

Lancashire's Model of Practice: Strength Based Approach to working alongside Children, Young People and Families

June 2021



Children, young people
and families are safe,
healthy and achieve
their full potential



Table of Contents

Section	Page No
1. Introduction	3
2. Purpose of the document	3
3. Levels of Need in Lancashire	4
4. Lancashire Children, Young People and Families Partnership Vision	4
5. Our Support	5
6. Plan on a page	6
7. Practice	7
8. Our Innovations	7
• Lancashire Family Safeguarding	
• Trauma Informed Lancashire	





1. Introduction

The [Care Crisis Review: Options for Change](#) and [Clear Blue Water Policy Briefing](#) evidenced that changes needed to be made in the way that we practice to tackle the crisis of rising numbers of care proceedings and children in care. There was consensus that relationship building is at the heart of good practice. It is also widely recognised that the best place for children is with their families.

The council and the Department for Education (DfE) through the Strengthening Families Protecting Children Programme have invested in Lancashire and we have introduced Lancashire Family Safeguarding as a strength-based model of practice.

Lancashire's vision is to embed strength-based practice across the whole of Lancashire, using motivational interviewing techniques when working with children, young people and families but also with staff, colleagues and partners. In Lancashire, from our children and

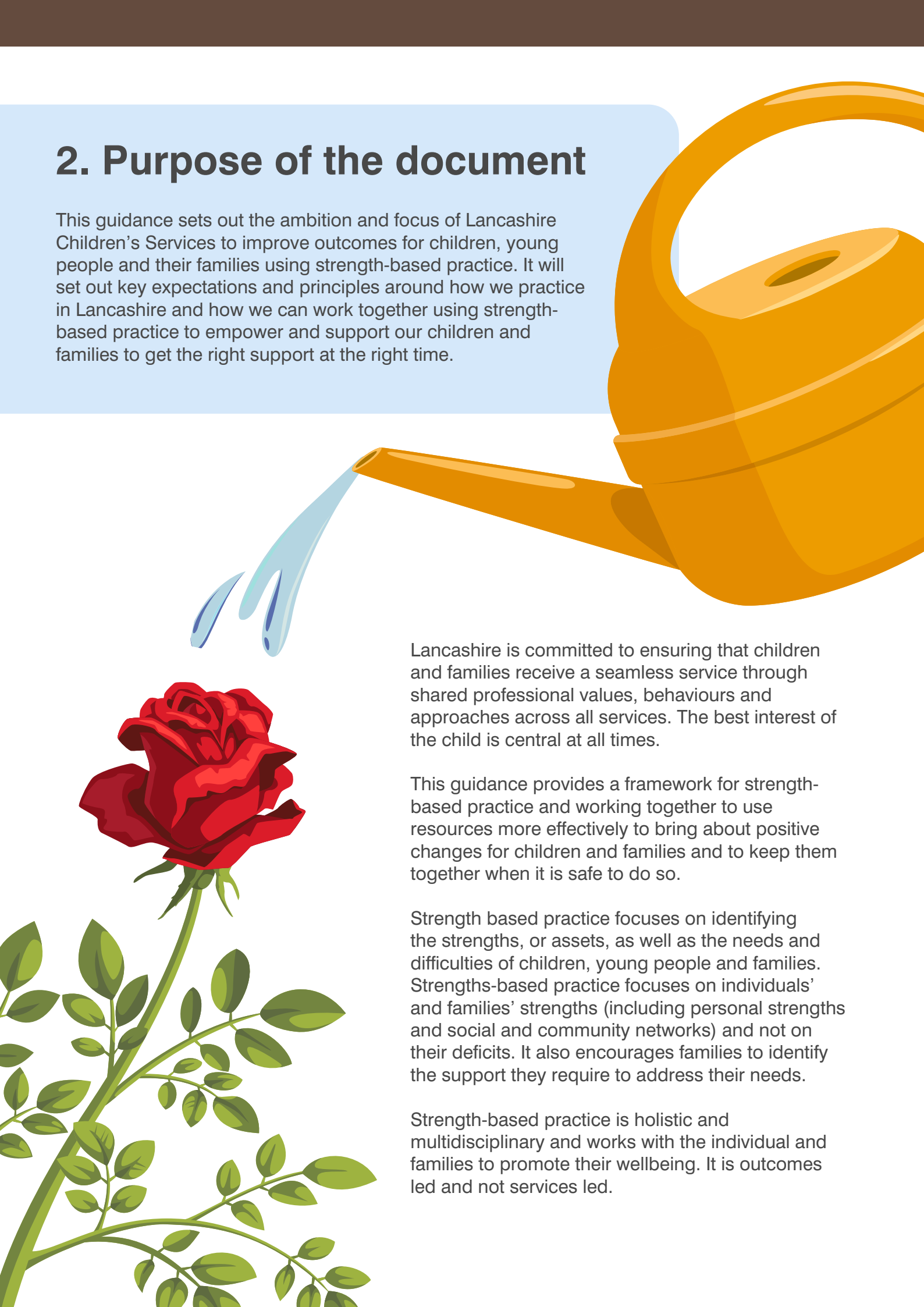
families service and front-door to our leaving care services, we are determined to deliver excellent outcomes for the children, young people, and the families we work alongside.

