

Quality Practice Standards

Operational from: Jan 2014

Version Number: 1.2

Agreed by: CYPS Policies and Procedures Group

Responsible Service Area/Team: Commissioning & Partnerships

Review date: December 2027

Document Summary

The Suffolk Quality Practice Standards define good practice and make explicit what is expected when providing a service to vulnerable children, young people and families. They are based on evidence about the elements of practice which are likely to lead to quality services and positive outcomes. They are intended to be used for all aspects of Quality Assurance including audit, supervision, case reviews and customer feedback. These Standards apply equally to internal and commissioned services of Suffolk County Council.

We will on request produce this policy, or parts of it, into other languages and formats, in order that everyone can use and comment upon its content.

| Review Date: | | |
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| Version Control | Reason for revision and summary of changes needed | Date |
| 1.1 | Updated to reflect Signs of Safety practice model | June 2018 |
| 1.2 | Updated to reflect changes in SoS+ Practice framework and Children's Social Care National Framework and include reference to other practice standards relevant to various parts of the service. | November 2024 |

The Suffolk Quality Practice Standards define good practice and make explicit what is expected when providing a service to vulnerable children, young people and families. They are underpinned by the four outcomes set out in the Children's Social Care National Framework:

Outcome 1: Children, young people and families stay together and get the help they need

Outcome 2: Children and young people are supported by their family network

Outcome 3: Children and young people are safe in and outside of their home

Outcome 4: Children in care and care leavers have stable, loving homes

The Practice Standards are based on evidence about the elements of practice which are likely to lead to quality services and positive outcomes. They are intended to be used for all aspects of Quality Assurance including audit, supervision, case reviews and customer feedback. These Standards apply equally to internal and commissioned services of Suffolk County Council.

- Each Standard includes a statement which describes the criteria which can be used to evaluate how the standard has been met.
- There is an expectation that services provided to children and their families will always be outcome focused - the positive effect on the wellbeing and safety of the child or young person.
- Children, young people and families must know what they can expect from any service. Services must be clear about their expectations of the people they work with – 'Our Promise' to children & young people.
- These standards reflect the core purpose of Children and Young People Services – ensuring safety, well-being, learning and successful preparation for adulthood and employment.
- They reflect the WE ASPIRE values of Suffolk County Council –Wellbeing, Equality, Achieve, Support; Pride; Innovate; Respect and Empower
- They include the principles and disciplines of the Suffolk Signs of Safety Trauma Informed and Restorative (SoS+) practice framework - fostering constructive and respectful working relationships, adopting a critically reflective questioning approach to practice, acknowledging the unique lived experiences of individuals and how these impacts on functioning and engagement with services, and finding out what families and practitioners say works and using this knowledge to develop practice.
- There is an expectation that all SCC staff and commissioned services promote and follow these standards when commissioning and delivering services

Standards overview:

1. Children & young people's welfare and best interests are of primary consideration.
2. Services are delivered in partnership with the child. Their wishes and feelings are sought, heard and responded to.
3. Work is carried out in partnership with parents, carers and family networks to enable them to meet their responsibilities and to achieve enduring outcomes.
4. Work with children & families is underpinned by joint working between agencies, to effectively identify and meet the needs of children, young people and families.
5. Services to children & young people are undertaken within the legislative & regulatory framework.
6. Services provided to children, young people, parents & carers are fair and accessible to everyone.
7. Work with children & young people is managed and supervised to achieve the best possible outcomes.

Standard 1 Children and young people's welfare and best interests are of primary consideration

- 1.1 Safeguarding children from harm in and outside of their home is a primary goal for services.
- 1.2 Children's needs are identified and assessed using the agreed procedures, practice tools and frameworks.
- 1.3 Decisions about the help, protection and care for children are always made in their best interests.
- 1.4 Decisions about best ways to safeguard a young person will consider and balance the need to ensure their physical and personal safety as well as the particularities of their individual needs, developmental stage, their capacity to make decisions, their capabilities, and the need to learn from own experiences.
- 1.5 Children's self-esteem and resilience are recognised as essential to their development and they are supported to achieve their potential in all areas of their lives.
- 1.6 Children's rights are actively promoted and advocated, their views respected and accounted for.
- 1.7 Plans will be focussed on improving outcomes and the child's daily lived experience. Plans will be smart and accessible.
- 1.8 Intervention is timely and responsive to risk and need.
- 1.9 Any changes in service provision must take account of the impact upon children and those who care for them.

Standard 2 Services are delivered in partnership with the child. Their wishes and feelings are sought, heard and responded to.

- 2.1 Developing effective relationships with the child is at the centre of our practice. Children are listened to, and their wishes and feelings are heard and considered when planning the provision of services. Practice is focussed on their experiences.
- 2.2 Children and young people are seen (alone when appropriate) observed and communicated with according to their developmental need and in accordance with the plans for them. Their views are accurately recorded.
- 2.3 Children and young people will be involved and engaged in the development of their own plans and reviews.
- 2.4 Advocacy, advice and assistance is made available to support children in any representation they may wish to make.
- 2.5 Assessment, planning and interventions with children and young people take into consideration their age, language & any specific needs/disability, including any needs associated with neurodivergence, as well as their religion, culture and identity.
- 2.6 Children and young people's hopes and aspirations are understood and used to shape individual support.

Standard 3 Work is carried out in partnership with parents, carers, and family networks to enable them to meet their responsibilities and achieve enduring outcomes.

