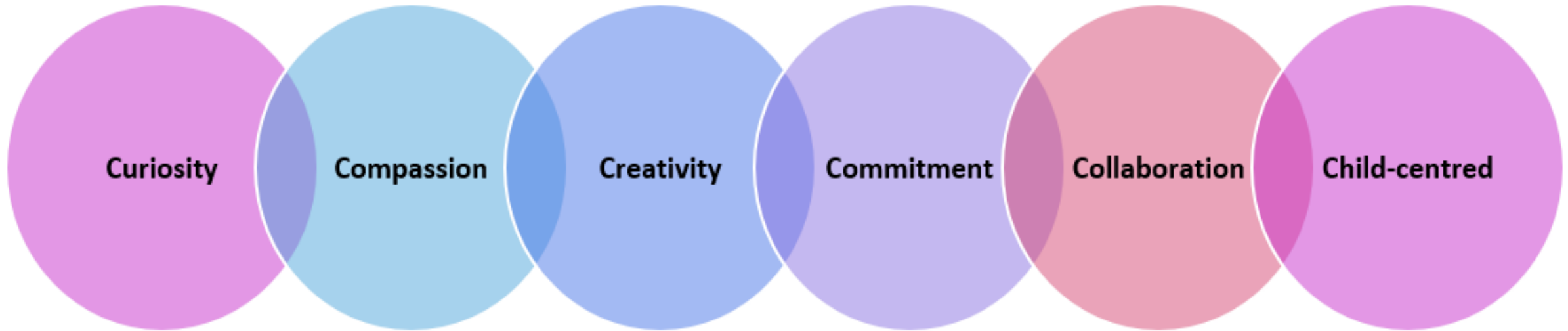
Pillars of Practice



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Values – the 6 C's



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Our values

Curiosity	Compassion	Collaboration
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exploring what is happening by observing, listening, asking questions, checking out, reflecting, and having brave and challenging conversations. Taking account of changing information and different perspectives. Maintaining an open mind, seeing past the obvious, not accepting things at face value. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connecting and engaging with a person beyond the symptom, behaviour, label or crisis. Allowing people to feel seen, heard, noticed, valued, listened to, important; that they matter and that we care. Working with empathy and kindness, putting thought into our actions to build relationships. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working ‘with’ not to doing things ‘for’ or ‘to.’ Recognising and developing strengths in children and families, and in our colleagues. Utilising their expertise and resources to make things better. Having respectful, open and trusting relationships that make change possible.
Creativity	Commitment	Child-centred
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Being bold and ambitious, embracing change and looking for better ways to deliver our services. Building and sharing new skills to create services that suit the needs of each child and family. Innovating and trying new things not just doing what we’ve always done if it isn’t getting the results our children deserve. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sticking with children and families, especially when things are at their most worrying. Doing what we have said we will, and giving people our full attention and help when they need it most. Striving to do and be our best and bring out the best in others by reflecting, adapting, and developing our skills, knowledge and practice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding the child’s life, allowing them to be heard and responding to their views and feelings. Recognising that children need to be loved by a network of trusted people around them. Safety and needs of the child come first; progress is measured by the difference made for the child.

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Our Practice Standards



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What are Practice Standards?

