

Children's Social Care Service Practice Standards

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Introduction

The Practice Standards (2021) for Children's Social Care Service in Jersey ("the Standards") outline the practice expectations of all social workers. They are designed to guide social workers to fulfil their professional practice responsibilities.

The Standards sit alongside the Social Work England Professional Standards and the Jersey Care Commission registration requirements.

A commitment to embedding and meeting the Standards is central to protecting children and young people and improving their outcomes.

Strengths-based and rights-based working and focusing on the quality of the relationship between those providing support and those being supported, are at the heart of the Standards.

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.

The Standards describe the minimum service that can be expected by families. Social workers are always expected to work to the Standards.

Children's Rights

Social workers work tirelessly to keep children safe and promote positive outcomes for some of the most vulnerable children in Jersey.

The Standards set out how our services are implementing a children's rights approach, both in the delivery of services and in individual practice. 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 care professionals 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).

The Standards strive to support practitioners 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.

All social care staff must complete the mandatory training on children's rights to effectively understand these Standards alongside the Children's Rights Approach guidance manual. The manual provides principled guidance and practical help on a Children's Rights Approach to planning and delivering services for children. The guide explains human rights and their relevance for public authorities and other organisations. It introduces sources of human rights and human rights duties, before explaining how each of the principles of a Children's Rights Approach may be put into operation. The focus is practical, offering guidance on procedures to give effect to children's rights and supports social workers by providing practical ways to embed children's rights in their practice.

Enabling Compliance

All staff must be given an opportunity to fully understand the Standards during their induction, and any reinduction. Their manager is responsible for ensuring that staff understand the Standards and managers must approve that they are ready to practice in Jersey.

Managers will lead their staff group and ensure that staff work in a professional environment that is conducive to delivering good professional practice. This includes promoting a staff culture that enables high support, high challenge, and professional curiosity.

Managers will ensure that their staff benefit from:

- Good levels of support

- Reflective supervision.
- Training appropriate to needs and role.
- A caseload that is regularly reviewed and tailored to experience and above all manageable to support the delivery of safe and effective practice.
- Support and time, from managers who are visible and prioritise the observation of front-line practice. Managers will aim to observe and give constructive feedback to social workers, at least, on a six-monthly basis.

Managers will regularly monitor compliance to ensure that children and young people are protected, receive appropriate services, and achieve their outcomes. An auditing framework and survey has been developed to monitor compliance with the Standards.

1. Management Standards

All managers are responsible for ensuring that social workers practice in accordance with the Standards.

- 1.1. I give all new starters an opportunity to fully understand the Standards during their induction and I ensure that new staff understand the Standards and I formally approve that they are ready to practice in Jersey.
- 1.2. I will ensure that thorough enquiries are undertaken that produce good quality assessments and analysis of needs, leading to well-reasoned and evidenced plans.
- 1.3. My management advice and decisions are professionally sound and recorded.
- 1.4. I ensure all recording on children's records are of good quality and are completed in a timely manner.
- 1.5. My signatures / electronic equivalents and scrutiny of social worker activity shows that this has met agreed standards.
- 1.6. I can evidence that appropriate steps are being taken to support development needs and to address under performance of individual social workers to bring about improvements.
- 1.7. I can evidence regular auditing of children's records and reports to ensure that standards are routinely met.
- 1.8. I always follow up development and improvement actions arising from audits.
- 1.9. I can evidence that regular quality reflective supervision is taking place with all staff.
- 1.10. My recording of reflective supervision demonstrates reflective practice.
- 1.11. Reflective supervision contracts are in place for all workers.
- 1.12. Annual appraisals take place with regular review and play an active part in the recognition and development of staff skills and are linked to service priorities.
- 1.13. I have a proactive approach to developing staff professional skills.
- 1.14. I acknowledge and give credit to good practice and promote this within and outside the staff group.
- 1.15. I keep up to date with procedure changes and research findings and make sure that these are shared with staff, with an expectation that they do the same.

