

How we practice in Children's Services

Lancashire County Council's practice approach in Children's Services, March 2019

'Children, young people and their families are safe, healthy and achieve their full potential'.

Lancashire

County
Council



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Good social work and support to families changes lives

Social work and support to families is delivered by a professional workforce with a strong value-base. We build relationships to enable and support change for families focused on children and young people's safety and wellbeing.

We take a strengths-based approach to our work, focusing on the strengths as well as difficulties for families, working in genuine partnership, co-producing plans and services.

At its heart it is about building positive, trusting relationships that support families to develop sustainable solutions to their challenges. The positive relationships we build enable families to lead and shape their lives with the least amount of statutory involvement.

Seeking permanent solutions

At every stage we engage families, their friends, kinship network and the professionals around them and actively seek family-based solutions. Our approach aims to achieve early permanence for children, wherever possible within their own family, by ensuring early support is provided at the right time to prevent statutory involvement. Our focus is to achieve lasting and sustainable outcomes for children, young people and their families and we will only bring children into our care when it is in their best interests and they cannot safely remain within their family.

Strengths-Based Approach

We are committed to building a skilled workforce able to engage with families, working more collaboratively to motivate parents in identifying for themselves the changes they need to make. With our partners we will develop outcome driven, solution focused practice, helping families to utilise their strengths. This is consistent with our shared ambition as a partnership to do everything we can to keep children safely at home with their families. All training and development is strongly linked to the Knowledge and Skill Statements to prepare staff for national accreditation and ensure a highly professional and skilled workforce.

Our vision

Lancashire County Council has set out a clear and compelling vision: 'Here at Lancashire County Council we are helping you to make Lancashire the best place to live, work, visit and prosper' 'and where everyone acts responsibly.'

We will work together with our partners to support the delivery of this vision so: 'children, young people and their families are safe, healthy and achieve their full potential.'

To achieve this we need to ensure our staff, skills, systems, structures, style of working and shared values align to the vision and priorities set out above.

Our values are directly linked to the council's corporate vision of working in ways that are supportive, innovative, respectful and collaborative. Our vision starts and finishes with achieving and evidencing positive impact and outcomes in everything we do.





Purposeful practice focused on prevention, participation and permanence.

We will ensure that everything we do makes a tangible, positive difference to the lives of the children we work for and that we intervene at the lowest and least intrusive level possible. Our Getting to Good Plan sets out how we will continue to strengthen and improve practice.

Key principles underpinning our approach to practice:

- Delivering the right service, at the right time, by the right people through effective

wellbeing, preventative strategies and interventions

- Building on the strengths of families.
- Engaging children and young people through effective participation activities.
- Meeting and surpassing statutory expectations.
- At every stage we are actively considering, developing and delivering clear plans to achieve permanence.
- Purposeful practice means being focused on the quality of our practice and achieving positive impact for children and young people.

A positive culture

For practitioners to deliver these aspirations we need a positive management culture across the whole service. This means:

- Realistic caseloads for all practitioners taking account of their level of experience and the complexity of their work.
- Managers modelling a learning culture demonstrating respectful challenge and professional curiosity.
- Managers modelling positive, trusting relationships within the service and with partners.
- Creative participation work that

is supported and protected by managers.

- Career and service development is frequently discussed in teams and with individuals.
- Training and development opportunities are promoted, protected and proactively used to inform practice.
- Quality assurance activity is embraced with guidance, legislation, audit, performance data, inspection outcomes, reports and other feedback actively used to improve services.





- Managers make clear, timely decisions and empower staff to do the same.
- Managers ensure that conditions and systems are in place to support effective practice.
- Supervision is regular, reflective, analytical, supportive, and focused on individual development, outcomes and impact for children and young people.
- Managers support the safety, health and wellbeing of their staff.
- Managers recognise performance and celebrate the achievements of staff.
- Staff respect management direction and manage their time to respond to managerial and service expectations.

For more information visit:

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