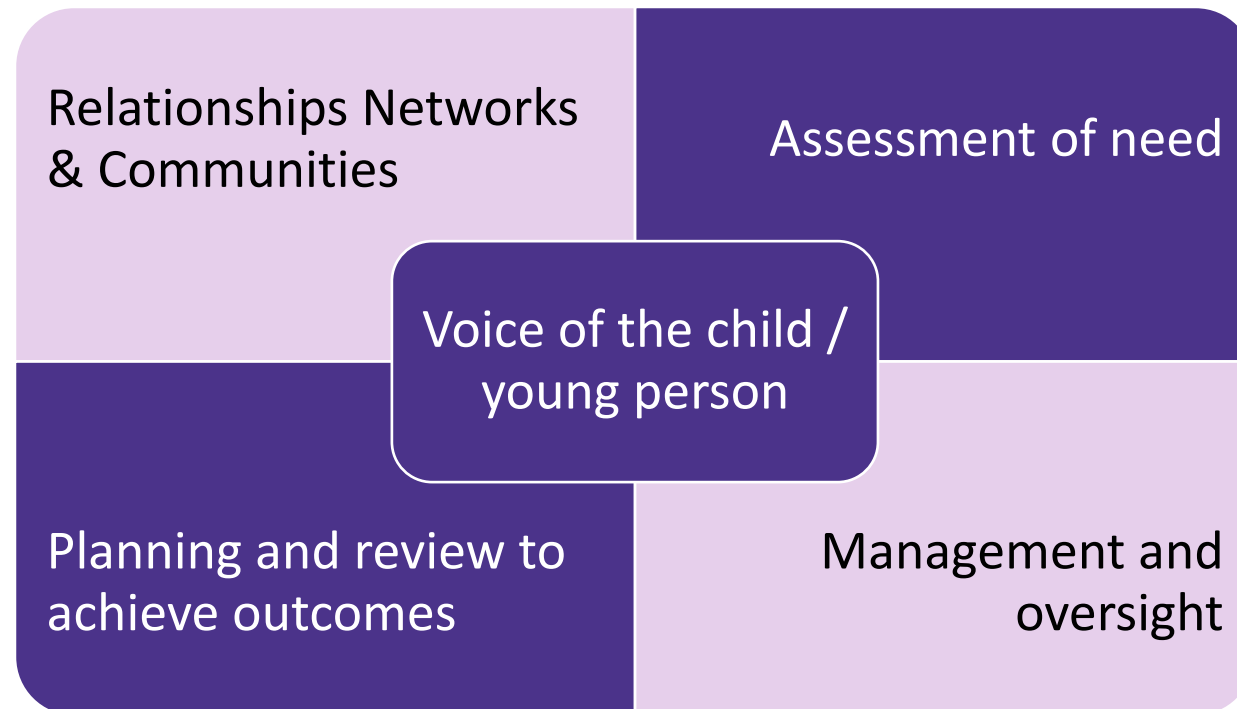


- A way to make sure that the children and families that we work with receive consistent, high-quality support that is respected and valued.
- Descriptions of our practice and what children, young people and their families can expect when we are supporting them.
- Measures of our practice, and our bottom line / minimum expectation
- Expectations for working in children's social care and early help based on statutory guidance and legislation; Ofsted grade descriptors; evidence-based practice research; and professional capabilities framework



Pillars of Practice

Our Practice Standards are aligned with our Five Pillars of Practice



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Practice Standards – Descriptors & Measures

What this means for our practice

We are Family Focussed

- We always presume that there is a family or network, and they can be found if we try.
- We complete genograms because this is the first step to establishing the support network. We keep the relationships section on the child’s record up to date. Every child has a genogram on their file.
 - Our recordings clearly show who is connected and important to the child or young person.
 - We use tools such as safety circles / ecomaps / This is Me and the family/friend tree to help identify who can be part of the child’s network and plans.
 - We recognise the unique strengths, abilities and things that people connected to the child have and the part that they can play. We support them to play whatever part they can in the child’s life, not merely when they are able to provide the support we may need them to.

What this means for our practice

Responsibility

Family network meetings

We hold a family network meeting **within 10 days** of a child or young person being opened to children’s social care; and is considered within early help dependent on the type of support offered.

We will hold family network meetings at relevant points throughout our involvement and invite the family network to multi-agency meetings we hold.

Allocated practitioner and Team Manager



Voice of the child / young person

What can be learned through direct work or achieved during a home visit cannot be underestimated. A child's voice is often the key that opens the door of our understanding and is a powerful catalyst for change. The engagement of all our senses in home visits, including what we see, hear, smell and feel within the child's surroundings is an essential aspect of our practice and provides the greatest insight into what it is like to live in the child's world.

Children and young people must have ownership and be able to influence the assessments of their needs, the plans that are made for them, and the support that they receive. It is through the relationship we build with a child or young person that we will best develop an understanding of their world, and the difference that has been made.

