



# Management Practice Standards

Swindon Children's Services

September 2023



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# Introduction

**The decisions and actions made by managers and practitioners will have a profound impact on the lives of those children and their families for whom they have a responsibility, whatever happens. They therefore have to be undertaken with the greatest care and diligence to ensure the best possible outcomes for those children and their families.**

These Management Practice Standards have been developed to support managers to promote consistent social work practice, supervision and management oversight in Swindon. They set out minimum service standards which can be expected by our leaders, managers, teams, children, young people, care experienced young adults, families, foster carers and partners.

These Management Practice Standards are a living document and will be reviewed regularly to fully reflect the needs of teams in Children's Services in Swindon as it develops and grows.

They are informed by statutory guidance and regulations; policies and procedures and so do not stand alone. All employees of Swindon Children's Services or those providing services on behalf of Swindon Children's Services are accountable for ensuring these Management Practice Standards are met at all times. They are mandatory and have been developed with Managers.

Our Management Practice Standards should be understood within the context of:

1. Social Work England, Professional Standards
2. The Health and Care Professions Council Standards of Conduct, Performance and Ethics
3. The Department for Education's Knowledge and Skills Statement for approved child and family practitioners
4. Swindon Children's Services Practice Standards for effective intervention with children, young people and families (under review November 2023)
5. Working Together to Safeguard Children – July 2018

Swindon Children's Services recognises that working with children and young people and their families is one of the hardest and most complex tasks carried out within the public sector. Practitioners are required to give of themselves both professionally and emotionally in a demanding environment. Practitioners and managers require a high level of emotional intelligence, resilience and fortitude. They have a right to expect high-quality support and supervision from the organisation in which they work.



***“Children’s social work can be highly pressured and, at times, extremely stressful. So, whether you are a frontline social worker, team manager or working with children in another social care setting, effective supervision helps you to do your job well.”***

(Supervision and Effective Social Work Practice, Ofsted Blog, 23 October 2018)

Managers across the services; including Directors, Heads of Service, Service Managers, Team Managers, Assistant Team Managers, Case Progression Managers, Practice Improvement Leads /Managers, Panel Advisors, IRO/FIRO and Child Protection Chairs are responsible for ensuring that a good quality service is provided, which includes the following:

- Ensuring a professional response from the initial referral to closure
- Overseeing and recording good quality decisions about the type of response or intervention to be undertaken, and ensuring the skills, competence and capacities are in place for a quality service
- Providing clear direction and setting priorities in the service
- Ensuring the child or young person’s voice is heard and fully considered when implementing the plan

- Scrutinising to ensure good quality recording, analysis of need and report writing
- Providing good quality supervision, annual Personal Development Reviews (PDRs) and well organised team and service meetings
- Making sure employees work within a supportive team culture, with good communication, high expectations, high support and routine commitment to rigorous professional practice
- Demonstrating effective multi-agency collaboration and working

Additionally,

The National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fostering-services-national-minimum-standards>

The National Minimum Standards for Adoption can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/adoption-national-minimum-standards>

# Management Practice Standards

Our aim is to provide a quality service, these Management Practice Standards have been devised to support this. All Social Workers and other qualified practitioners need to know what their manager expects of them, and managers need to be assured that work has been carried out to an acceptable standard. In a practitioner's absence, colleagues need to be able to access records and know quickly what has been happening in the child's life and how best to respond to any need arising. Our Emergency Duty Service (EDS) rely on sound recording on children's records, including accurate and up-to-date summaries to inform decision making out of hours. Key information should be available from the basic details screen, within the child's summary, chronology, genogram, recent reports, and the latest records, plan, and reviews.

Managers are responsible for ensuring there are systems in place to monitor and review the performance of individuals and teams and provide protection, support, and professional development for practitioners, so they can deliver the best service possible, as well as comply with service procedures and legal requirements. Consistent scrutiny of practice makes explicit the service's expectations of each practitioner and enables the manager to provide evidenced feedback about outstanding, good, or acceptable practice, or to address unacceptable performance where it is identified.

Swindon has a [Quality Assurance Framework](#) in place which is intended to be supportive and strengths based. Good practice will be identified through audit activity as will any areas of concern,

to improve performance and outcomes for children, young people, care experienced young adults and families. We are concerned to ensure that intervention makes a positive difference to the lives of children and young people and so impact will always be a key consideration. Where possible; we will gain feedback during audit from children, young people, families and care experienced young adults.

These Management Practice Standards are intended to assist managers across Children's Services; some standards will relate to specific roles. They provide guidance to promote consistent scrutiny, support, and supervision, and ensure defensible, informed and proportionate decision making. They are intended to clarify expectations and are broken down into five key aspects:

- General Management Standards
- Supervision
- Culture and Support
- Recruitment
- Sickness Absence

More detailed practice guides can be found at the end of these Management Practice Standards. It is acknowledged that the implementation of Management Practice Standards requires time and understanding. Communication should be ongoing to embed these Management Practice Standards which are mandatory and essential in supporting our continuous improvement journey.

# 1. General Management Standards

## Induction

- All managers will ensure that every new starter to the organisation receives an induction which allows them time to understand the organisation and its core values, meet relevant others, familiarise self with Management Practice Standards, policies and procedures and complete mandatory core training.
- An induction programme has been created to welcome every new employee to Swindon Children Services.
- The 2-week induction programme can be adapted to suit different roles but contains key essential information relevant to all employees across Children Services.
- All new managers to Children Services should be provided with a copy of these Management Practice Standards as part of their induction.
- A revised induction programme may be useful to support individuals who have been absent from the workplace for a significant period.

