



York Children's Social Care

Keeping Families Together – Keeping Children Safe
Our Vision, Ambition and Expectations



Working together with Children, Young People and Families



Foreword

June 2013

Dear Colleague,

In this document we set out the arrangements that we believe will deliver a new model of social work with children and families in York. This is a model that is fit for the world in which we now live.

We have set out the outcomes we seek to achieve, the expectations we have of our professional workforce and the tools, leadership and resources we will provide.

The model we have developed and the cultural changes that we seek are driven by a belief that:

- we can, together, help more children and young people to achieve better outcomes and equip them to develop into responsible and participating citizens in their communities, and
- we need to create an environment in which, as staff, you can get on and do the job you want to do in the way you want to do it.

In York, we start from a strong base. We are not afraid to question or challenge our own practice and already we have achieved good outcomes for some of the most vulnerable children and young people in the city. However, we can do more and we can do it better. Our new model of working asks us all to do some things differently. We appreciate that it will take time and patience for this approach to become embedded.

Over the coming year we will stay in close touch with every member of staff to make sure we understand the impact of the changes we are implementing both on individuals and teams.

We want York to be a city where good social work practice is recognised and supported, and where weak or poor practice is promptly identified and addressed through peer challenge, supervision or management oversight.

Such a culture will not only further improve the outcomes we can achieve for those we serve but also ensure that children's social work in York is a safe and rewarding career choice.



A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Eoin Rush'.

Eoin Rush - Assistant Director, Children's Specialist Services

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The York Vision

Together with our partners, parents and carers we can help more children and young people to achieve better outcomes and equip them to develop into responsible and participating citizens in their communities.

“ York is a city making history and its children are our future. Every child and young person in York deserves to live their dreams. We will stretch, support, nurture and release them to do so. Working with them and their families, York will be the best place in Britain in which to grow up.

(Dream Again - Children and Young People's Plan 2013 -16)

”

Ways in which we will work to help all children, young people and their families to live their dreams:

- Striving for the highest standards
- Upholding truly equal opportunities
- Helping children and young people to always feel safe
- Intervening early and effectively
- Working together creatively
- Working in genuine collaboration with children and families: mutual respect and celebration
- Connecting with communities, within which our children live, and to the rich culture of our great city
- Remembering that laughter and happiness are important!

“ The new vision for children's social care is in the best interests of social work practice in York and an increased focus on social work practice outcomes is welcome

Social worker, Children's Social Care staff survey 2013

”

The Vision for Children's Social Care

We have always recognised that children are best brought up in their own family. Where this is not safely possible, we will seek to ensure alternative and high quality care arrangements. For most, and when appropriate, this will be in a local family placement.

We must ensure we give extra help to any family experiencing difficulties and to those parents who may be vulnerable. We will continue to support our foster families, adoptive parents and extended family members who take on the care of vulnerable children.

We will know we have succeeded when we have safely reduced the number of children who are looked after in York and the number who are subject to protection plans.

This means we will:

- spend **more time** working in partnership with families to effect positive change
- provide **strong professional development and professional support** for our social workers
- **manage risk**, understanding that uncertainty and risk is a feature of child protection work
- make a difference by **working together**.

“ These arrangements will allow social workers to provide a better service to, and work more effectively with families. ”

Social worker, Children's Social Care staff survey 2013

“ Making the social worker role more 'professional' is welcome. ”

Social worker, Children's Social Care staff survey 2013



Delivering our Vision

The importance and value of children's social work in York is widely recognised and these services are consistently prioritised in Council planning.

Change is not just about structure. Changing child and family social work in York involves a whole system approach to deliver a new vision for our social work services.

By definition, our whole system approach to our change process means that everyone whose work contributes to, or is affected by, children's social care is included.

To deliver our vision we will work closely with our partners across all agencies and include our partners at every stage of our work with families. This means we will keep colleagues informed of our involvement with families, where possible collaborate on and share assessments, feedback on outcomes and notify all involved when we intend to end our involvement with a child, young person and their parents/carers.

Our commitment to partnership working will be strengthened further by the introduction of a Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). This will see the co-location at West Offices of key police personnel who will work alongside our single front door arrangements.

CAMHS and Children's Social Care in York have always worked closely in partnership. We share the vision of placing families and young people at the centre of services. This includes the developments within the service around recognising the expertise of families, listening carefully to, and working closely with, parents and providing accessible and speedy interventions. We look forward to the continued development of this partnership within this framework.