- We seek and respond to children's wishes and feelings
- We develop a multi-sensory understanding of a child's world through visits to their home
- We ensure that children and young people have all the information that they need so they can make their voice heard



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Relationships, Networks & Communities

Collaborative relationships with children their families and other professionals working them is the bedrock of effective practice in responding to situations where children suffer abuse. If we are going to make a real difference, and one that lasts, we need to do the work together with children and families. Every contact is an intervention, and an opportunity to create connection and change with a family.

Research suggests that having a network of extended family, friends and other professionals who would like a person to succeed can help maximise the effectiveness of professional intervention. To establish a permanent naturally connected support network around a child, we need to work with and not do to. When we are family focussed and involve everyone that is linked and important to the child, there is the opportunity to break secrecy and shame, build lasting safety, provide healing and develop lifelong connections.

- We are family focused
- We promote a clear and shared understanding of worries, and recognition of strengths
- We work “with” and don’t “do to”
- We support lifelong connections



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Assessment of Need

Assessment is how we make sense of complex and difficult situations, and through that understanding, find ways to navigate towards solutions. Assessments help us to understand, analyse and record what is happening for children and young people within their families and the wider context of the community in which they live. Assessments represent our best understanding of the child's needs, and whether they are in need or likely to suffer significant harm. The decisions that are made within the assessments we complete can have an enormous impact on the lives of children, young people and their families.

We approach assessments with curiosity and honesty. We think critically and help families to think their way into and through worries and concerns, and to identify their strengths, successes and solutions. We ensure that a child's needs are assessed holistically, taking into account the views of the child and the people in their life that love and care for them. We consider a range of factors that impact on a child's wellbeing, including the child's developmental needs; parenting capacity; and the family and environmental factors that affect a child's identity.

- Assessments are dynamic, timely and proportionate to risk
- Assessments are holistic, strengths based, outline risk and consider cumulative harm
- Assessments are analytical and focused on the impact for the child
- We are curious and operate with safe uncertainty



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Planning and Review to Achieve Outcomes

Our practice and the plans we develop are built on the belief that children and families have the right to be together whenever this can be achieved safely. Effective planning helps us answer the most challenging of questions: what do we need to do and see to be satisfied that the child or young person is safe, their needs are being met and they no longer need our help because they are not at risk of harm?

To achieve the best possible outcomes we involve the child, their family and safety network as soon as possible in our work with them. We are honest about what we are worried about and work together to outline what needs to change. We develop plans together with children, young people and their family and professional network and identify how we can work together to make things better through clear actions. Planning in this way means that within our practice, even during difficult times, we are respectful, family focussed, strengths based, transparent and directed by the needs of child and their family.

- Plans have impact and deliver outcomes
- Plans are informed by analysis and the views, wishes and goals of the child and their family
- Relationships are at the heart of all plans
- Plans are clear, effective and shared
- Plans are regularly reviewed to ensure progress and safety



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Management and Oversight of Practice

Social work and early help are relational and caring roles; practitioners feel deeply about the children and families that they support. The work that we do is seeped and soaked in trauma; the lives of the people that we work with are complex, and the work is sometimes distressing. We are mindful of secondary trauma; that the story of children and families we work with can become our story. Good supervision is fundamental to good practice, and is critical in supporting us to be a truly trauma informed and responsive workforce.

Staff are empowered to develop their professional skills and expertise; to and be accountable for their own practice, seeking guidance and support when they need it; and delivery of kind, responsive and purposeful support for children and families. Children, young people, and their families benefit from rigorous management and oversight so that we remain focussed on the child and their needs; the impact of our involvement; and timely decisions about what we need to do next.