## Management Oversight

- All children, young people, and young adults for whom Children Services has a responsibility will have evidence in their records of managers scrutinising practice to ensure that decisions are made in the interests of the child or young person and are properly recorded. The same applies to the records of foster carers.
- When allocating to a social worker, managers will identify the direction of assessment, support and planning and outline tasks required; indicating

timescales and desired outcomes where possible. Management direction must be recorded on the child or young person's file at the point of allocation. The same applies to our work with foster carers within the fostering service.

- Managers will ensure all recording and reports are of a good quality and are completed within timescales. Any court timescales should be explicit within the child's summary.
- Managers will ensure that thorough enquiries are undertaken that produce good quality assessments and analysis of needs, leading to well-argued and evidenced recommendations for actions to be taken.

## Observations of Practice

- Managers will observe practice and give constructive formal feedback to Social Workers at least annually. This is to be documented as an observed practice and saved within supervision records on SharePoint.
- Observations will also be allocated to support monthly audit activity and may occur during Practice Week in November or to support individual or team learning.
- Feedback from children, young people, care experienced young adults, families and carers will be sought wherever possible.
- Practitioners will now be required to submit two pieces of learning and reflect on one of these with a peer for Social Work England registration; the peer reflection has been expected since 01.12.21.

- It is important that observations of practice are supportive, strengths based, reflective, constructive, and well recorded. Any wider learning for the Local Authority should be documented and shared with Senior Managers to take forward.
- Any highlighted actions noted for follow up in an observed practice should be clearly recorded with timescales for completion.
- Managers should offer praise when work is done well and share good practice with Principal Social Worker to cascade or highlight within the Swindon Scoop Newsletter or other learning forums, including the Directors' weekly Keeping in Touch (KIT) meetings Promoting a culture of giving and receiving feedback is important to everyone.
- Management oversight and scrutiny of practice will also be evidenced through children's file audits, supervision, observations and during Practice week in October each year. This activity will support individual professional development and service improvement.

## Supervision

- All Team Managers and Assistant Team Managers must provide monthly supervision to Social Workers within their team. Supervision is both a right and a responsibility. Frequency will vary between roles. (see [Supervision Policy](#))
- All managers should ensure that a supervision agreement, (a template is available in the Supervision Policy) is in place which outlines expectations clearly. This should be reviewed on an annual basis or when there is a change in supervisor.
- Supervision is an essential part of employee care; should provide opportunity to consider the impact of work on self; along with professional development and any training needs.

Information on these issues must be placed in the practitioner's personal supervision file on SharePoint, not on the child, young person's/young adults or foster carers record.

- All managers must ensure protected time to explore decision making and workload. Quality supervision is a key requirement to assure us that children and young people are kept safe, receive a quality service and that planning in respect of them is needs led and timely.
- The supervision record is a key management tool for childcare planning and recording. It must be used in every supervision session relating to that child, young person or foster carer and must include consideration of the following:
  - Guidance as to the course of action required if expectations cannot be met, and contingency plans in the event of no access visits. (Laming 2003 Rec34)
  - The requirement for an allocated social worker; that children and young people's needs are assessed; they each have a plan which meets all their needs and support is put into place to actively address those needs.
  - The requirement that children and young people should be seen, seen alone, and spoken to. If this does not happen, there should be an explanation as to why with detail as to who else is in contact with the child or young person.
  - The child/young person's voice should inform planning and decision making; with creative use of direct work tools to engage and communicate.
  - Supervision should also consider any potential risk to the practitioner along with their health and wellbeing.
- All Team Managers and Assistant Team Managers are responsible for their team performance which they should check prior to individual supervision sessions to inform their conversations.



- If an audit has taken place; this should be reflected upon during supervision and any actions tracked to ensure learning loops have been closed and good outcomes.
- Service Managers will also be responsible for checking performance to inform supervision with Team Managers and Senior Manager Performance meetings.
- All Team Managers and Assistant Team Managers will have access to Care Director and performance data in an ongoing way to observe and monitor team performance.
- All Team Managers and Assistant Team Managers will have access to foster carer records on Care Director.
- All Team Managers and Assistant Team Managers should evidence effective and visible management scrutiny on children's records by recording oversight showing that files are routinely read and regularly audited.
- Any key management decisions outside of formal supervision, which shape the actions and interventions of a practitioner, must be recorded by the manager responsible not the practitioner.
- There should be layered management oversight when advice is sought from a Service Manager or Director; recorded by the relevant Senior Manager.
- Any decisions made outside of hours will be recorded by Emergency Duty Service on Care Director.
- The Team Manager/Assistant Team Manager must retain a copy of supervision on the practitioner's welfare supervision file on SharePoint. If a child, young person, or foster parent has been discussed during welfare supervision; only their Care Director number should be recorded within their welfare supervision record; to be held safely within their personal file on SharePoint.
- Supervision notes should always be recorded in a dignified way.
- Group supervision can be effective; it encourages different perspectives to be sought and experience to be shared. A summary of any actions that stem from group supervision should be recorded within the file.