- 3.1 Planning and decision making promote the child's upbringing within their family and community networks, wherever possible.
- 3.2 Parents and carers and, when appropriate, any other significant people from the child's network, are engaged in assessment, planning, implementation, review, and ending a service.
- 3.3 Work is undertaken with a reflective, questioning approach, which aims to identify and strengthen what works for families and where they 'need to be'.
- 3.4 Communication with parents/carers/family networks promotes their engagement in the planning and shaping of service delivery.
- 3.5 Parents and carers are advised clearly about concerns and what needs to change to keep their child safe.
- 3.6 Safety goals/planned outcomes are agreed with families and carers.
- 3.7 Where conflict is identified, this is mediated and managed to minimise adverse impact on the child's life.
- 3.8 Children are supported to maintain relationships with their families and communities wherever possible.

- 3.9 Services planned for children and young people utilise the resources of the wider family network and communities.
- 3.10 Recording is up to date and demonstrates the purpose and outcome of each contact and uses language that children and families understand. The language used in recording is meaningful and inclusive of all children, young people and families, remembering to not make anyone feel uncomfortable and / or stigmatised.
- 3.11 Assessments, plans and reviews are recorded and shared with parents / carers and other relevant professionals in accordance with agreed timescales and procedures.

Standard 4 Work with children and families is underpinned by joint working between agencies, to effectively identify and meet the needs of children, young people and families.

- 4.1 Assessments, plans and reviews take full account of the information and professional opinions provided by agencies that know the child. Agencies working with the child / young person will keep each other informed of any decisions made with the child or young person.
- 4.2 All agencies share responsibility for achieving the best possible outcomes for children; we will work collaboratively with partners to ensure that these outcomes are met.
- 4.3 Working relationships with partner agencies are mutually respectful and active steps are taken to resolve conflicts or difficulties should they arise.
- 4.4 We work together with agencies to provide services and information that are effective in supporting the child's journey within the optimum time framework for the child. 'One family one worker, one family one plan'.

Standard 5 Services to children and young people are undertaken within the legislative and regulatory framework

- 5.1 Work follows legislation and statutory requirements, making use, where required, of statutory powers to support good outcomes for children.
- 5.2 Work gives due regard to nationally agreed good practice standards and relevant government guidance.
- 5.3 Work is in accordance with the principles of 'best value'.
- 5.4 Work is informed by the best evidence available and will contribute towards self-evaluation and internal inspection.
- 5.5 Communication with partner agencies is clear, timely and proportionate to the child's needs. This will include a commitment to share information according to the Council's Privacy Notices. Details of these Privacy Notices can be found on the Council's website at [Privacy notice - Suffolk County Council](#).

5.6 Any information about children and young people is written, stored and shared in accordance with Data Protection and Information Sharing protocols.

5.7 Recording is concise, analytical and distinguishes between fact and professional opinion. It is accurate and complete to enable service planning and demonstrate the decision-making process and to meet the requirements of performance measurement and data monitoring.

Standard 6 Services provided to children, young people, parents and carers are fair and accessible to all.

6.1 All work with children and young people seeks to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality
- Develop good relations between communities, challenging prejudice and promoting understanding

6.2 Services challenge the impact of social disadvantage in neighbourhoods, schools, networks, and communities.

6.3 Services advocate with and on behalf of children, parents and carers, to enable them to access sources of support within the community.

6.4 Services actively enable children, parents and carers to address and overcome social exclusion.

6.5 Services given to children, young people and families are responsive to their cultural, language & equality needs.

6.6 Services given to children, young people and families seek to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics and take steps to meet the needs of people, where these are different from the needs of other people.

Standard 7 Work with children is managed and supervised to achieve the best possible outcomes

7.1 Work is allocated to suitably trained and qualified staff, who fully understand the task and have the capacity to undertake it.

7.2 Members of staff are supported to improve outcomes for children and young people through rigorous performance management.

- 7.3 Managers use the required systems to ensure that children receive a timely and appropriate service.
- 7.4 Regular individual, group/peer supervision takes place; this promotes an enquiring, scrutinizing and reflective approach to work with children and their families. Individual supervision records are kept up to date and accurate.
- 7.5 Management accountability and decision making is evidenced at all stages of work with the child, from referral to closure.
- 7.6 Managers audit case records as required, and action taken where necessary.
- 7.7 All managers promote opportunities for learning and developmental strategies. Staff take advantage of professional development opportunities.

Further information:

Children's social care: national framework, statutory guidance - [Children's social care: national framework - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/childrens-social-care-national-framework)

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023, statutory guidance - [Working together to safeguard children 2023: statutory guidance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children-2023)

Health and Wellbeing Suffolk, 'Preparing for the Future – Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022-2027' - [Health and Wellbeing Strategy 22-27 \(healthysuffolk.org.uk\)](https://healthysuffolk.org.uk/health-and-wellbeing-strategy-2022-2027)

A Guide to Child First – Youth Justice Board for England and Wales (October 2022) - [PowerPoint Presentation \(yjresourcehub.uk\)](https://yjrsourcehub.uk/)

'The Source' – Information, Advice for Young People in Suffolk:
<http://www.thesource.me.uk>;

Suffolk's Local Safeguarding Partnership: [Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership \(suffolksp.org.uk\)](https://suffolksp.org.uk)

[Suffolk Anti Discrimination and Anti Racist Practice Standards.docx \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

Data Protection - [Privacy and data protection - Suffolk County Council](#)

Care Quality Commission - [Single assessment framework - Care Quality Commission \(cqc.org.uk\)](https://www.cqc.org.uk)

The Nursing and Midwifery Council - [The Code: Professional standards of practice and behaviour for nurses, midwives and nursing associates - The Nursing and Midwifery Council \(nmc.org.uk\)](https://www.nmc.org.uk)

The standards of proficiency for practitioner psychologists <https://www.hcpc.org.uk/standards/standards-of-proficiency/practitioner-psychologists/>