

# CSCS Practice Framework

Approved by the Chief Social Worker for Children and Families

September 2021



# The Jersey CSCS Practice Framework is based on the main ingredients of effective practice models



Research and inspection findings show that there are certain ingredients across different models of practice that enable them to be more effective:

1. A children's rights approach
2. A family-focused approach
3. Focus on strengths, balanced with risks
4. Valuing stable relationships
5. Systemic practice
6. Trauma-informed
7. A shared model across agencies
8. Systemic responses
9. Impactful direct work



# 1. A children's rights approach



- A Children's Rights Approach is a principled and practical framework for working with children, grounded in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).
- Social workers make difficult decisions each day for children, young people and their families. This often means that a range of children's human rights must be weighed up and balanced, including rights to be listened to, rights to a family life, rights to safety from harm and for children to be supported to achieve their potential. Often, children's rights are already paramount in decision making and are taking place in services and in individuals' practice, even when not labelled as such.
- The driver of social work is to support children and keep them safe, which is linked strongly to Article 3 of the UNCRC – to always do what is in a child's best interest. Whilst professionals aim to make decisions which support rights and which support a child's best interests, children don't always feel this is clearly explained to them. Children have said that at times it doesn't feel that their other rights are given the same regard and consideration, for example their rights to have their say and be listened to (Article 12), to have information (Article 13) and rights to privacy (Article 16).
- Social workers are expected to build children's rights thinking throughout everyday practice and to support children and young people in receipt of social care services to be aware of, and access all their rights under the UNCRC.

## 2. A family-focused approach



- Models that take a whole family approach - addressing all needs and risks with individuals in a family holistically – tend to be particularly successful.
- They address key needs and risks while identifying and using strengths but without losing the focus on the child.

# 3. Focus on strengths, balanced with risks



- Any model should have a focus on families' strengths and their capacity to change but must also clearly identify the risks. The implementation needs to ensure that the model guards against over-optimism and against assessment and intervention becoming too adult-focused.
- A strengths-based approach means looking first at what families can do with their skills and resources and what they can do for themselves, and together with their family, friends and community. Families need to be seen as more than their needs – they need to be experts and in charge of their own lives. Individuals, families and the Island community have a key role to play in the care of children and young people, which cannot be replaced by professional intervention.

# 4. Valuing stable relationships



- Most models focus on the importance of stable relationships with social workers. They see this as a critical element of achieving sustainable, positive change for children and their families.
- We must get to know our children and families well and allow them to know us well.
- We must seek to connect with each other before we charge into content and change.
- The way in which we work, processes, systems and paperwork, should all be geared to promote strong and trusting relationships.

# 5. Systemic Practice



- Systemic practice is a way of working which emphasises people's relationships as key to understanding their experiences and affecting change.
- Families are worked with rather than 'done to'. Systemic practice can be seen as a way of acting, thinking and viewing the world, which focuses on relationships and recognises that individuals are always embedded in their social context.
- Over time, relationship patterns both enable and limit processes of development and change. In practice, this means that problems in families are always part of larger processes. This implies that individuals cannot act entirely on their own, either for good or bad. Change in one part of a relational pattern, or system, can be expected to create adjustments throughout the family and immediate context.
- Systemically informed practice, with its focus on problems in their social and relational context, also takes account of the efforts made by professionals to help families and individuals achieve change

# 6. Trauma-Informed



- Individual trauma results from an event, series of events, or set or circumstances that is experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or life threatening and that has lasting adverse effects on the individual's functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional or spiritual well-being.
- A model that is grounded in and directed by a complete understanding of how trauma exposure affects service user's neurological, biological, psychological and social development.
- As such, it is informed by neuroscience, psychology and social science as well as attachment and trauma theories, and gives a central role to the complex and pervasive impact trauma has on a person's world view and relationships. Trauma-informed organisations assume that people have had traumatic experiences, and as a result may find it difficult to feel safe within services and to develop trusting relationships with service providers. Consequently, services are structured, organised and delivered in ways that promote safety and trust and aim to prevent re-traumatisation.

# 7. A shared model across agencies



- Models of practice can be particularly effective when used across agencies.
- Inspection has found that where local areas took a strategic, multi-agency approach then staff across all agencies had the support, training and tools needed to tackle neglect of older children. These areas had a more consistent and considered way of working that was having a positive impact on many children.

# 8. Systemic responses



- The accumulated challenges that our children and families face need systemic responses and the models we choose must reflect and respond to these challenges.
- They must provide the knowledge, tools and skills to enable great social work practice and ensure a continuous focus on children's experiences and progress.

# 9. Impactful direct work



- The best children's social care services see purposeful direct work with children and families as a fundamental part of their practice framework.