## Meeting Attendance

- Managers are expected to attend (and chair) single agency, multi-agency and multi-disciplinary meetings and panels to oversee decision making, where there is a change in a child's circumstance, escalation of risk, the transfer of a child between teams, or stepping down to Early Help (see Case Transfer Protocol and the Step-up Step-down Policy on Tri-x).
  - Managers will also be expected to chair the first Child in Need (CIN) meeting, and the fifth, to ensure robust oversight and decision making.
  - Regarding management attendance at Initial Child Protection Conferences (ICPC)– the initiating social worker and team manager attend and the receiving social worker where cases are transferring. This is in line with the SWE CP guidance – which states attendance will be - Suitably qualified, Social Work England registered children's social work professionals who have led and been involved in an assessment of the child and family (and their first line manager); Where the case is transferring good practice would indicate the sending manager and receiving manager have a conversation before the ICPC.
- ## Supervision Records
- There must be a record of the discussion completed for each child or young person/young adult or foster carer at every supervision session concerning them. It must be recorded within their record within five working days. Where Service Managers or other managers who are not the child's allocated worker discuss individual children and young people and make decisions this must be recorded on their records. The same applies to foster carer records.

## Auditing

- The Principal Social Worker / Head of Service for Quality Assurance and the Quality Assurance team will be responsible for organising and collating audit activity across Children Services, alerting all relevant Social Workers, Team Managers, IROs, Service Managers of planned audit activity; timescales and learning outcomes.
- Service Managers, Practice Improvement Leads, Team Managers, Principal Social Worker, Independent Reviewing Officers, Child Protection Chairs, Assistant Team Managers will be asked to undertake file audits, dip sample audits and thematic audits within directed timescales. Observations will also be allocated as part of audit activity.
- Clear guidance will be issued to all new managers who will be given the opportunity to co-audit if they are new to auditing.

## Children/Young People/Care Experienced Young People/Foster Carers records

Team Managers are responsible for ensuring all children, young people, care experienced young adults and foster carer records open to their team are up to date. They must ensure that:

- The personal details held on the child, young person, wider family, foster family are accurately recorded on the basic details screen.
- The chronology is up to date and provides meaningful information in respect of significant decisions outcomes and achievements. It will be important to think about what would be significant to a child reading their record later in life.
- There is an up-to-date child's summary (updated every 3 months or in the event of any meaningful

change which brings the child/young person alive and explains their current situation as well as providing a summary of relevant history; detail of key professionals involved, legal status, contingency planning, family time plans, safety planning and detail of any significant timescales.

- Involvements are updated with clear contact details.
- Childrens' records should be up to date and well written, free from error and written in a positive way to the child/ young person. There may be times when it will not be appropriate to write to the child/young person but all attempts should be made to ensure that notes are written sensitively in a way that would make sense later in life.
- Records must meet agreed standards of practice. E.g., frequency for statutory visiting, CIN visiting, CP visiting, supervisory and unannounced visits to foster parents; seeing the child/young person alone, recording of their views and any observations of children irrelevant of their age or developmental stage.
- Records must be maintained electronically on the child's file, including a copy of a child's life story book which has been scanned / PDF
- Every Cared for child should have an 'About Me' which is used to get know them and help them to understand their past and current situation. Identifying also if any further work is required to support them.
- There should be a recent photograph located on every cared for child/young person individual file, with their name and date of photograph recorded, to be correctly located on files of cared for children and young people.



## Confidentiality

All managers have access to personal and highly confidential information pertaining to the public and employees. Swindon Data Protection & Confidentiality Policies explains how we expect employees of the Council to treat confidential and personal information and so should be read alongside this practice guide.

As a manager, you will receive and handle personal and private information about children, families, foster carers/parents, adopters, partner agencies, Swindon employees and organisational matters through the course of your day-to-day work. Swindon Children's Services is committed to ensuring this information is well-protected. To this end, all Council employees are expected to complete mandatory training.

We must protect information for a number of reasons, to include:

- Children, young people, care experienced young adults and family personal information is sensitive.
- Information can be sensitive to the operational area.
- An employee's personal information belongs to them.
- To safeguard children, young people from harm and / or promote their wellbeing.
- To safeguard and protect vulnerable adults.
- Confidentiality affects all employees. Council employees may have various levels of authorised access to confidential information. All managers are expected to understand and maintain confidentiality relevant to their role. This is key to the functioning and integrity of Swindon Borough Council.

Common examples of confidential and personal information include:

- Financial information.
- Personal data regarding children, families, foster carers/parents, adopters, members of the fostering family, partners, agencies and commissioned services.
- Data entrusted to the Council by external parties.
- Documents and processes explicitly marked as confidential.
- Unpublished goals, plans, forecasts, strategies, and initiatives marked as confidential or otherwise.

### What you should do:

- Ensure mandatory training is always up to date.
- Clear desk policy.
- Lock or secure confidential information always.
- Place confidential documents in the confidential waste when they are no longer needed.
- Make sure you only view confidential information for the purpose of completing work related tasks.
- Make sure you only view confidential information on secure devices and only those that you are directly working with or your staff are.
- Only disclose information to other employees when it is necessary and authorised.
- Keep confidential documents inside Swindon BC premises unless it is absolutely necessary to move them.