Chris Williams – Clinical Lead, Child, Adolescent and Mental Health Service (May 2013)

“ North Yorkshire Police welcome the approach set out in this vision statement – we share a determination to work together to keep children and young people in York safe. This commitment can be seen clearly in the development of a York MASH/CRU, which will improve our ability to make a proportionate and timely response to any concerns for children or young people in the city. ”

DCI Nigel Costello, North Yorkshire Police (May 2013)



A Changing Policy Landscape

The past three years has seen an unprecedented number of national policy changes that influence the way social work is delivered. These changes support and shape our vision for York. They include:

- Changes to the regulation of social work - with all social workers now required to register with the **Health and Care Professions Council**.
- The introduction of the **College of Social Work** – responsible for the quality of social work programmes and the promotion of high professional standards.
- The work of the **Social Work Reform Board (SWRB)** – although the board has now ceased its work, it has left a strong and nationally supported legacy of improved social work practice. This includes, changes to the calibre of entrants to social work programmes; changes to the curriculum (including practice learning arrangements); and partnerships between employers and social work education providers.
- A **Professional Capabilities Framework** - developed by the SWRB and owned by The College of Social Work, this provides a framework for the way in which social workers should think about and plan their careers and professional development. It will serve as a backdrop to both initial social work education and continuing professional development after qualification.
- **Early intervention – the Allen Review** – at the heart of York’s Children and Young People’s Plan, early intervention is nationally recognised as the way to prevent the escalation of family problems and in this way improve the outcomes for all children and young people.
- The **Munro Review of Child Protection – Final Report** – Professor Munro’s report began a comprehensive process of shifting children’s social work from compliance to a learning culture.
- New **Ofsted Inspection Framework** – shifting the focus from process to outcomes.
- The **Family Justice Review** – speeds up the public law process and emphasises the voice of the child and the role of professionals working together.
- Revised **Working Together 2013** - streamlines previous guidance documents to clarify the responsibilities of professionals towards safeguarding children and strengthen the focus away from processes and onto the needs of the child.
- **Further Action on Adoption** - sets out our proposals for the next steps in tackling delay so that more children can benefit more quickly from being adopted into a loving home.

Our local learning from serious case reviews, learning lessons reviews, case file audits, staff surveys, customer feedback and inspection outcomes is also shaping our approach to delivering our service vision.

A New Style of Delivery

An important element of the change programme is changing the way we do things and we need to be clear what our new 'style' will be.

Our starting point is to:

- be creative and **solution focused**
- undertake **proportionate assessments**
- implement **evidence based interventions**
- make **speedy interventions**, with depth and decisiveness
- create a system that optimises **a seamless journey for the child**
- act as **good corporate parents** for the children in our care
- ensure that Looked After Children are placed in **local family placements** whenever possible
- **spend time with children and young people** and listen to what they have to say
- **listen to parents**, respect them as parents and empower them to care for their children safely
- **place a high value on families' expertise** and their own strengths and resources
- be **open and honest** with children, young people and their families
- **release social work professionals from bureaucracy** by streamlining processes and systems and providing appropriate support services.

In line with the Munro Review and the recommendations of the SWRB, each social work team will have an advanced social work practitioner (ASWP) who will play a key role in both practitioner and service development.

A principal social worker (PSW) will bring together the work of the ASWPs and will be responsible for ensuring that social workers have the opportunities to develop their skills and that service provision continues to reflect service need.

We need to improve on the communication of information to staff teams and make links between changes and how this impacts on practice.

Service manager, Children's Social Care staff survey 2013

CAFCASS, as a front line safeguarding agency, welcomes this vision. Relationships are strong with Children's Social Care in York and we have a shared focus to achieve the very best outcomes for some of the most vulnerable children and young people in the area

Margaret Harvey -
Service Manager, CAFCASS

What We Have Done so Far

We have already developed a suite of services to support the outcomes we are seeking. These include:

Front Door

A coordinated point of contact for all referrals to children's social care and early help services.

This service ensures that:

Together with our partners, we can get the right early help to the right child at the right time.

We will see sustained good performance through:

- An increase in the number and quality of CAF interventions
- A reduction in the number of Looked After Children

Integrated Family Service

A family support service (incorporating York's 'Troubled Families' programme), which seeks to provide early help and support to families. This service is based in three localities across the city, co-located on school sites. The teams work in partnership with local services to ensure that early support is targeted at those families most in need.

This service ensures that:

Families receive timely and effective help in their local community, tailored to their needs and circumstances, and which seeks to build on their strengths.

We will see sustained good performance through:

- Achieving our target for the numbers of newly identified 'Troubled Families' engaging with the support in year
- Increasing the number of families who receive effective early support



Looked After Children's Support Service

Provides a dedicated support service to Looked After Children including assessed and supervised contact and direct work with Looked After Children.

This team will move into a new, specially designed facility in September 2013.

