

CSC Development Plan Practice Model

Lead Contact:	Sophie Wales
Directorate:	Children's Services
Service Area:	Investment in a Practice Model

1. TRANSFORMATION OVERVIEW

Background

Delivering children's services safely and effectively is a key challenge across local government.

Since our last inspection in 2018, nationally and locally communities are recovering from the Covid Pandemic and are living in the midst of a cost-of-living crisis, all of which will see many more adults parenting in adverse circumstances and further impact on Children's Services in Barnsley

A recent review of the Children's Social care and Early Help has highlighted significant workforce pressures and some variability in the quality of practice.

To support the service through a journey of improvement, a Development Programme will be put in place that will identify short term and longer-term activities to drive sustainable change, improve quality of practice and compliance and keep children and young people safe and supported.

Summary of Proposal

Although Barnsley developed a practice model a number of years ago, this was not well known or understood or used to effectively support practice.

The approach taken had been to take a number of recognised theories and roll them into one approach. This locally developed model quickly fell into disuse and was difficult for staff to articulate let alone practice within.

High turnover of staff and managers compounded this issue, and it now lacks credibility among remaining staff and managers.

We have recognised that implementing a recognised practice model that is well regarded and understood is fundamental to our recruitment and retention activity, as it will form a key part of our overall offer to staff and will be attractive to those seeking to work in an authority that is ambitious for both its children and staff.

An effective practice model provides a framework for practice and ensures both a consistent approach to practice and the provision of help and support across the system. It is well understood that a practice model provides a lens through which we deliver our social work theory in order to effect positive and sustainable change with the children and families we work with.

This will require an investment in the region of £300K; meetings are scheduled with the SOS Provider for w/c 24 October and a ballpark figure has been provided by them for this business case.

As we implement our preferred model, we will also be focussing on supporting our existing managers through a comprehensive training and development offer and focussing their role through the framework of this model. This will strengthen the implementation and maintenance of the model and approach.

In order to ensure our workforce are skilled and supported and also to achieve greater consistency in our practice across early help and children's social care the proposal is to: -

Procure and implement a 'Signs of Safety' model of practice that will enable all workers, from Early Help to Social Care to practice in the same way, ensuring a consistent experience for children and their families.

This is an evidenced based intervention that builds on family strengths, working with families to identify risks and develop safety plans. It has had significant success nationally and internationally and is compatible with other edge of care programs such as Family Group Conferencing (FGC), which Barnsley are also actively considering.

The model requires a focussed way of working across the whole system so will require buy in from Partner agencies. In order to roll this out there will need to be investment in initial training and on-going commitment to maintain the model and implement the practice.

The implementation of a researched based intervention across the whole system based on family strengths and managing will supports children to safely remain within families and gives clarity to all involved in the plan as to their roles and responsibilities to achieve the identified outcomes.

It will complement the introduction of a Development Hub in Barnsley and will enhance workers and partners skills in working with our most vulnerable children and family in a strength based way

Signs of Safety is a nationally recognised social work intervention and meets all requirements for continuous professional development of practitioners. There will also be benefits for those partners and non-social work qualified practitioners in respect of their portfolios to support their personal and professional development.

The project will enable us to ensure that children's outcomes are promoted, and they are safe and protected

Signs of Safety is used in both neighbouring and wider authorities and will support the effective and speedy induction of new staff into Barnsley if they have previously used the model elsewhere.

Alternative Options

The service could continue with no recognised model of evidenced based practice. This would not support the improvement in practice required across the service and identified through the recent review. Signs of Safety is a practice model that can be used across the whole of children's services and wider.

The current lack of an evidenced based approach may be contributing to increasing numbers of children entering the Looked After System and preventing them exiting at the most appropriate stage for them and their families.

This is having negative outcomes for them as well as creating additional financial pressures on the authority.

Links to Corporate Priorities

- Healthy Barnsley - People can access all the care and support they need, at the right time and in the right place.
- Enabling Barnsley - Our council is modern, inclusive, efficient, productive, and high performing

Anticipated Objectives & Benefits

- Consistent approach, practice and methodology used for children and families across all children's services and with partners
- Develops a language that the service recognises, focusing on families' strengths and resilience, and reduced reliance on services in the future.
- Reduced risk for children and supporting them to safely remain with their families and improving outcomes.
- Support consistent decisions around threshold for services
- Reduce demand by keeping children protected within their families through safety plans that all partners are agreed to.
- Reduction in the length of time children remain Looked After, as decisions as to future plans will be evidenced based, reduce drift and enabling timely decisions on to future permanence options.
- Improve audit outcomes and overall understanding of the effectiveness of the service.

Implications

- Requires Partner buy-in to extend the scope of this evidenced based practice through all services to children

2. PROJECT SCHEDULE

What are the provisional milestones / timescales?

Key Milestone	Start Date	Completion Date
Procurement	Nov 22	Jan 23
Leadership Commitments	Jan 23	Feb 23
Communication / briefing sessions	Feb 23	April 22
Training	Feb 23	June 23
Alignment of practice processes	June 23	

3. RESOURCES

Provide details of any anticipated resources required (IT support, office space, Project Manager, Project Team, specific skills, investment etc.)

Resources	Why Required	When Required
Training rooms	To enable face to face training to be delivered	Feb 23 to June 23 and onward
Financial investment	£0.362M Bespoke nationally recognised Practice Model	2 Years – subject to evaluation
Partner commitment	To expand scope of strength-based practice model across other services to children and families	Through out

4. EFFICIENCIES

What efficiency with the transformation deliver – minimum expected is 10%

Efficiency	Estimates (£)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in admission to care • Increase in exit from care • Reduction in demand for CSC • Reduction in re-referrals • Reduced reliance on agency staff as staff are attracted to permanent roles and staff remain with BMBC. 		

5. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Provide any further summary information regarding urgency, dependencies, constraints, enablers, assumptions.

As we enter discussion with the Provider, we will have a more precise understanding of the cost of implementation and roll out. This is a priority for our development journey and will underpin our culture and approach to working with families and partners. This will be the cornerstone on which we base our social work practice, and it will require everyone to sign up to these new ways of working.