- 1.16. I ensure that the work demands are matched to the skills and abilities of staff members, and staff capacities and capabilities are defined and managed fairly.
- 1.17. I ensure that good communication takes place within the staff group, and all staff are informed of important matters affecting their work.
- 1.18. I facilitate regular team briefings/meetings and they are properly set up, chaired, and recorded. Team Meetings have formal agendas and are recorded and shared.
- 1.19. I cultivate a staff group atmosphere that is mutually supportive and respectful, and an office atmosphere that is calm and purposeful, and one in which staff are focused to work. I promote a positive work life balance and consider the emotional well-being of workers.
- 1.20. I set an example as to how to conduct oneself as a professional and set expectations of good practice that must be adhered to and create an atmosphere of professionalism.
- 1.21. I proactively seek advice and guidance and escalate issues and concerns to senior managers in a timely manner.

2. Assessment Standards

All children and young people will have a good quality social work assessment and analysis of needs which informs their plan, is on children's records and produced within specified timescales.

- 2.1. I have clearly recorded the reasons for the assessment with issues, needs, and concerns evident.
- 2.2. I have made it clear to parents, children and young person why the Children's Social Care Service is involved, what we will be doing and the likely outcomes.
- 2.3. The family know I have conducted an assessment and their views and opinions are recorded within the assessment.
- 2.4. I have advised the original referrer and all relevant agencies of the outcome.
- 2.5. I have seen the child or young person alone and where possible gained their views and separately recorded them. If I have not seen the child or young person, I have recorded reasons why.
- 2.6. I have ensured that all children and young people in the family have been considered as part of the assessment. I have identified if there are any other children living in the household, (not from the family I am assessing) or connected and ensured that their safeguarding needs are being met.
- 2.7. I have regard to race, ethnicity, gender, disability, religion and nationality of the family and my assessment reflects these needs.
- 2.8. I have identified all adult members of the household in my assessment including those who may be absent (e.g., in custody, absent parent, in hospital).
- 2.9. I have considered in the assessment family finances and any relationship between their means and child abuse and neglect.
- 2.10. I have ensured that previous history including past referrals and assessments (including early help assessments) and previous records in respect of any member of the household has been considered and incorporated into the assessment.

- 2.11. I have ensured that the child's chronology is updated and included the history of significant events for the child.
- 2.12. I have held a Children and Family assessment planning meeting, requested information from those agencies involved with the child or young person and involved them in the decision making regarding next steps. I have contacted those agencies involved with the child or young person and family who were unable to attend the meeting to ensure their views inform the assessment.
- 2.13. I have ensured that strengths and protective factors have been clearly identified and assessed. I have been careful to distinguish fact from opinion.
- 2.14. The child's record clearly shows what I have found and what I think should happen next including the rationale.
- 2.15. The child or young person is central to my assessment and my assessment identifies their needs. I have included a realistic, detailed picture of the child or young person and what it is like for them in the family.
- 2.16. I have used assessment tools where necessary to identify need and understand risk.
- 2.17. My assessment evidences that research findings have been used to assess need and inform my decision-making.
- 2.18. In my assessment I have recorded a picture of the parents, their parenting strengths and areas where they are not meeting the child or young person's needs.
- 2.19. I have ensured that the child, young person and their family know what will happen next.
- 2.20. My analysis and decision making clearly evidences my findings, links back to the original concerns and any other issues, including history of all family/household members, and I have made recommendations for any future work by Children's Social Care Services or Early Help.
- 2.21. I have completed my assessment within the timescales and sent it to my manager for review and sign off.
- 2.22. I have given a copy of the agreed assessment to the family, and young person as appropriate, and have proactively invited comment and feedback.
- 2.23. I have undertaken a re-assessment when a significant incident has occurred or annually.

3. Child Protection Enquiries Standards

All children and young people will be protected from further significant harm through a thorough enquiry that identifies need, is timely and is recorded on the child's record.

- 3.1. I have undertaken a multi-agency strategy discussion.
- 3.2. As part of Article 42 enquiries, I have seen the child or young person in timescales or as directed by my Team Manager, and spoken to them alone (where appropriate) within the first week.
- 3.3. I have identified all concerns regarding significant harm including likelihood, and I have identified need, risks, and protective factors, including those posed by frequent visitors to the household.