This service ensures that:

Children who are looked after can enjoy safe contact with their parents/carers, their wishes and feelings are heard and understood, and they are helped to understand their histories as part of their journey to alternative care.

We will see sustained good performance through:

- A routine survey of users to evidence satisfaction
- The high quality of life story work

Review and Re-procurement of Children's Home Provision

The provision of children's home beds in York has been contracted to Northern Care, a major provider of children's residential care in the north of England. This arrangement includes the block purchase of four beds at Wenlock Terrace in York and a further two external placements in Northern Care's other homes.

This arrangement ensures that:

We have sufficient local and out of authority high quality residential beds available for those young people who may require this provision.

We will see sustained good performance through:

- A sustained reduction in the total number of out of authority placements due to the delivery of enhanced quality local provision

A New Deal for Foster Carers

In recognition of the key role our foster carers play here in York we have introduced a new fees and allowances scheme that is closely linked to a foster carer's development pathway. The new grading and remuneration structure provides an excellent platform for the effective retention and ongoing recruitment of foster carers.

These arrangements ensure that:

Our foster carers are recognised as important colleagues in the delivery of our vision and we maintain a sufficient supply and range of quality local placements for York children who need to be looked after.

The creation of a LAC team and an IFS team is welcome.

Social worker, Children's Social Care staff survey 2013



We will see sustained good performance through:

- A reduction in the percentage of children in care having three or more moves of placement
- An improvement in the percentage of children in care for over two and a half years and in one place for two years or more, or placed for adoption
- A sustained increase in the numbers of locally approved foster carers

Strengthened Independent Challenge

We have located our independent reviewing officers (IROs) within the City of York Safeguarding Children Board (CYSCB) to coincide with the implementation of a new comprehensive CYSCB performance framework. We have further strengthened this service with the addition of one new IRO post.

These arrangements ensure that:

The quality assurance and monitoring of single and multi-agency interventions with children, young people and their parents/carers are effective and contribute to a learning environment across the community of services in York.

We will see sustained good performance through:

- A sustained reduction in the percentage of children becoming the subject of a Child Protection Plan for a second or subsequent time
- Sustained evidence of timely and effective decision making
- Evidence from case audits that lessons from reviews and research are understood and applied in practice

Reconfigured Children's Social Care Teams

We have reconfigured our children's social care teams to support the delivery of our vision. Each team will be led by an experienced service manager, include an advanced practitioner and, where possible, a newly qualified social worker. Details of the new structure are set out below.

These arrangements ensure that:

There is a clear focus on the delivery of high quality social work to the most vulnerable children and young people in the city.

We will see sustained good performance through:

- Evidence from case file audits demonstrates that children and families understand what is expected from them in any intervention
- Evidence of effective outcome focused 'child in need' support provided whenever appropriate
- Evidence from staff surveys that practitioner satisfaction with their role is good or better

Creation of Separate Fostering and Adoption Teams

In recognition of the critical importance of appropriate and timely alternative family placements for children and young people who cannot be supported within their families, we have strengthened both services. Each team will have a dedicated service manager and advanced practitioner to lead the delivery of these services.

These arrangements ensure that:

Children and young people can receive high quality alternative care without delay.

We will see sustained good performance through:

- An improvement in the percentage of Looked After Children adopted following an agency decision that the child should be placed for adoption (placed within 12 months of decision)