## What you should not do

- Use confidential information for any personal benefit, profit, or interest.
- Disclose confidential information to anyone outside of Swindon BC unless there are legitimate reasons for doing so.
- Replicate confidential documents and files and store them on insecure or personal devices.

## Confidentiality Measures

Swindon BC will take measures to ensure that confidential information is well protected; to include:

- Ensure that manual records are held securely.
- Minimise printing.
- Encrypt electronic information and safeguard databases.
- Ask you to sign a confidentiality agreement.
- Ask for authorisation by senior management to allow employees to access certain confidential information or restrict access e.g. if there is a known conflict of interest.

## Exceptions

Confidential information may occasionally have to be disclosed for legitimate reasons. Examples include:

- Where a regulatory body requests information as part of an investigation or audit.
- Where it is necessary and considered to be in the best interests of safeguarding the welfare of children and young people.

- Where Swindon BC examines a venture or partnership that requires disclosing some information (within legal boundaries).
- In such cases, employees involved should document their disclosure procedure and collect all necessary authorisations. We are duty bound to minimise the amount of information disclosed to only that which is necessary.

## Disciplinary Consequences

Any breaches of the Council's Data Protection & Confidentiality Policy may lead to disciplinary and legal action.

Swindon BC will investigate every breach of confidentiality and consider termination of any employee who wilfully or regularly breaches our confidentiality guidelines. Swindon BC may also have to act in respect of any unintentional breach of its confidentiality policy depending on the nature of this, intent, frequency, and seriousness.

## Communication

### Communication with children, young people, care experienced young adults, foster carers and families

- All those who we work with are to be spoken to professionally and always treated with respect.
- Team Managers and Assistant Team Managers to ensure that practitioners have provided full contact details to children and young people, their families and care experienced young adults and all relevant professionals within two working days of new allocation. This includes name, telephone contact and email address.
- Children, young people and their families to be notified of any significant changes the management within two working days (e.g. re-allocation or transfer).

- All messages to be responded to within two working days.
- All Managers to be open, honest, and transparent with families always.
- All Managers must use plain and jargon free language.
- Team Managers/Assistant Team Managers must ensure that children, young people, families and care experienced young adults; carers have access to interpreters if their first language is not English, or if British Sign Language speakers – also, that written information provided is translated if required.
- Duty telephones should have clear, relevant message to assist those who are calling Swindon BC.
- All Managers should ensure they have a complete signature on their email – their name, role, team, telephone and email details; relevant work days if applicable. We are asking all Children Services employees to support other colleagues by using pronouns.
- Out of Office should be used so that people are clear whether people are available for contact and accurate voice mail messages should be updated.
- All managers/practitioners should provide their first and last name to callers and when reference is made to someone talking to their manager, the name of that manager is provided to the caller.

## Communication with Professionals:

All professionals to be spoken to professionally and treated with respect.

Team Manager/Assistant Team Manager to ensure practitioners provide full contact details to all professionals involved with the child, young person/ young adult and their family. This includes name, telephone number and email address.

All messages to be responded to within two working days.

Professionals to be advised of any significant events or changes within the family circumstance within 2 working days.

All professionals to be invited to all key meetings regarding the child or young person with sufficient notice.

All professionals to receive a copy of all relevant documentation within timescales.

Foster carers should be afforded the same level of respect.

If capacity is challenged, wherever possible a response email should be sent with an indication as to when a fuller response can be provided.

All Managers to connect with relevant partners to increase understanding of each other's roles.



## Communication with your Colleagues.

- Colleagues to be spoken to professionally and always treated with respect.
- All Managers are expected to read circulated information and cascade to their teams. Email traffic can be overwhelming; other ways of delivering messaging need to be considered; for example face to face.

### Team meetings.

- Team Manager / IRO / CP Chairs to be advised immediately of any significant changes to a family situation which may mean a child or young person is at risk; Service Manager to be consulted as appropriate and if escalation is required.
- Service Manager to be advised immediately if a timescale or piece of management advice cannot be adhered to with a clear rationale as to why.
- Legal Services to be notified in advance if court timescales cannot be met so that the court and relevant others; to include family can be notified in good time.

- Team Managers must advise their Service Managers if there are any issues which are impacting upon their ability to fulfil their role so that support can be put into place at the earliest opportunity.
- Assistant Team Managers must advise their Team Manager if there are any issues which are impacting upon their ability to fulfil their role so that support can be put into place at the earliest opportunity.
- Team Managers/Assistant Team Managers to follow the HR policies and ensure teams are aware of relevant policies to support staff wellbeing e.g., Lone Working policy etc.
- Care should be taken by all to ensure that emails are directed only to those who a response is required. Sometimes, it will be necessary to copy others into emails for information or when seeking advice. If an answer is expected; please address the email to that person.
- All Team Managers model good practice to their teams in respect of communication.