- 3.4. The Article 42 assessment is multi-agency and recognises the potential needs and safety of siblings and any other children in the household (and other households where relevant).
- 3.5. I have made sure that protective factors have been identified and recorded.
- 3.6. I have followed the Jersey Safeguarding Children Procedures and Children's Social Care Service Procedure for Article 42 Enquiries.
- 3.7. I have updated the chronology having fully interrogated the history on all members of the household and the investigation is informed by this perspective.
- 3.8. I have identified the key agencies involved with the child or young person, completed all checks and information from those agencies and incorporated the information and views into the assessment.
- 3.9. My investigation concludes with an evidence judgement about "harm" and whether or not it is considered "significant" (as defined by the Children's Jersey Law 2002).
- 3.10. I have clarified what action is required to secure the safety of the child or young person.
- 3.11. I have checked back on the referral details and I am certain I have investigated all the allegations and followed all the instructions given by the Team Manager.
- 3.12. My report for the Initial Child Protection Conference summarises and analyses all information from the assessment to date and all pre-existing records relating to the child, young person, family, and any other household member.
- 3.13. I have completed the Initial Child Protection Conference report and I have shared it with the family, the chair, and other agencies in timescales before the Conference, in their first language and noted their comments.

4. Child Protection Plan Standards

All children and young people must have a multi-agency child protection plan that is regularly reviewed and updated, that identifies need and is recorded in their record.

- 4.1. I have ensured that the first Core Group Meeting takes place in timescales of the Initial Child Protection Conference. During the meeting I ensured all actions to be taken under the child protection plan were identified, and agreement reached about what actions would be taken by whom, including timescales, to complete the Children and Family assessment on time.
- 4.2. I have ensured at the initial Core Group Meeting that parents or carers know what change is expected, including timescales.
- 4.3. I have ensured that minutes of the Core Group Meeting are produced and circulated to all members of the Core Group in timescales.
- 4.4. I have ensured that a detailed SMART multi-agency Child Protection Plan is developed by the initial Core Group Meeting, that this is reviewed and updated following each Core Group and is recorded on the child's record.
- 4.5. I ensure the child or young person is seen as agreed by the Chair and that the visits are purposeful and focus on the identified needs. I have seen the child or young person on their own (where appropriate). I have evidenced this on the child's record.
- 4.6. The focus of all my work is to maximise the safety and well-being of the child or young person and I have undertaken both announced and unannounced visits. Each

of my visits add to the knowledge about the child or young person and what life is like for them and helps in achieving the desired outcomes.

- 4.7. I regularly ascertain the child or young person's wishes and feelings and keep them up to date with the child protection plan and any developments.
- 4.8. I continue to assess and re-assess the needs of the child or young person. I can answer the question "*What is it like to be a child or young person in this family?*"
- 4.9. I ensure that I understand the role of fathers and male partners in the household and ensure that new partners or new household members are properly assessed.
- 4.10. I ensure the core group meets are in timescales and progresses the implementation of the child protection plan. If the outcomes required are not being delivered through the plan, I will ensure the core group agrees actions to address this.
- 4.11. I have ensured that the core group have prepared the report for the Child Protection Review Conference in timescales before the Review Conference and share it with parents, carers and children or young people in advance in their first language.
- 4.12. I use reflective supervision to explore my feelings about the work and to ensure that I am putting the child or young person first.
- 4.13. If I identify anything in my work with the child or young person or family, or household members, that gives rise to additional concern for the safety of the child or young person I discuss it immediately with my manager, or a covering manager and agree actions to be taken

5. Children in Care Standards

All children and young people in the care of the Minister should be in a care setting that meets their needs, and they must have a multi-agency care plan that is timely and is reviewed regularly.