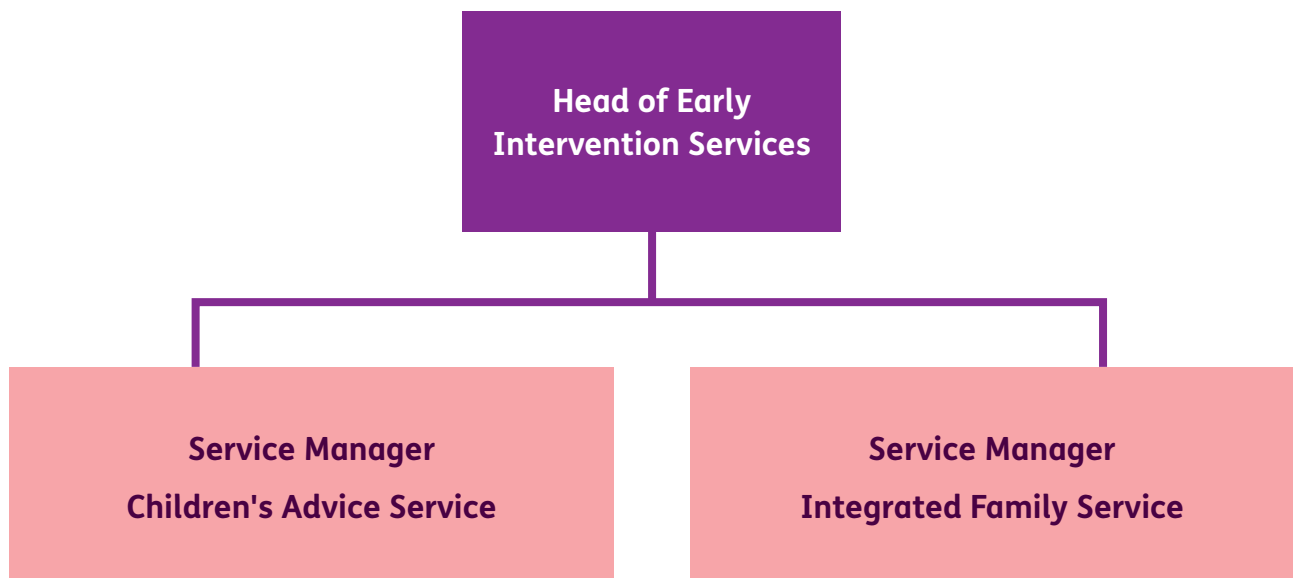
The Structure

There are three main arms to the structure:

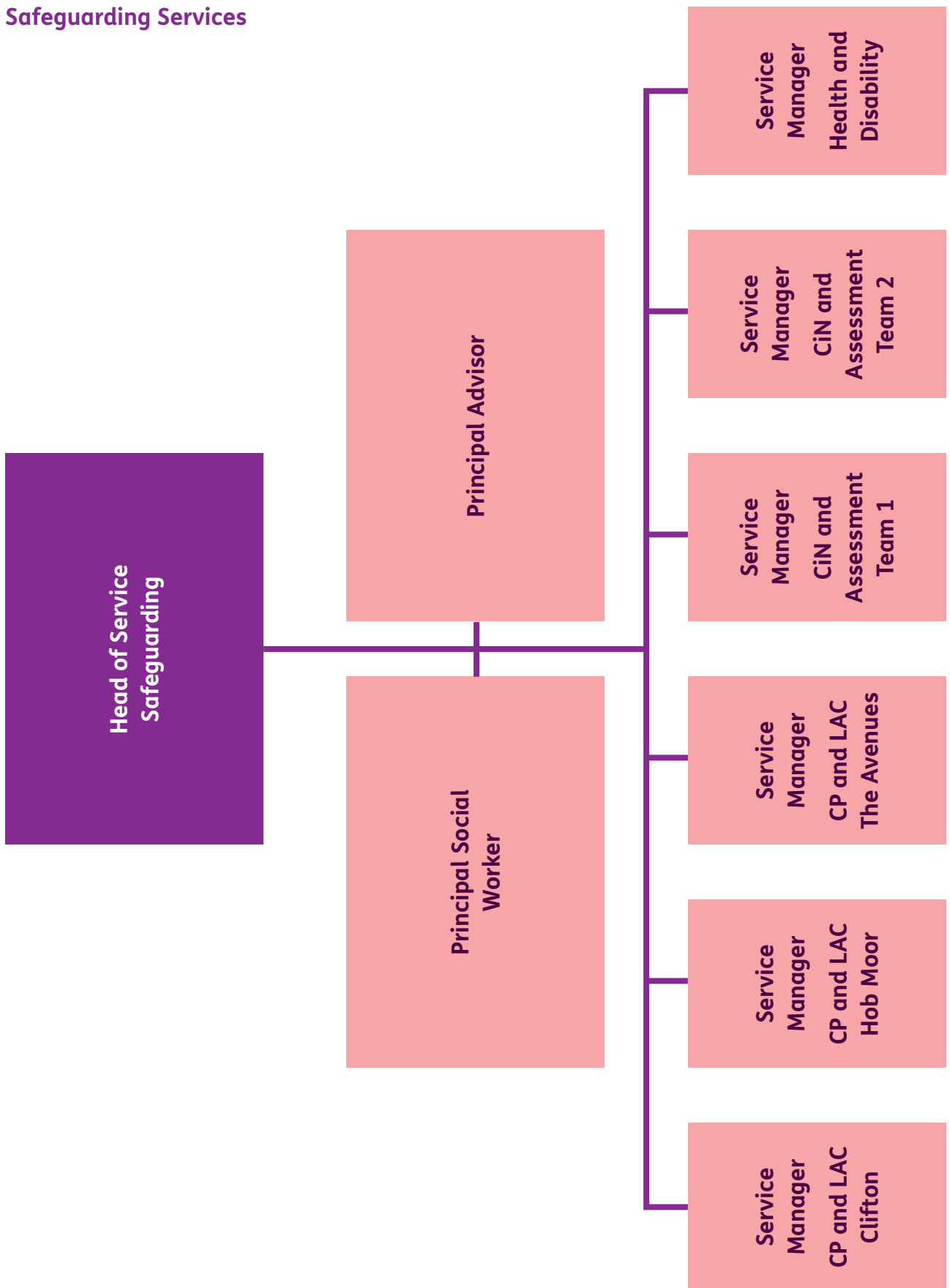
- Advice Service (within Children's Specialist Services - Early Intervention Services)
- Children's Social Care - Safeguarding Services
- Children's Social Care – Resources