We believe that kindness matters, and we treat people with fairness, dignity, and respect. Together with our partners, we work with families to recognise and draw on existing resources, motivations, capabilities, and support systems to meet, challenge and overcome adversity. We aim to work with families and partner agencies to co-produce plans that identify sustainable solutions that require the least amount of professional intrusion in family life.

We seek to offer support at the earliest opportunity to help families to solve problems or reduce the impact of problems that have emerged so that families remain together, and children are safe from harm and can reach their full potential.

2. Purpose of the document

This guidance sets out the ambition and focus of Lancashire Children's Services to improve outcomes for children, young people and their families using strength-based practice. It will set out key expectations and principles around how we practice in Lancashire and how we can work together using strength-based practice to empower and support our children and families to get the right support at the right time.



Lancashire is committed to ensuring that children and families receive a seamless service through shared professional values, behaviours and approaches across all services. The best interest of the child is central at all times.

This guidance provides a framework for strength-based practice and working together to use resources more effectively to bring about positive changes for children and families and to keep them together when it is safe to do so.

Strength based practice focuses on identifying the strengths, or assets, as well as the needs and difficulties of children, young people and families. Strengths-based practice focuses on individuals' and families' strengths (including personal strengths and social and community networks) and not on their deficits. It also encourages families to identify the support they require to address their needs.

Strength-based practice is holistic and multidisciplinary and works with the individual and families to promote their wellbeing. It is outcomes led and not services led.

3. Levels of need in Lancashire

Across Lancashire there are identified four broad levels of need:

Level 1 needs – Universal (universal services)

- Most children, young people and families will experience challenges in their lives that impact on their wellbeing. Most families will be able to weather these challenges (are resilient to them) either without help from services, or with advice, guidance and support from universal services, including empathy and understanding.

Level 2 needs - Universal Plus (Early Help Service)

- Some children, young people and families will need support from people who know them well and have established relationships with them to meet some challenges where advice and guidance has not been enough to help the family achieve change or where a child or young person needs additional support to help them to thrive.

Level 3 needs – Intensive (Early Help Service)

- A small number of children, young people and families will experience significant difficulties and will need coordinated support from experts working with them to find sustainable solutions that reduce the impact of challenge on the wellbeing and development of children and young people.

Level 4 needs – Specialist (statutory children's services)

- In exceptional cases families need specialist, statutory support that is designed to maintain or repair relationships and keep families together wherever possible. In some very specific circumstances, the needs are so great that children need to be away from their family to ensure that they are protected from harm and in these circumstances the local authority becomes their “corporate parent”.

Please see [Working Well with Children and Families in Lancashire](#) for further guidance on thresholds.



4. Lancashire Children, Young People and Families Partnership Vision

Outcome one: Vulnerable children and young people are safe from harm and build resilience.

Outcome two: Children and Young People achieve their full potential in education, learning and future employment.

Outcome three: Children and young people enjoy healthy lifestyles and know how to help others

Outcome four: Children, young people and families have a voice in shaping the support they receive.

Outcome five: Children and young people live in Lancashire where they can enjoy a good quality of life, be happy and want to stay.

For further information on our vision please visit: Vision (lancscc.net)

5. Our Support

In Lancashire we are committed to working together with children and families to find out what support they want so that they can build on their own strengths as well as the strength of their family, friends and local community.

We aim to enable families of Lancashire to achieve their goals, reach their full potential and reduce reliance upon traditional services. We want to work with families so that they feel empowered to make and maintain change.

We also aim to ensure that wherever possible children can remain within their family where it is safe to do so.



Lancashire's Vision: Children, young people and their families are safe, healthy and achieve their full potential.

Lancashire's Model of Practice: Family Safeguarding—Strengths-Based Approach to working alongside Children and Families.