- 5.1. I am aware of and understand the Jersey Children in Care Entitlement.
- 5.2. I have arranged to see the child, young person within the timescales relevant to the type and duration of the care setting.
- 5.3. I have arranged a multi-agency care setting planning meeting in timescales.
- 5.4. I have made sure contact between a child or young person and his or her family and friends is actively promoted and facilitated, if this is in their best interests. (Ensure planning clearly outlines all contact, and the venue is in the child or young person's best interests).
- 5.5. I have clearly explained to the child the reasons for coming into care. I have explored possible family and friends' connected carers and discussed the care setting and contact arrangements with parents, siblings and friends, and endeavoured to answer all the child or young person's concerns.
- 5.6. I have ensured that all the requisite Children Looked After paperwork, including the needs assessment and care setting plan is completed to a high standard and that the carers have a copy. If the child or young person is accommodated under Article 17 of Jersey Children's Law 2002, I have obtained informed consent and the signature of all parents who have parental responsibility. I have ensured that the parent has the capacity to consent and have used an interpreter if necessary.
- 5.7. I have made the necessary arrangements for a health assessment.

- 5.8. I have regularly seen the child or young person in accordance with procedural requirements.
- 5.9. The child or young person has my contact details and knows how to get in touch with me if they need or want to. (This includes email address and mobile telephone number, as well as office number and number if I am not available.)
- 5.10. I have seen the child or young person alone (if not I have recorded the reasons why not), and I have taken account of their views and feelings, and where this is not possible, I have explained why in an appropriate way.
- 5.11. I have completed direct work with the child or young person.
- 5.12. I have given the child or young person information about independent advocacy and Mind Of My Own and proactively encourage them to access the support.
- 5.13. I have ensured that the parents have the relevant written paperwork regarding their child or young person coming into care that they understand the reasons why, and what might happen next. I have kept in regular touch with them and involved them in assessments and plans as appropriate. Where necessary I have used an interpreter or advocate to ensure that they understand what is happening.
- 5.14. I have made sure that children, young people, their parents or carers are aware of the complaint's procedures.
- 5.15. I have promoted the child's or young person's identity through life story work and by ensuring that they have personal possessions, information, photos, and material relating to their family and past.
- 5.16. There is an assessment completed for the child or young person in care at least annually.
- 5.17. I have ensured that a Personal Education Plan planning meeting takes place and that there is an up-to-date Plan recorded on the child's record each term.
- 5.18. I have consulted health, education and other agencies or individuals involved with the child or young person (or their family) as part of the assessment and care planning.
- 5.19. I have taken account of the child or young person's needs in relation to race, ethnicity, language, disability, gender, sexuality.
- 5.20. When the young person is 15 $\frac{3}{4}$ I have commenced the Pathway Plan, and this is recorded on their record. I have consulted with the child or young person about who attends their review meetings and they know they can be accompanied by a relative, close friend or advocate to enable them to participate and provide them with support.
- 5.21. The child or young person has been encouraged and assisted to participate in their review meeting either directly, or by other means (e.g., video recording, written submission etc).
- 5.22. I have proactively encouraged parents to participate in reviews.
- 5.23. I have shared and discussed my report with the child, young person and family in advance of the review.
- 5.24. I have ensured that all relevant consultation documents have been completed and provided for every review.
- 5.25. I have ensured that I have recorded fully the achievements of the child or young person and that these are included in their Life Story work where appropriate (e.g., swimming badges, youth awards, school team membership etc).

6. Care Leaver Standards

All Care Leavers will be provided with comprehensive support so each young person will have a successful transition to Adulthood.