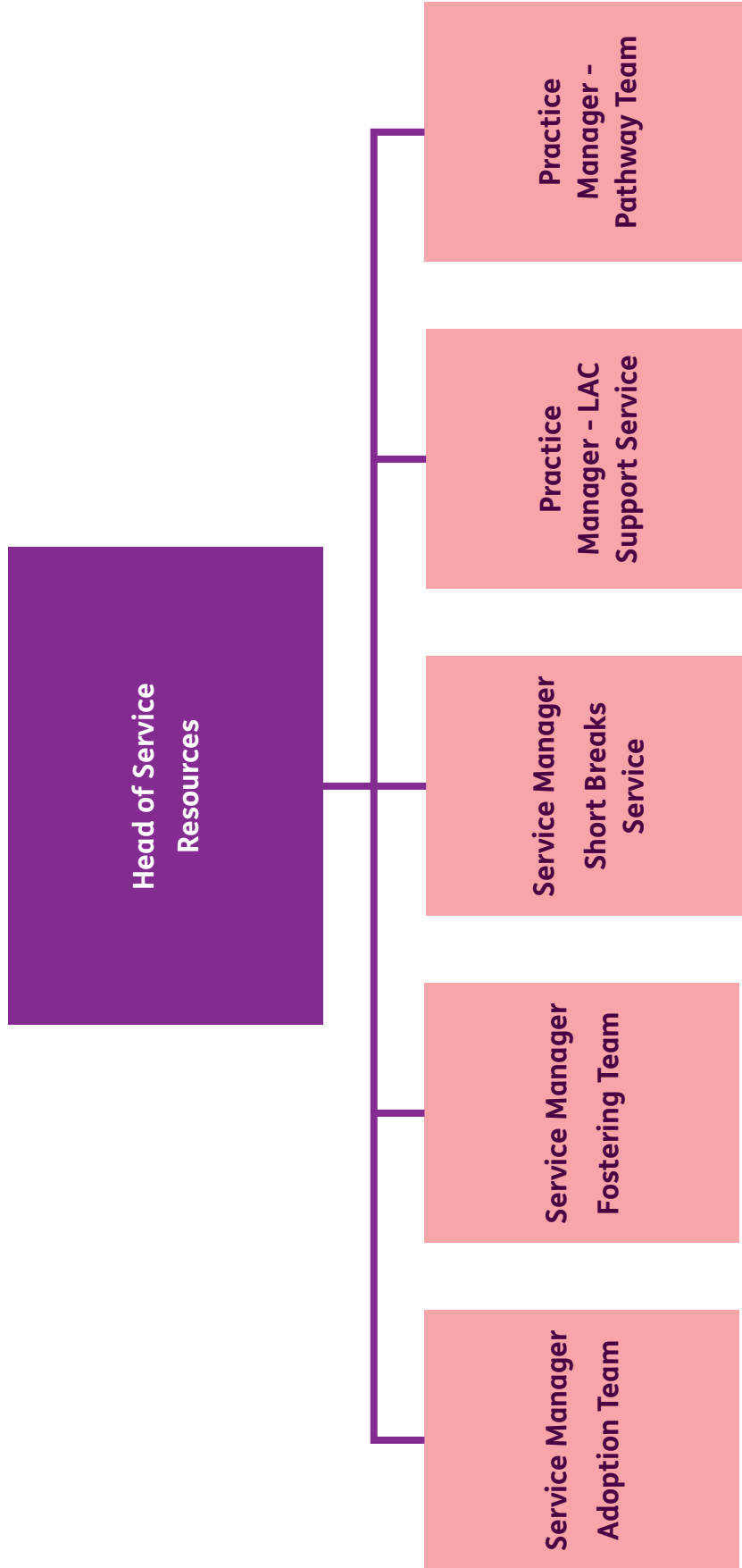
The Advice Service



Safeguarding Services



Resources



“ The new team structure is an improvement on the previous structure, as it offers opportunities for teams to support and learn from each other. ”

Social worker, Children's Social Care staff survey 2013

“ The expansion of the Assessment Team to cover children in need will fill current gaps in service provision and enable more time to sufficiently safeguarding children. ”

Social worker, Children's Social Care staff survey 2013



Introducing New Teams

The implementation of the new “Assessment and Child in Need” and “Child Protection and Looked After Children” teams described above will further strengthen our ability to deliver our vision.