## 2. Supervision

- All employees will have a supervision contract to be updated annually or if there is a change in supervisory relationship. This includes practitioners who are not social work qualified.
- All Team Managers/Assistant Team Managers should observe and record at least one observation of practice per year. Qualified social workers must now record at least one peer reflection as part of their CPD each year.
- Every manager has a duty of care. This includes a requirement to ensure that those they supervise are safe within their work environment.
- All employees will have a Display Screen Equipment assessment on their supervision record.
- Each employee has a professional responsibility to be accountable for their own conduct, development, and delivery of a high-quality service. This includes being prepared for supervision, bringing evidence of progress, seeking appropriate assistance when needed and using a range of learning opportunities.
- All social work practitioners should have at least monthly formal supervision of the children they are working with and personal supervision, which considers professional development, and personal support. Notes from these meetings should be recorded on a personal supervision form and shared within five working days; to be signed and dated by the supervisee and supervisor and uploaded to the supervisees file to be held on SharePoint.
- Discussions and actions in respect of children and families should be recorded within the supervision tool in Care Director.
- Supervision should focus on children, young people, care experienced young adults and families; how we are helping them? What is working well? What could we consider doing differently to improve engagement or gain better outcomes? Whether the plan remains relevant and, in the child's, best interests? Progress in respect of previous agreed actions and driving the plan forward? What we hope to help the family achieve and by when?
- As Supervisors, we act as Practice Leaders – supervision should improve our vision of what is happening in the lives of individual children, young people/young adults and families; so that we can consider how best to support employees to work with them.
- Notes taken during any welfare supervision should be recorded within five working days using the reflective supervision tool; to be signed and dated by the supervisee and supervisor and uploaded to the supervisees file to be held on SharePoint. If any children or families are discussed in terms of impact on work on self; only the Care Director number should be referenced within the welfare supervision record. The frequency of welfare supervision will vary between roles; details held within Supervision Policy.

- The frequency of supervision sessions will also be determined by the level of experience and the complexity of the work being undertaken. Additionally, supervision for practitioners involved in assessments will need to be more frequent as work can change within four weeks. Every child/ young person and foster carer should be considered each month unless there is clear rationale within the child's summary for this to be less frequent e.g. children supported by Disabled Children Team and Positive Futures.
- Informal supervision at the point of need is also important; any discussions and agreements from such meetings should also be recorded on the file; within a supervision document or as management oversight.
- Formal supervision will be undertaken weekly with NQSW's until 3-month review, following this fortnightly during next 3-6 months and monthly following positive 6-month ASYE review. There is appropriate guidance in respect of managing newly qualified practitioners with an emphasis on reflective learning and group supervision.
- Frequency of supervision for practitioners who have undertaken a major change of role in transferring to a different team and practitioners returning to work following a career break or other long-term absence will be agreed by receiving Team Manager and Service Manager and recorded within supervision notes/agreement.

## Performance Development Reviews

- All employees must have a minimum of two Performance Development Reviews (PDR) a year. This provides opportunity for employees to formally think about their achievements in the past twelve months and record any actions or areas for development. See [\(Performance Management Guidance Booklet.pdf\)](#)
- The learning outputs of these conversation will be documented and reported on the LMS system.

## Managing Performance

- Effective supervision, high support and high challenge are key to good performance and ultimately good outcomes for children, young people/young adults and families/foster carers. Practitioners are accountable for their own professional practice and should be held to account if performance is not at expected standard. Where poor or under performance by the practitioner is identified, managers must seek support and guidance from their own line managers and Swindon Human Resources service in line with relevant procedure.

***“Supervision and case consultations are critical in helping practitioners draw out their reasoning so that it can be reviewed.”***

(The Munro Review of Child protection, Munro, 2011)





### 3. Culture and Support

- All managers will lead their team and ensure that everyone works in a professional environment that is conducive to delivering good professional practice. It is essential that Social Workers and other team members, e.g. Adult FSM Practitioners, receive support from their Team Manager and peers. Developing and maintaining a supportive team culture can be a challenge at times of high demand but is essential to ensure adequate support, constructive challenge, a sense of belonging and pride along with professional rigour to daily practice.
- Teams work best when there is a culture of mutual support, inclusion, clear management leadership, good communication, clear expectations, a shared understanding of professional responsibilities, standards and vision.
- Managers should be aware of and actively adopt Swindon priorities which relate directly to how we deliver services and the way in which we treat one another and talk about Swindon to others. They are to:
  - Put people at the heart of what they do
  - Listen, value, and respect each other's views
  - Develop a culture of challenge, ownership, innovation, and improvement
  - Be ambassadors for Swindon
  - Be responsive and efficient
  - Be clear about what they can and cannot do.
- Managers are responsible for ensuring weekly team meetings take place so that all team members understand what is happening in the wider organisation and the expectations of them. Managers need to model the expected standards for their teams which includes:
  - Always presenting professionally
  - Being on time for meetings
  - Being prepared for meetings and briefings
  - Acting as required in a timely way
  - Responding to telephone calls, emails
- Having a good knowledge of the children, young people, young adults, families and foster carers within the team
- Supporting and challenging appropriately.
- In addition, individuals and teams need support from their managers that demonstrates commitment to their professional development and opportunities to innovate, which consider and provide the practical means to work in a supportive physical environment and gives protection so that the workload is manageable.
- The Management Team will promote a supportive culture of giving and receiving feedback, learning, and listening in a range of ways – highlighting new ideas and sharing positive feedback in the Friday e-mail and Service area Keeping in Touch Meetings (KIT) which should be discussed at every team meeting to keep all abreast of change across the service.
- Managers should encourage team members to attend staff engagement sessions, the weekly KIT sessions with Director and Senior Leadership Team so that they can express their views, keep abreast of change and contribute to innovation and improvement.
- Managers at all levels will be visible, accessible and approachable to their teams and lead by example.
- New managers will be given opportunities to shadow other managers across the service.
- Swindon Family Safeguarding Model is a whole partnership approach which informs practice and service delivery in Swindon. All managers will be responsible for supporting implementation of this approach. To this end, all managers will be expected to attend relevant training on the practice model and motivational interviewing, supervision, and management oversight and support their teams to take advantage of learning opportunities to embed this approach.
- The managerial role can be tough, sometimes lonely. Peer support and mentoring is to be promoted and encouraged across the service.