- Children and families are supported by suitably skilled practitioners
- Children, young people and their families benefit from consistent practice and robust management and oversight of the support we give
- Professional / personal supervision provides a safe space to think, reflect, learn and develop
- Managers lead by example and cultivate an atmosphere that is supportive, draws on the professional strengths of all staff and is focused on continuous improvement



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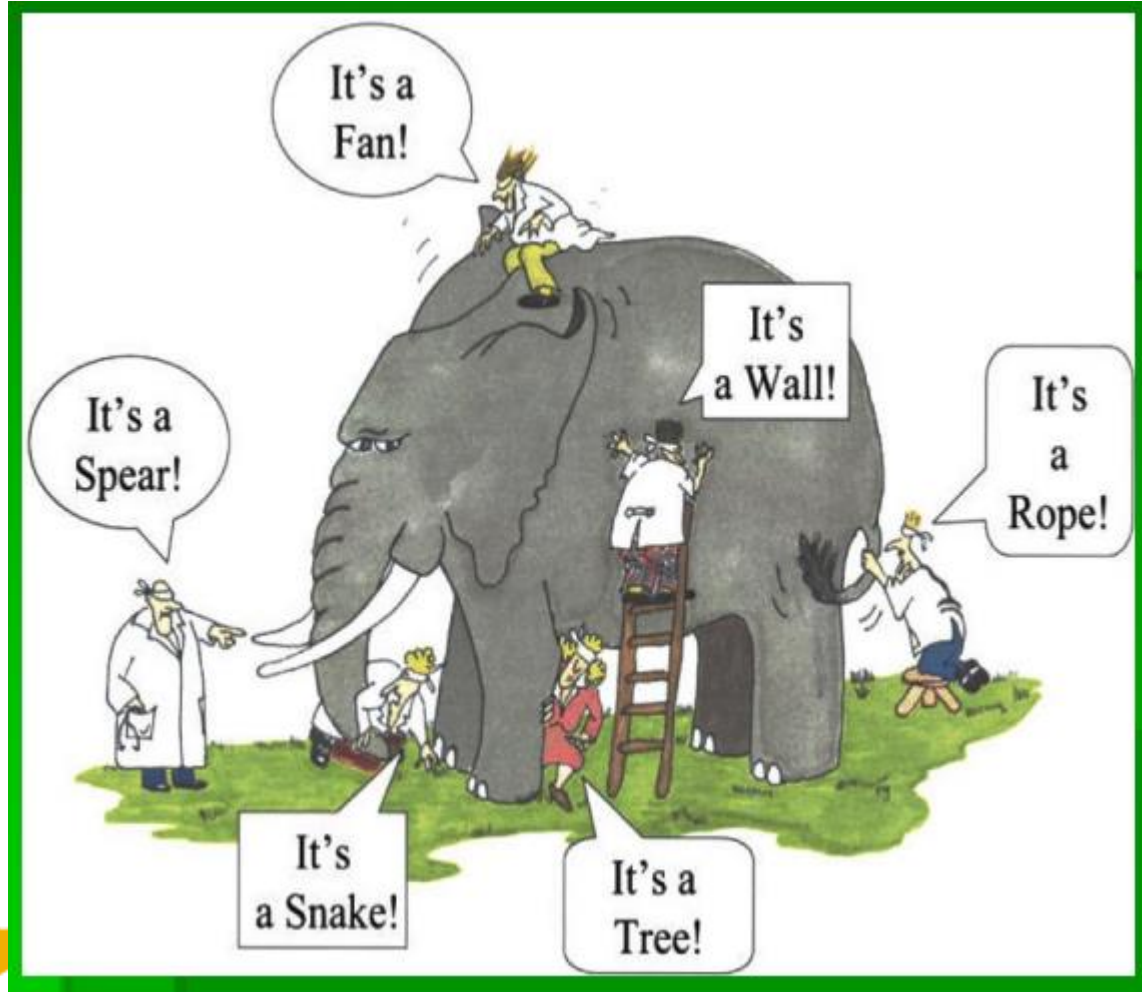
You are accountable for your own practice, and delivery of kind, responsive and purposeful support for children and families.

It is important that you understand and commit to the practice standards in your everyday practice.



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Some final thoughts...



*I've learned that
people will forget
what you said,
people will forget
what you did,
but people will
never forget how
you made them feel.*



Maya Angelou



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**THANK
YOU
AND
ANY
QUESTIONS**



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