

VISION

LEWISHAM CHILDRENS SERVICE

1. Families will tell us they understand why we are involved, the reasons for our decisions and the actions we take.
2. Children & young people will tell us their social worker spent time getting to know them and has made a difference to their lives.
3. Families are respected and supported to stay together whenever there is enough safety.
4. Children & young people that are in our care, know we care and we won't give up on them.
5. Young people who have been in our care feel confident about themselves and their future.

How will we get there?

The Improvement Plan



Bottom Lines



PRACTICE STANDARDS

GUIDANCE



Research



One service • Thinking • Purposeful plans • Child's story
 • Accountability • Relationships • Quality Assurance.



Our Vision

What good children's social work looks like in Lewisham



Families will tell us they understand why we are involved, the reasons for our decisions and the actions we take

We will make sure children/young people, parents, carers and others are clear about why we are involved, what needs to change and what we are doing to help. We will work 'with' families and support everyone to participate by listening to their views and encouraging them to find their own solutions. We will always respect that families are all different and they know themselves best, we will be balanced and recognise their strengths, seeking to build on what is working well to help change happen.

Children & young people will tell us their social worker spent time getting to know them and has made a difference to their lives

We will always make sure we spend enough time with the child/young person so we understand their experiences and what is important to them. The child/young person will always know that we are looking out for them, that we care about what is happening to them and that their wellbeing and safety is our top priority. We will explain to children and young people what we are doing and why, in a language they will understand and will encourage them to participate and help them make good choices to shape their own experience and futures.

Families are respected and supported to stay together whenever there is enough safety

Through building trust and relationships, families will be helped to find their own solutions and become more resilient. We will always recognise the importance of the child and young person's network and strengthen support for families to stay together wherever it is safe to do so. We will always look for care for children and young people in the naturally occurring network as the first option. We will work with families, their communities and other agencies to help young people navigate the challenges they face to keep safe in their homes, schools and in the community.

Children and young people who are in our care know we care and we won't give up on them

When a child or young person comes into our care we will do everything we can to make them safe and secure. We will talk with them about their life story, to help them understand and make sense of the difficulties they may have experienced. We will keep them connected to their family, culture and community. We will always champion their interests, celebrate their achievements and have high aspirations for them, to help them grow and to do the best they can in their lives.

Young people who have been in our care feel confident about themselves and their future

The young adults who have been in our care will be provided with the tools and support they need to build their knowledge, skills and confidence to lead successful, independent lives. We will help them access services and keep connected in their culture and communities. We will encourage and support them to realise and achieve their hopes and ambitions. We will ensure they always have someone to turn to if they need advice or help.

The Bottom Lines

The things that we must always do, to deliver practice consistently

One Service	We are all part of one service and the way we behave with our families, partners, carers and each other reflects our vision, values and practice framework.
Accountability	Our practice is disciplined and in accordance with legislation, statutory guidance, regulations and local procedures
Thinking	When we make decisions and professional judgements, we have an analysis informed by the family history and our thinking is transparent and clearly explained.
Relationships	The frequency of our contact with children, young people and families enables us to develop effective relationships, visits are purposeful and progress the plan.
Purposeful planning	We develop SMART plans with children, young people and their network. We regularly review and adapt plans to have a positive impact and create sustainable change
Child's story	Our writing is timely, reflects the work we have done and tells the child's story in a language that the family understand.
Quality assurance	Management oversight and supervision provides support, constructive challenge and quality assures that what we are doing is meeting our practice standards and making a difference.



Our Values

The way we do social work in Lewisham

The core principles of Signs of Safety approach reflect the values and philosophy of practice that we want to underpin the way we do social work in Lewisham. We believe if we provide the right leadership, we create the right strategic conditions and adopt the following ways of working supported by Signs of Safety, we can realise the vision of consistently delivering good social work for children and families.



Our ways of working within the organisation and with our partners

- ✓ We exercise **leadership** at all levels, no matter where we are in the hierarchy. When we notice something needs improving we **take responsibility** to be **pro-active** and find **solutions**.
- ✓ We are **respectful, inclusive** and **supportive** to each other and our safeguarding partners, we **appreciate different perspectives** and will work **collaboratively**, demonstrating what good social work looks like in everything we do.
- ✓ We are **flexible** and willing to **adapt** our ways of thinking and working to accommodate changes and think creatively about ways to **evolve** our ways of working to stay current.
- ✓ We are **disciplined**, making sure the core basics of social work practice are done **consistently** well, we take **responsibility** and are **accountable** for our behaviour and practice.
- ✓ We take personal responsibility for keeping ourselves well **informed** and are **engaged** in making a **positive contribution** to improving the service and social work practice. We recognise we have a **duty to do our best** for families and are **accountable** for our work.
- ✓ We are **transparent** in the way we work, seeking **feedback** from all those we work with, **reflecting** on our own behaviour and practice to **continually learn** and evolve.
- ✓ We recognise there are financial limitations to the service and we play our part by **working efficiently** and **targeting finite resources** at the most vulnerable families.
- ✓ We take a **double loop learning** approach, seeking to understand complex situations, not finding fault, to apportion blame and apply simplistic quick fixes.
- ✓ We are **courageous** in our practice and will **ask** if there is something don't know or understand and we will say when we don't think things are being done in the right way.

Our ways of working with children, young people and families

- ✓ We work hard to build **trust** and **nurturing** relationships, spending time **working directly** with children, young people and families.
- ✓ We **respect** that children have important **connections** in their **network** and **recognise** they are known best by the family and friends around them.
- ✓ We respect that children, young people and **families are all different**, we do our best to **understand** the things that are important to them, like their **culture, customs** and values.
- ✓ We work '**with**' families, not do things 'to' them, and help by **finding solutions** and **facilitating change** to build **resilience**, by not doing everything 'for' them.
- ✓ We are fair, **balanced** and recognise the **strengths** in families and work hard to build safety and stability from those strengths.
- ✓ We will be **honest** and **straightforward** when we are worried and **clearly describe** what needs to change and we won't keep changing the goalposts.
- ✓ We will keep things simple, using **plain language** to explain why we are involved, in ways that the youngest member of the family can understand. We don't use labels and jargon.
- ✓ We are **respectful** to, kind and **compassionate** with the children, young people and families we work with, even when we disagree.
- ✓ We are **professionally curious**, apply **appreciative enquiry** and not taking things at face value. We **think and analyse carefully and slowly** to make decisions that have a good **rationale**.
- ✓ We are **proportionate** with our actions and in how we **manage risk**, only using **our authority** when there is insufficient safety in families.
- ✓ We are **creative** and **autonomous**, thinking about the child's individual needs, not solely which service is available for them to be fit into.
- ✓ We are interested in other people's views, seeking feedback, **listening** to and **reflecting** on **different perspectives**, to help up keep **open minded**.
- ✓ We are **purposeful** with our actions and are always thinking how what we are doing is **making a difference** to the child/young person.
- ✓ We are **persistent** and **tenacious**, championing families and having high **aspirations** for our children and young people.
- ✓ We are **reasonable and realistic** about our expectations and what we can and cannot do and will not promise things we cannot deliver.
- ✓ We are **adaptive and flexible** in our approach, **responsive** to quickly changing needs and circumstances and not becoming repetitive and rigid in our approaches.