

Children's social care national framework: City of York Council

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How the City of York Council embedded the national framework across all areas of children's social care.

City of York Council has been working consistently to embed the national framework across all areas of children's social care.

The national framework's outcomes and enablers now underpin:

- day-to-day practice
- workforce development
- leadership expectations
- the way in which the service understands and improves the experience of children and families

This has created a consistent, outcome-focused culture that strengthens support, safety and stability for children and young people.

Embedding the outcomes in core practice and quality assurance

York has aligned its core practice tools directly with the national framework. York's revised practice handbook explicitly connects guidance and expectations to each of the 4 outcomes, helping practitioners understand how their everyday actions contribute to:

- children staying safely at home
- being protected
- being supported by their networks
- having stable, loving homes

York's quality assurance framework mirrors this approach with audit tools, case reviews and observations referencing the outcomes throughout. This allows leaders and practitioners to evaluate not just compliance, but how effectively practice is improving the experiences and outcomes that matter most to children and families.

Leaders at all levels are expected to demonstrate how they drive practice that meets the national framework expectations.

Creating a shared understanding of the outcomes

To support consistent application, York developed 3 memorable 'meaningful measures' which are:

- stay home
- safe and connected
- come home

These simple phrases have become embedded in everyday language across the service.

Staff use them to:

- anchor supervision conversations
- structure team discussions
- maintain focus on what they are trying to achieve

Practitioners report that the measures make the outcomes easier to remember and apply during busy frontline work.

Using the practice model to deliver the outcomes

The national framework includes specific outcomes designed to ensure children, young people and families thrive.

The framework outlines key goals and York's building brighter futures practice model provides the tools and approaches that apply the national framework.

Here are the national framework outcomes and how they have been put into practice.

Outcome 1

Stay home: trauma informed conversations and early relational work help families stay together safely and access the support they need.

Outcome 2

Children and young people are safe in and outside their homes: evidence-based safety planning frameworks provide a consistent approach to identifying and managing risk across all settings.

Outcome 3

Children and young people are supported by their family network: family-led decision making strengthens natural networks and ensures plans are grounded in relationships that can sustain progress.

Outcome 4

Come home: permanence and belonging tools, alongside the leaving care offer, promote stability, long-term connections and loving homes for children in care and care leavers.

Workforce development and cultural change

All training is mapped to the national framework, ensuring the workforce understands how their practice contributes to the 4 outcomes and the enabling conditions of good practice.

The Principal Social Worker has used the national framework to drive cultural change, particularly around strengthening family-led practice linked to outcomes 2 and 3.

Regular reflective learning sessions help practitioners consider how their work:

- promotes safety
- strengthens networks

- supports long-term stability

Improving communication with children and families

Key documents, including updated assessment explanations, now reference the outcomes directly. Families receive clearer, more transparent information about the purpose of social work involvement and the goals the service is working towards. This strengthens relationships and supports more collaborative planning.

Key successes and impacts

Through this work, City of York Council has:

- created a shared, outcome-focused vocabulary used consistently across the service
- aligned practice, supervision and quality assurance with national expectations
- strengthened family-led practice and increased use of natural networks
- improved consistency and intentionality in assessment, planning and decision-making
- ensured children and families experience a service guided by clear, ambitious outcomes

<https://www.gov.uk/government/case-studies/childrens-social-care-national-framework-city-of-york-council>