## 4. Recruitment

- Our aim in Swindon is to recruit the best people in a fair, transparent and efficient manner.
- All managers are responsible for identifying vacancies within their team/service area.
- All managers are responsible for ensuring that:
  - Job Descriptions and Person Specifications are appropriate for the role, are in Swindon's format, and have been approved via the Job Evaluation Process.
  - Ensuring that the appropriate budget and funding is in place for the role and the relevant Establishment Control forms (BC1) are completed and authorised prior to advertisement.
  - Investing time in recruitment to attract and recruit the best person with the required skills and attributes for the role. This includes:
    - Preparing an attractive and effective advertisement that promotes Swindon as an employer of choice – The Transformation Team has been set up to support this.
    - Arranging a recruitment and selection panel.
    - Arrange shortlisting with the panel.
    - Updating the HR recruitment team with details of those shortlisted.
    - To prepare appropriate selection activities including a formal interview with appropriate questions.
    - Completing New Starter forms.
    - Verifying references.
    - Preparing and delivering Induction.
    - Completing Probationary meetings in accordance with the [Council Policy Probationary Policy](#).
- The recruiting manager should ensure the advert promotes Swindon and includes the following:
  - Role title
  - Salary point (confirm with HR if in doubt)
  - Location of work
  - Close Date
  - Likely interview date
  - Details of contact person should applicant wish to find out more about the role – email address is sufficient.
  - Details of Swindon offer if applicable to the role. If in doubt, seek HR advice.
- The recruiting manager will need to obtain the most recent job description and person specification linked to the post to be advertised and attach this with advert and forward to SM.
- Upon instruction, the HR recruitment team will support you by sending out letters for interview dates, undertaking relevant checks including references and preparing and sending out all contractual paperwork.
- All Managers need to check that an BC1 has been authorised before advertising any new roles.
- Adverts should be sent to HR to upload to the intranet/Swindon Council website.
- It is the responsibility of the recruiting manager to confirm the interview date, venue and any specific expectations linked to the interview e.g. title of PowerPoint presentation; deadline for forwarding and mechanism for sharing on the interview date.
- It is the responsibility of the recruiting manager to consider part of the application which specifies if the applicant has any additional needs and take these into account in setting out details for the interview.

- All managers should complete mandatory training to support them in their role to ensure they understand recruitment processes.
- Care must be taken to ensure that the interview process is fair and consistent. The panel should agree what questions will be asked, by whom and in what order.
- It is reasonable to ask a question a second time or prompt a candidate to get the best out of them but care should be taken to ensure the same opportunities are afforded to all those applying for the role.
- Whilst we are interested in ensuring that people we recruit have the right skills, knowledge, experience and qualifications – managers should also seek to use restorative questions which bring out values and beliefs.
- Scoring should be completed at the end of the interview schedule. Written records should be made and retained securely.
- All applicants should be notified of the outcome of their interview as soon as practicable. If it is known that there will be a delay, this should be communicated. Both successful and unsuccessful applicants should be given the opportunity to receive feedback. Remember - the candidate may not be perfect for the job they have interviewed for but may consider Swindon again in the future if they get a good impression.
- Successful interviewees should be advised that any offer is subject to satisfactory references.
- An appointment form should be completed in respect of the successful applicant. This should be sent to HR who will take responsibility for all checks, references and subsequent offer paperwork if all is satisfactory.
- Useful information for New Starters can be found at [this link](#).
- [Further Information](#) on recruitment and appointment can be found on the Intranet.



## 5. Sickness Absence

- All Staff are required to follow Swindon's Sickness Absence policy and procedures. Managers are required to support staff and manage sickness absence in accordance with the policy and procedure that can be found on Swindon's Intranet on the following link; [Sickness absence](#).
- Managers are responsible for ensuring that all absences are recorded, maintained and updated on the Swindon's Absence system PeopleLive.



# Practice Guidance 1

## General Management Standards

Standard	Standard Expected	Standards not applied
<b>Induction</b>	<p>Evidence that every <a href="#">new starter</a> whatever their role receives an induction to ensure that they have opportunity to gain experience about their organisation and understand expectations linked to their role.</p> <p>Details of every new starter's induction should be held on their supervision record which will be stored safely within SharePoint.</p>	<p>Little or no induction plan in place.</p> <p>Little of no evidence that induction plan has been in place or completed.</p> <p>Little or no evidenced understanding of the organisation, role, relevant processes, or partners.</p>
<b>Management Oversight</b>	<p>Evidence of layered management oversight on records to demonstrate shared and accountable decision making.</p> <p>Evidence of smart management oversight which includes timescales for any work or action required.</p> <p>Evidence of follow up on any actions requiring attention.</p> <p>Evidence of clear oversight if there is change of direction with reasons to explain rationale.</p>	<p>Little or no evidence of management oversight on records.</p> <p>Little of no evidence of follow up by managers to show impact.</p>
<b>Observation of Practice</b>	<p>Evidence within supervision files of at least one observed practice per annum.</p> <p>Evidence that service user feedback was gained as part of observed practice.</p> <p>Evidence that observation of practice encouraged reflection; highlights strengths, immediate actions and any areas for learning or development.</p>	<p>Little or no evidence of observed practice on supervision records.</p> <p>Little or no evidence of follow up by managers to demonstrate supportive interventions to stretch skills and knowledge or increase opportunities for new learning or consolidation.</p>