- 6.1. I am aware of and understand the Jersey Leaving Care Offer.
- 6.2. I will ensure that the young person's Pathway Plan is reviewed in timescales.
- 6.3. I will ensure that I make every effort to encourage the young person to participate in their pathway plan review and to discuss with the young person who will be invited to contribute to their pathway plan. A copy of the plan will be given to the young person.
- 6.4. I will clearly explain to the young person their entitlements as a care leaver and provide them with resources, guides that explain their entitlements.
- 6.5. Every child in care will have a Leaving Care Personal Adviser allocated to them prior to their 16th Birthday. The Personal Adviser will provide support, advice (including practical) and guidance so the young person is provided with the opportunities to support them into adulthood.
- 6.6. I will ensure that contact with the young person is based on assessed need and I will always ensure that they know how to contact their Personal Adviser, the duty social workers and the Out of Hours Service.
- 6.7. Planning for a move to independence will be done in a timely way, ensuring that the young person's needs will be provided by a range of accommodation options. Taking into account:
 - The young person's wishes and feelings
 - their education, training or employment needs
 - Health needs
 - The locality in which they want to live
 - Type of accommodation (supported accommodation, supported lodgings, social housing)
 - If privately rented, we are satisfied with the character and suitability of the landlord or provider
 - Complies with health and safety.
- 6.8. I will ensure that the young person is able to access their Setting Up Home Allowance to furnish their accommodation in a planned way, so they do not move into their accommodation without the essential items needed.
- 6.9. I will ensure that any care leaver in Higher education is provided with the Higher Education Bursary and vacation accommodation if needed.
- 6.10. I will ensure that the young person is provided with a high level of support to access and maintain Education, Training and Employment.

- 6.11. I will ensure that the young person is aware of the complaints procedure and how to make a complaint.
- 6.12. I will ensure that young people are made aware of Jersey's duty to care leavers up to the age of 25 if resuming programmes of education or training after the age of 21 and how to get back in touch with Children's Social Care Service.

7. Recording Standards

All children and young people should have records that include an accurate chronology, genogram, plan and reviews with up-to-date recordings case notes, visits and evidence of management oversight, reflective supervision and key decisions.

- 7.1. As far as possible, I have recorded information as I go along; in any event case notes will be recorded in timescales.
- 7.2. I evidence that I regularly see the child or young person alone, as appropriate
- 7.3. My recording reflects the complexity of the child's or young person's life and the interventions of key people in their life. My recording differentiates between observed fact, reported fact and interpretation or opinion. I have included relevant research in the analysis.
- 7.4. I have recorded where interpreters, specialist workers or tools and activities have been used to help communication.
- 7.5. I have ensured that the child or young person's views are clearly identified in their record. As far as possible, I have recorded what the child or young person told me, in their own words and I have confirmed this with them.
- 7.6. I have cross-referenced entries in Mosaic, where necessary and relevant, and where I have duplicated, across siblings, family members, I have ensured that the information is pertinent to each child or young person and is personalised.
- 7.7. I have ensured that my recording on the child's record is respectful to the child, young person and their family.
- 7.8. I have ensured that where other professionals or family and friends have provided information, the record reflects the person's name, contact number and who they are.
- 7.9. I ensure that the Chronology is updated in timescales and that the entries are relevant to the child or young person.

8. Data Protection Standards

Information sharing is essential for effective safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. Data protection and human rights law should not be barriers to justified information sharing, but provide a framework to ensure that personal information is shared appropriately.

- 8.1. I will be open and honest with the individual (and/or their family where appropriate) from the outset about why, what, how and with whom information will, or could be shared, and seek their agreement, unless it is unsafe or inappropriate to do so.
- 8.2. I will seek advice from other practitioners, or our information governance lead, if I am in any doubt about sharing the information concerned, without disclosing the identity of the individual where possible.

- 8.3. Where possible, I will share information with consent, and where possible, respect the wishes of those who do not consent to having their information shared. I understand that I may share information without consent if, in my professional judgement, there is a lawful basis to do so, such as where safety may be at risk. I will base my judgement on the facts of the case. When I am sharing or requesting personal information from someone, I will be clear of the basis upon which I am doing so. Where I do not have consent, I will be mindful that an individual might not expect information to be shared.
- 8.4. I will consider safety and well-being: base my information sharing decisions on considerations of the safety and well-being of the individual and others who may be affected by their actions.
- 8.5. I will ensure that the information I share is necessary for the purpose for which I am sharing it, is shared only with those individuals who need to have it, is accurate and up to-date, is shared in a timely fashion, and is shared securely.
- 8.6. I will keep a record of my decision and the reasons for it – whether it is to share information or not. If I decide to share, I will record what I have shared, with whom and for what purpose.