In Lancashire, from our front-door to our leaving care services, we are determined to deliver excellent outcomes for the children, young people, and the families we work alongside. We believe that kindness is integral, and we treat people with fairness, dignity, and respect. Together with our partners, we work with families to recognise and draw on existing resources, motivations, capabilities, and support systems to meet challenge and overcome adversity. We aim to work with families and partner agencies to co-produce plans that identify sustainable solutions that require the least amount of professional intrusion in family life.

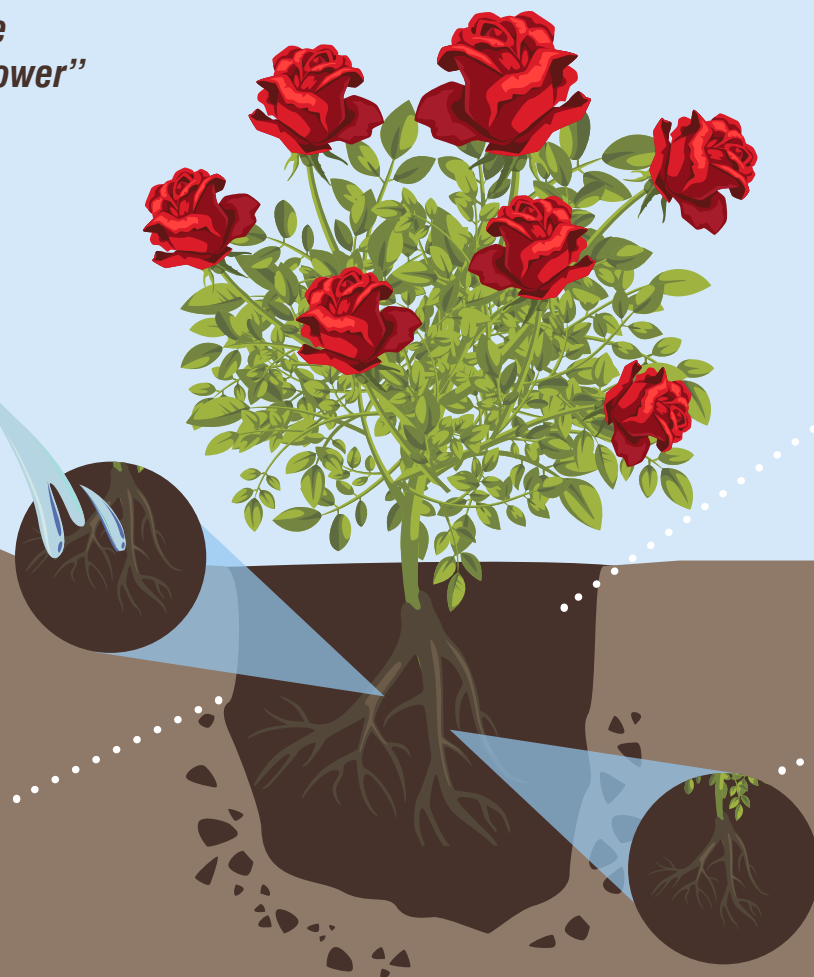
“When a flower doesn't bloom, we fix the environment in which it grows, not the flower”

Alexander Den Heijer.



Our behaviours seek to nourish:

Actively listening, supporting, role modelling, honesty and transparent. Resourceful, adaptable and flexible. Be reflective, using initiative and demonstrating positivity. Demonstrating empathy, compassion, kindness, and unconditional positive regard. Rising to the challenge, Communicating clearly, and timely. Being genuinely responsive and welcoming feedback. Taking accountability, being emotionally intelligent, seeking to empower and increasing resilience. Sensitive and able to contain and co-regulate. Nurturing, demonstrating warmth and professional love and always being aspirational for the families we work alongside.



Our Practice is Strengthened by the use of Evidence-Based Models, Approaches and Tools:

Motivational Interviewing, Strength-Focused, Systemic based practice. Trauma Informed, Relationship-based, Championing Participation, Engagement & Co-Production, Team Around the School, Intensive Family Support, Multi-agency working and co-located teams, Multi-disciplinary and group Supervision, Creative Direct Work, Child First and Family Focused, Task-Centred, Neglect strategy, Life story work, Up-skill families, build on strengths, build community resilience, Family Group Conferencing, Right Support at the Right Time, Psychoanalytic Theories, Holistic, Working “with” Families instead of “doing to” Families, Solution-focused, Cycle of Change, Strengthening Families, Social Learning theory, Balancing Care vs Control.