Assessment and CIN Service (ACS)

The Assessment and Child in Need (CIN) Service will be delivered by two new assessment and child in need teams based at West Offices. These teams will be co-located with the North Yorkshire Police’s Vulnerable People’s Unit (PVP) and will work closely with the advice team and integrated family service.

Each unit will be responsible for children aged 0 to 18 years.

The teams will, on receipt of a referral undertake an initial assessment. As a result of this assessment the teams will progress the cases in one of the following ways:

- case closure
- step down to integrated family support
- convene a child in need (CIN) meeting and provide appropriate CIN support, including intensive intervention work
- convene an initial child protection conference
- initiate immediate court action where required.

It is the aim of this service to provide families with effective and timely help that will divert them from child protection services and court intervention.

Child Protection and Looked After Children’s Service (CP/LAC)

The CP/LAC Service will be delivered by three locality based teams.

The social workers in these teams will be supported to further develop expertise in undertaking assessments that will replace the historical need for expert assessments. The advanced practitioner social workers in these teams will develop expertise and knowledge around specific areas of risk (e.g. toxic trio¹) and other types of abuse.

Once a permanence plan has been agreed for the child/young person the teams will continue to support the children and their families until that permanence plan has been achieved.

1) Domestic abuse, parental mental health, drug/alcohol misuse. Risk of maltreatment is escalated when there are two (or more) of the toxic three impacting on parental capacity.

Introducing New Posts

To achieve our vision, and prompted by the drivers described on page 9, we have created two new roles.

Principal Advisor Children's Social Care

This role will ensure that our systems and processes are integrated and aligned to the operational needs of the service and multi-agency partnerships.

Principal Social Worker

This post holder will play a key role in driving up and maintaining the highest levels of social work practice.

“ There will be more social workers to assess and plan for children and families ”

Social worker, Children's Social Care staff survey 2013



“ We need confident, assertive, well-supported social workers whose expertise is valued and for whom partnership is second nature. These changes are vital to reinvigorating children's social care along the lines set out by the Munro Review. ”

Simon Page - Head of Integrated Youth Support Services

Creating the Right Working Environment

To ensure Children's Social Care in York is a good place to work we will:

- promote a culture that supports and develops good practice. (The introduction of advanced social work practitioner posts and the new principal social worker will promote challenge and support to improve practice)
- promote a practice culture in which staff are proud of the work they do, are willing to take responsibility and own the impact they have on families' futures
- support informed decision making as close to practice as possible with limited need for recourse to senior managers (this will be defined through a new scheme of delegation)
- work hard to get the right people in the right jobs so that they can bring about good outcomes for children and families
- have high expectations of staff and expect them to have high expectations of themselves to support good social work practice
- look for strong leaders who constantly identify what needs to be realigned in order to improve performance, manage change and who are resilient to the anxiety that this work can generate
- look for leaders who can balance improving service efficiency and effectiveness with the need to manage increasing financial pressures
- look for leadership behaviour at all levels of the organisation
- operate a robust selection process for all staff so that the requisite knowledge, skills and methodological interests that are needed are present, and all the recruits have the necessary personal qualities required to develop and learn
- take responsibility for developing the knowledge and skills of our staff in order to carry out effective assessments, implement evidence based interventions, understand the developmental needs of children, make positive relationships with families and other professionals and have strong report writing skills and good communication skills
- promote practice based career pathways so that those skilled in working with families have an alternative career path to the managerial route.

“ Increased time for working with families, lower case loads and clearer career development is very encouraging. ”

Social worker, Children's Social Care staff survey 2013

Developing the Skills we Need

Whether social workers start in York as a newly qualified social worker or with a high level of skill and knowledge we will offer a development programme suited to their individual professional development needs.

All workers will receive a comprehensive induction programme that will help to orientate them within York's local procedures, its culture and its style of working.

A framework for social care development has been developed that will promote and support our social work model. The new framework will enable staff and their managers to plan individual career progression and development in line with the objectives of the Professional Capabilities Framework, the Munro Review, and related developments. (See Appendix A for workforce development pathways.)

A new feature of our strengthened professional development framework will be the introduction of observed practice visits and observed supervision by senior managers. This process will mirror the already established system of observed lessons in school settings.

