**West Sussex Safeguarding Children Partnership**

**Core Safeguarding Practice Standards**

Safeguarding is everybody’s responsibility and West Sussex Safeguarding Children Partnership (WSSCP) recognises that children are best protected when professionals are clear about what is required of them individually and how they need to work together. It can be a challenging and complex area of work which requires a shared commitment, effective communication and, above all, a focus on achieving the best outcomes for the child. At the heart of effective multi agency practice is building professional relationships based on openness and transparency. These standards should be read in conjunction with the WSSCP thresholds document.



the Quality Assurance and Scrutiny Framework



and the Information Sharing Agreement



They outline the expectations of agencies and professionals who work with children who require a statutory safeguarding response. The standards reflect the requirements of Working Together 2018 and the Pan Sussex Procedures. They will continue to develop and change over time to ensure that they reflect statutory guidance and best practice.

These standards are an important part of the framework to deliver continuous improvement and drive high quality safeguarding practice. WSSCP will regularly review the standards and will audit and observe practice to assure multi-agency compliance and the effectiveness of the standards and services to safeguard children.

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| **Professional Responsibility** | * Practitioners take responsibility to ensure they have the knowledge, skills and utilise the available tools to provide the best service to children and families * Practitioners are confident in respect of their role & responsibilities and are respectful of other people’s roles & responsibilities / positions / perspectives * Practitioners attending safeguarding meetings are well prepared to contribute fully to decision making and planning to safeguard children * Practitioners will alert their manager if they are unable to follow through on actions to ensure agreed actions are completed |
|  | * Practitioners maintain accurate and up to date records written in a clear and concise way with the child in mind   **Recording & Information sharing**   * Professional reports are clearly written, contain analysis and recommendations and avoid jargon * Reports are shared with children and families in advance of safeguarding meetings * Honest dialogue is prioritised to enable perspectives to be shared, information exchanged and relationships built especially at each key decision stage and handovers * Practitioners will seek consent from families to share information with key professionals to protect and support the welfare of children |
| **Ownership** | * At the earliest opportunity professionals identify a network around the child and family who are engaged throughout the course of the work * Every practitioner actively participates and is committed to the work/plan to support the child and family * Practitioners update colleagues throughout the safeguarding process in respect of progress and any significant issues, changes or incidents |
| **Voice of Child** | * Practitioners use a range of child centred approaches to ensure that the voices of all children and young people, including the voices of very young and non - verbal children, are heard and recorded * The active engagement and participation of children, parents and relevant individuals is evidenced across the partnership * The child or young person has an understanding (as appropriate) of the safeguarding process and is able to contribute and participate, particularly in regard to the safety plan |
|  | * All assessments including pre-birth assessment must include a whole family history and ensure fathers and extended family are fully engaged in the process   **Assessment & Planning**   * Practitioners need to utilise professional curiosity. This is particularly important to understand how past events may influence future risk or resilience * Assessments give a clear picture of the child's life, what it feels like for them and what needs to happen to improve it * Assessment is a dynamic process and must be updated as the needs and risks for the child and family change * Assessments must consider extra familial risk (place, space and peer-based risk and vulnerability) using this contextual information to inform intervention and assessment decisions * Assessments must seek to increase the safe use of public spaces (including the online world) by understanding contextual risk.  Doing so enables young people to socialise safely, rather than disrupting or diverting them away from potentially risky places * Plans are SMART and measure the difference that the intervention has made to the child's lived experience and future goals |
|  | * Promote and govern excellent practice and develop good quality practice   **Supervision & Management Oversight**   * Practitioners must receive regular supervision (or oversight depending on the agency arrangements) that supports reflective practice and professional development; with the overall aim to improve outcomes for children and avoid unnecessary drift and delay * Managers must maintain oversight with records that clearly show the management 'footprint' thoroughout the child's journey * Management oversight must be evident on the child's records and include a clear rationale for decisions made |

**The following principles underpin the core practice standards across the partnership:**

* **Child Centred Practice.**

Practitioners will ensure that children and young people have opportunities to participate and collaborate in the work of the Partnership and that the voice of children & young people is embedded in multi-agency practice.

* **High support and high challenge.**

Systems that develop and promote a culture of high support and high challenge will enable environments where growth and learning is accelerated. Practitioners receive scrutiny and knowledgeable challenge which will in turn empower them to exercise their professional judgement and improve outcomes for children and young people.

* **Promoting Practice leadership.**

The partnership will involve practitioners in the continuous learning process of quality assurance and scrutiny in a supportive and challenging way, in order to build practice leadership capacity across the partnership.

* **Restorative approach.**

The partnership will take the approach of ‘working with’ rather than ‘doing to’ with key stakeholders including children and families.

* **Promoting a culture of continuous learning.**

The partnership will create the environment for learning, recognizing the way systems influence each other and the benefits of working together rather than in individual agencies. We will ensure that we learn from best practice, case reviews and multi-agency audits, including the monitoring of the implementation of recommendations.

* **Promoting diversity and cultural competence.**

The partnership will respond respectfully and effectively to people of all cultures, languages, classes, races, ethnic backgrounds, religions, spiritual traditions, immigration status, and other diversity factors in a manner that recognizes, affirms, and values the worth of individuals, families and communities and protects and preserves the dignity of each.