



## **Priorities for Practice**

### **Priority 1: Relationship with Children and Families**

#### **1. *Focus on the Child***

**We will** keep the child<sup>1</sup> at the centre of our work. We will see them, listen to them and focus on their physical, mental and emotional wellbeing. We will see beyond their outward presentation and seek to understand their lived experience. We will actively seek and support them to express their views, when assessing their needs and any potential risks. We will always involve them in assessment, planning and decision-making. We will be inquisitive, curious and alert to parental disguised non-compliance. The risks of disproportionate optimism, in respect of the parent's<sup>2</sup> potential to improve, will be fully understood and resisted. The child's welfare is always paramount.

#### **2. *Engagement and Relationship Building***

**We will** build and sustain constructive, positive and trusting relationships with children and families; which is both supportive and challenging. We will help parents to engage with services and agencies, as this is central to improving the child's wellbeing and minimising the risk of harm. We will adopt a trauma informed practice approach and understand the role of fathers, partners and other significant adults in a child's life.

#### **3. *Assessment and Planning***

**We will** develop robust, dynamic assessments and plans which take a holistic view of the child's wellbeing, their environment and the impact of parental issues and behaviours. We will identify and analyse patterns of risk, using shared tools and techniques, being alert to the impact of cumulative and escalating concerns. We will develop robust plans which support and meet need and risk by building on family strengths and resilience, ensuring plans are accurate, evidence based, outcome-focused and SMART. We will always respond flexibly to changing family circumstances, reviewing the assessment and plan to ensure the child is safe and supported.

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<sup>1</sup> Note: Children and Young People including Unborn Babies

<sup>2</sup> Note: Parents and Carers



## **Priority 2: Working Together**

### **4. *Early Intervention and Support (Right Help at the Right Time)***

**We will** have in place early and effective intervention which aims to minimise the risk of further harm and abuse to children. We will refresh and embed the *Getting it right for every child* approach across all services and agencies to ensure that children get the right help, at the right time, from the right people. This will include widespread use of the National Practice Model and support for those fulfilling the role of the named person and those carrying out the role of the Lead Professional. We will develop a shared threshold and understanding about how to address neglect and enhance wellbeing. We will also have an understanding of the impact of rurality and poverty.

### **5. *Partnership Working***

**We will** work in partnership across children services, adult services and geographical areas in the best interests of the child. We will have a clear understanding of each other's roles, responsibilities and limitations and work flexibly in the best interests of the child. We will proportionately share and exchange relevant information as necessary. This will be enabled through reasoned, confident and accurate recording of what information is to be shared; why the information is to be shared; with whom the information is to be shared and the likely risks if the information is not shared. We will work together to resolve any disputes or disagreements and escalate concerns where appropriate.

### **6. *Empowerment, Supervision and Leadership***

**We will** be enabled and empowered by strong and effective collective leadership which is visible and accessible. We will be enabled by high quality supervision which promotes reflective and critical thinking, professional curiosity and confidence to challenge. We will have confidence to apply professional judgement. A culture of constructive support and challenge will be fostered, which embodies shared values and principles. Peer support will also be made available through networks of support and regular meetings. Clear guidance will support practice and checks, and balances put in place to test out staff understanding. Communication lines and processes will be put in place to listen to and understand staff concerns re workload; working conditions; emerging issues and professional concerns. We will have access to continuous professional development and single and multi-agency child protection learning and development opportunities. We will establish a positive learning culture across services and agencies which improves day-to-day child protection practice.