“ As part of York St John University's highly valued partnerships with York City Council, we continue to support the development framework for York foster carers as part of the York's Children's Social Care Transformation Programme. This high quality partnership work is a model for those who wish to engage in innovative collaborative working, in this important area of workforce development. ”

Paul Smith, York St John University



Providing the Right Tools

We know that our staff are our most valuable resource. We have described our determination to create the right environment and to provide high quality leadership, supervision and support. We also recognise that we need to provide the right systems and tools to support the highest quality practice.

With work already underway we will continue to:

- redesign our systems to ensure that, so far as is possible, they enhance professional practice
- create recording systems that maintain a systemic and family narrative
- make the most of new technologies including mobile working and client interface software.



Service Planning and Review

To ensure we are focused on our priorities, clear about the outcomes we are seeking and routinely evaluating our impact, all teams within our service will work to an annual cycle of service planning.

The Children's Specialist Services service plan is the overarching plan for children's social care. Each head of service has a sub-plan from which will flow individual team action plans.

Team action plans will be owned by individual service managers who will be expected to make quarterly progress reports against the actions in their plan.

The diagram below illustrates the bookshelf of planning.



“ I welcome the new vision for Children's Social Care. In York, joint working is one of our hallmarks that ensures we deliver co-ordinated support for children, young people and their families. I am delighted that this vision places children and young people at the heart of all our planning, not the processes, and that our joint working ensures we all work together to bring about the best outcomes for each child or young person. ”

Jess Haslam, Head of Integrated Services for Disabled Children

Over to You

We are committed to providing the highest quality services to the children and young people of York. We know that this can only be achieved if we value and support our staff in the very challenging work they do. We have set out in this document our promise to do all we can to lead, support and provide the best possible working environment.

We will continue to survey all our staff at least twice per year but if you have any feedback on this document, please contact Eoin Rush, Assistant Director, Children's Specialist Services: E: eoin.rush@york.gov.uk

At the end of the day it is your professionalism, skill and commitment that will make the difference ...

over to you

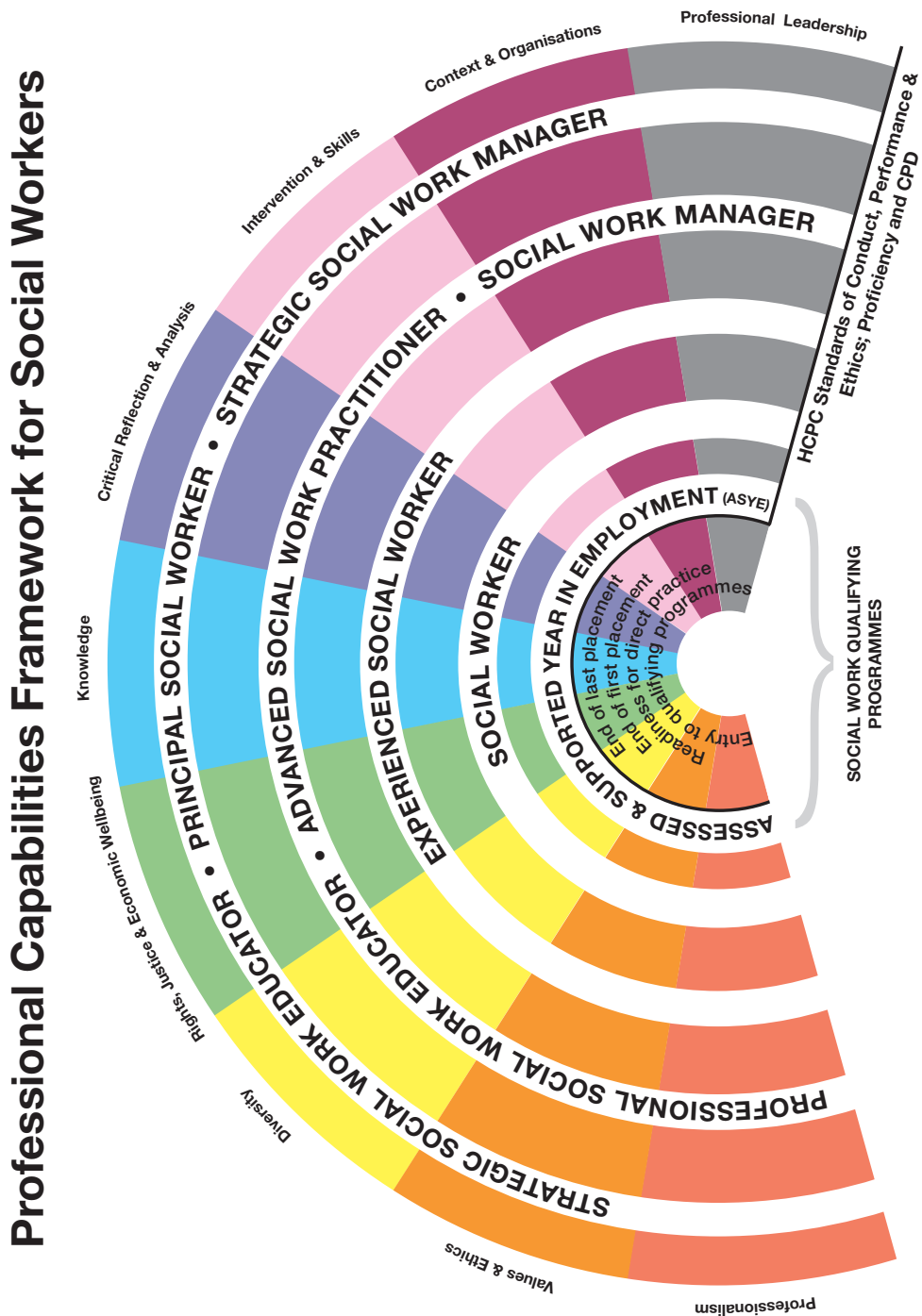
“ One of the problems is that in recent years too many social workers have come to feel undervalued, disempowered and de-skilled. Social workers are experts ... They are, and we must recognise them and treat them as such. ”