Standard	Standard Expected	Standards not applied
<p><b>Supervision: Quality and Effectiveness</b></p>	<p>Evidence that regular quality supervision is taking place within the supervision policy standards.</p> <p>Management advice and decisions are well evidenced, professionally sound, and SMART. Recording of supervision demonstrates reflective practice and testing of hypotheses.</p> <p>Decisions are revisited to measure progress, impact and drive plans forward. Clear rationale for decision making is evidenced.</p> <p>Supervision considers employee development needs, health and wellbeing.</p>	<p>Little evidence of management advice and decision-making being recorded.</p> <p>Decision making is not smart.</p> <p>There is no clear rationale for decision making.</p> <p>Actions are not reviewed or commented on to close loops.</p> <p>Advice appears confusing.</p> <p>Supervision does not consider staff professional development needs or health and wellbeing.</p> <p>Supervision lacks reflection and direction.</p>
<p><b>Quality Assurance of Practice</b></p>	<p>Evidence of regular quality assurance of Children's records to ensure that practice standards are met routinely before supervision sessions.</p> <p>Evidence of follow up of corrective action requirements arising from audits.</p> <p>Impact on outcomes for child, young person, family, or foster parent is recorded.</p> <p>Evidence that attempts have been made to seek the views and opinions of other professionals involved and to speak to family, children, young people and care experienced young people.</p>	<p>Little or no auditing of children's records and practice.</p> <p>Little or no evidenced understanding of the quality of the service or impact of interventions.</p> <p>Compliance focussed audit which does not consider impact and outcomes for the child, young person and family.</p> <p>Little or no feedback from others to test out. Triangulate experience, progress and any learning.</p>

Standard	Standard Expected	Standards not applied
<p><b>Quality of Assessments, Plans &amp; Reports</b></p>	<p>Evidence of managers' signatures/electronic equivalents, dates.</p> <p>Evidence of management scrutiny of the quality of the work undertaken leading to good quality assessments/ plans with good outcomes for children and young people.</p> <p>Evidence of advice being sought and given by Directors, Service Managers when required; Legal Services as appropriate.</p> <p>Evidence of timely sign off by manager with clear rationale and curiosity evident.</p>	<p>Management sign off is tokenistic and does not show that work has been scrutinised standards.</p> <p>Inadequate assessments being signed off by the Team Manager.</p> <p>Advice not being sought from Senior Managers or Legal Services if deadlines cannot be met, or plans progressed in line with expectations.</p> <p>Advice not being sought from Director in a timely way; advice lacks analysis.</p>
<p><b>Addressing poor performance</b></p>	<p>Evidence that appropriate steps are being taken to address poor or unacceptable performance of practitioners to bring about improvements.</p> <p>Timely use of formal procedures around improving performance.</p>	<p>Acceptance of practice that is below standards and an inability or unwillingness to tackle issues to bring about improvements.</p> <p>Continued use of informal measures where formal processes should be displayed.</p>
<p><b>Annual Performance Development Review (PDR)</b></p>	<p>As part of preparation for PDR, the manager will have directly observed the staff members practice (on a home visit or chairing a meeting) and will provide constructive feedback and record this on the PDR / Supervision record.</p> <p>Evidence that annual performance PDR take place within guidance and plays an active part in the recognition and development of skills and creating opportunities for progression.</p> <p>Evidence that PDR is revisited at regular intervals throughout the year to track progress or.</p>	<p>Little or no Personal Development Review (PDR) on supervision record or PeopleLive.</p> <p>Tokenistic PDR on supervision record which is not used to develop staff throughout the year.</p>

Standard	Standard Expected	Standards not applied
<p><b>Support and Development of Staff</b></p>	<p>Evidence within supervision records, audit, observation that Manager has a proactive approach to developing people's professional skills.</p> <p>Evidence within supervision, audit, observation that Manager takes initiative to ensure support is adequate to enable people to do their best work.</p> <p>Evidence that manager is aware of Career Progression Policy and holds relevant discussions around progression and development.</p>	<p>Manager acts in a way that reacts to service demands and gives little attention to individual or group support needs or development.</p> <p>Little or no evidence of support and development of staff.</p>
<p><b>Celebrating Good Practice</b></p>	<p>Manager acknowledges and gives credit to good practice and promotes this within and outside the team.</p>	<p>Good practice is not acknowledged or celebrated.</p> <p>Little attention is given to giving and receiving feedback; cultivating this approach within the team or wider organisation.</p>
<p><b>Policy, Research &amp; Practice</b></p>	<p>Manager keeps up to date with key policy and research and uses this in practice. This can be evidenced in the quality of work undertaken and information sharing with teams/others.</p> <p>Managers access Research in Practice and Community Care Inform (both freely available) and encourage team members to do so and create opportunities for team discussions and reflective learning.</p> <p>Managers understand Management Practice Standards, Timescales for best practice and Quality Assurance Framework.</p>	<p>Policy, guidance, learning and research are given little or no recognition in practice.</p> <p>Little awareness of Practice Standards; updates to relevant guidance documents e.g. Timescales for best practice, Quality Assurance Framework.</p>