Our Core Values Keep Us Grounded:

Autonomous, Responsible, Creative, Innovative, Maintaining a Just Culture, Owning our practice, Assuming Positive Intent. Advocating for Social justice. Having a Learning and Growth Mind-set, Maintaining Professional Boundaries. Believing in Changes and Valuing Strengths. Demonstrating Cultural Humility and Responsive, Ethical Practice. Cohesion and Belonging, Driving Shared Identity,

Across Lancashire all agencies work together to offer families the right support at the right time, helping them to stay together safely.

Practice

In Lancashire we use strength-based practice and motivational interviewing to empower families to make and maintain positive change.

We will work alongside children and their families when they experience challenges to support them to build strong foundations and develop resilience so that children thrive.

The support we offer to children, young people and families is solution-focused, trauma informed and evidence-based interventions.

We want to offer support at the earliest opportunity to prevent problems from escalating.

- We want children, young people and their families to receive the right support at the right time.
- We want children to remain within their families when it is safe to do so
- We have a whole family approach when working with families.
- We work with children, young people and families and do not do to them.
- We believe that children, young people and their families are experts in their own lives and that working alongside them and co-producing solutions is important.
- We provide timely support and recognise when children and families require additional support from statutory services.
- We use motivational interviewing skills to empower and enable our children, young people and families to be fully engaged and be in control of the support they receive.

- Children, young people and families are supported and encouraged to participate and be involved in changes to services, have their voices heard and their wishes and feelings understood.

In Lancashire our practice is open and transparent, rights-based and person-centred and has a clear ethical and values-based foundation.

- Kindness and respect are at the heart of everything we do.
 - o Our relationship with children, young people and families
 - o Within our teams
 - o When working with colleagues
 - o In our relationships with our senior management team
 - o Within the community of Lancashire



Eileen Munro's review of child protection in 2011 emphasised a need for a change from a system that has become over-bureaucratised to one which is focused on the safety and welfare of children and young people and the development of professional expertise.

- Manageable caseloads so that social workers can spend time getting to know the families who they are supporting.
- We have improved the way that we record in children's files: using language that is more family friendly and to ensure that the child's voice and journey are heard. Some practitioner's recordings are written directly to the child but we recognise that all practitioners are individual, so we allow autonomy in recording.

In Lancashire we believe in a learning culture and continued learning and development.

- We have Practice Development Managers
- We have an amazing Social Worker Academy to support newly qualified staff and staff who are new to Lancashire
- We have established a Leadership Academy to support the continued development of our leadership team and to support aspiring managers.
- We have Community of Practice to share good practice.
- We hold regular learning circles.
- Audits where the findings inform practice going forward



7. Our Innovation

We have adopted the **Family Safeguarding** whole family approach to supporting children and families this is a way of keeping families together where it is safe to do so. This is achieved through a more collaborative way of working where we as professionals, motivate parents and carers to identify the changes needed within their own families. We also provide wrap around support for parents who need support to change some of their own behaviours which may be a cause for safeguarding concern. This helps to achieve better outcomes for children and young people.

We work with parents to build on strengths and identify positive changes. It's not about imposing change on them. That includes:

- **Motivational interviewing** – A strengths-based conversational approach that encourages families to choose change.
- **Multi-disciplinary teams** - A team of specialists working together to address parental domestic abuse, mental health and substance misuse
- **The family safeguarding workbook and family programme** – An assessment of need leading to a programme of tailored support. The workbook is a working tool for the time a family are being supported by a family safeguarding social worker

- **Group case supervision** monthly supervision for each case with input from every professional working with the family

Becoming Trauma Informed Lancashire -

Trauma is recognised as a profound global public health crisis. The pervasive and harmful impact of traumatic experiences on individuals, families, and communities and the inadvertent but widespread re-traumatisation of children and adults within the system has made it essential to rethink 'how we do business'. There has been a tendency to focus on presenting symptoms such as violence or substance 'abuse' and there is a need to tackle the impact of trauma and focus on how systems can prevent trauma and support recovery from traumatic events by working together, across systems and with communities. Senior Leaders across Lancashire have committed to the development of **Trauma Informed Lancashire** and the collective practice of understanding human experiences of the children, families and communities of Lancashire, responding to such experiences and addressing the causes rather than just the presenting behaviours.

This innovation is being run by the Lancashire Violence Reduction Network (LVRN). The LVRN is a multi-agency network across Lancashire, for further details and information please visit the [LVRN website](#).