Sir James Munby, President of the Family Division



Appendix A:

Professional Capabilities Framework for Social Workers



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Source: www.tcsw.org.uk

Children’s Social Care – Professional Capability – Workforce Development Pathway

Professionalism	Values and Ethics	Diversity	Rights Justice and Economic Wellbeing	Knowledge	Critical Reflection and Analysis	Intervention and Skills	Contexts and Organisations	Professional Leadership
Identify and behave as a professional social worker, committed to professional development	Apply social work ethical principles and values to guide professional practice	Recognise diversity and apply anti-discriminatory and anti-oppressive principles in practice	Advance human rights and promote social justice and economic wellbeing	Apply knowledge of social sciences, law and social work practice theory	Apply critical reflection and analysis to inform and provide a rationale for professional decision-making	Use judgement and authority to intervene with individuals, families and communities to promote independence, provide support and prevent harm, neglect and abuse	Engage with, inform, and adapt to changing contexts that shape practice. Operate effectively within own organisational frameworks and contribute to the development of services and organisations. Operate effectively within multi-agency and inter-professional settings	Take responsibility for the professional learning and development of others through supervision, mentoring, assessing, research, teaching, leadership and management
ASYE Programme Important links: www.tcsw.org.uk	www.tcsw.org.uk www.hpc-uk.org/	Equality and Diversity training	Legal Updates http://www.unicef.org.uk/UNICEFs-Work/Our-mission/UN-Convention/	Basic Child Protection Awareness Basic Child Sexual Exploitation Awareness	Individual Supervision Getting the Most from Supervision	Core Assessment Skills SHB Assessment Model (AIM)	ACE and YorOK Inductions LSCB www.saferchildrenyork.org.uk	Mentoring Practice Enabling Award

Professionalism	Values and Ethics	Diversity	Rights Justice and Economic Wellbeing	Knowledge	Critical Reflection and Analysis	Intervention and Skills	Contexts and Organisations	Professional Leadership
<p>www.hpc-uk.org/</p> <p>www.education.gov.uk</p> <p>http://yorkchildcare.procedureonline.com/index.htm</p> <p>www.yorkworkforcedevelopment.org.uk</p> <p>www.sdqinfo.com</p> <p>www.ccinform.co.uk/</p> <p>Making Research Count</p>	Supervision including observed supervision	<p>http://www.tcs.w.org.uk/standards-2col-lhm.aspx?id=6442451175&terms=Equality%20and%20diversity</p> <p>Supervision</p>		<p>Single agency Child Protection Awareness Refresher CP</p> <p>Child Sexual Exploitation for Social Workers</p> <p>Risk and Resilience</p> <p>Toxic Trio and CP</p> <p>Domestic Abuse</p> <p>Parental Mental Health</p> <p>Child Development Training (0-18)</p>	Use of Chronologies Making Research Count	<p>DDP (Dan Hughes) Communication Skills</p> <p>Strengths and Difficulties: www.sdqinfo.com</p> <p>Assessing and Promoting Attachment</p> <p>Solution Focused Interventions (Signs of Safety)</p>	Raise (recording systems) Making Research Count	Leadership and Management Training and Guide



If you would like this information in an accessible format (for example in large print, on CD or by email) or another language, please telephone 01904 552022 or email: OCECommunications@york.gov.uk