<b>Standard</b>	<b>Standard Expected</b>	<b>Standards not applied</b>
<b>Culture &amp; Support</b>	<p>Manager promotes an inclusive learning culture through highlighting, recognising, and sharing good practice at all levels, encouraging training and developmental opportunities, shadowing, joint working and modelling positive relationships with colleagues.</p> <p>This leads to increased moral and team stability and in turn good quality social work practice.</p> <p>Managers address negative behaviours and practice as they arise.</p> <p>Manager sets high standards and expectations in terms of compliance with mandatory training expectations.</p> <p>Manager recognises and seeks to address any known support needs.</p>	<p>Manager fails to highlight and share good practice, is not inclusive and does not support training and developmental opportunities or monitor and promote compliance with mandatory training.</p> <p>Manager models negative relationships with colleagues. Manager does not draw on team support, skills, and knowledge to spread workload.</p> <p>This can lead to workforce instability, low team morale and poor social work practice.</p> <p>Manager does not address issues as they arise; this can lead to people feeling unfairly treated or overlooked and can impact on retention and recruitment.</p> <p>Manager is not proactive in addressing support needs of individuals.</p>
<b>Workloads</b>	<p>Manager ensures that work demands are matched to the skills and abilities of team members, that individual and team capacity and capabilities are understood, defined, and protected.</p> <p>Manager highlights any gaps which will impact of service delivery to relevant Director as appropriate.</p>	<p>Manager does not match work demands to capacity and skills of the team. This results in staff feeling overwhelmed, overloaded, and not working efficiently or effectively.</p> <p>Manager does not escalate concern in respect of resources and demand.</p>

Standard	Standard Expected	Standards not applied
<b>Communication</b>	<p>The manager ensures that good communication takes place within their team, and all employees including those who are absent from work are informed of important matters affecting their work.</p> <p>Regular staff meetings take place and are properly set up, well attended, chaired, recorded and notes circulated.</p> <p>Team / service meetings have formal agendas and track previous agreed actions.</p> <p>Managers promote Swindon Council's values and link teams to the wider service; ensuring relevant updates.</p>	<p>Little or no evidence of team/service meetings taking place monthly.</p> <p>Poor attendance at team/service meetings.</p> <p>No formal agendas, tracking or recording of discussions or actions.</p> <p>Communication arrangements are absent or sporadic.</p> <p>Team/service meetings are poorly organised.</p> <p>Important developments and information is not shared with teams.</p>
<b>Peer Support</b>	<p>Senior Leaders and Managers cultivate an atmosphere that is mutually supportive and respectful; an office atmosphere that is inclusive, calm, and purposeful – one which inspires sharing of ideas; that people wish to be part of and feel supported to do their best work.</p>	<p>Senior Leaders and Managers oversee teams that do not support each other; where conflicts and disputes are allowed to fester, and where staff are unhappy coming into work and being together in the work setting.</p>
<b>Challenge and professional rigour</b>	<p>Managers set an example as to how to conduct oneself as a professional, set expectation of good practice that must be adhered to, and create an atmosphere of professionalism.</p> <p>High support, high challenge and professional rigour is expected and appreciated.</p>	<p>Managers are inconsistent and unprofessional in their conduct and set a poor example of conduct.</p> <p>Managers do not set expectations that ensure staff work professionally.</p> <p>Managers do not create and sustain a climate where high support, high challenge and professional rigour is expected and appreciated.</p>
<b>Monthly Children's File Audits</b>	<p>Evidence of timely follow up of corrective action requirements arising from audits.</p>	<p>Little or no auditing of children's records and practice.</p>

# Practice Guidance 2

## Supervision

- Supervision is an essential component of practice in social work and social care, not just for frontline social work staff but at all levels of the organisation. Effective supervision can provide a safe space for reflective practice, considered decision making; as well as an opportunity to develop skills and knowledge and consider health and wellbeing of employees who are one of our most important assets.
- There are a number of key functions to supervision which fit into four broad categories; often termed differently by researchers in this field. Supervision has a Managerial, Developmental, Supportive and Mediation function.

The **managerial** element will address:

- Overall management of the quality of work practice
- The impact of intervention on children, young people, and their families; foster carers.
- Overall management of workload and priorities of resources o Provision of a safe, inclusive environment in which to work
- Professional discussion around performance against individual and team objectives
- Ensuring that social care policies are communicated and made clear to all.

The **developmental** element will address:

- Identifying individual strengths
- Identifying areas for development to conduct the role to the required standard to meet desired objectives

- Identifying learning and development opportunities
- Planning how development needs could be met
- Ensuring that the practitioner has induction training
- Evaluating and reflecting on training and development opportunities taken
- Discussing and reflecting on audit, observation of practice, compliments/complaints
- Discussing progress, practice and improvement goals.

The **supportive** element will address:

- Support for the practitioner as a professional and as an individual person in their own right, including acknowledgement of issues of diversity
- Support for health and well-being at work.

The **mediation** element will address:

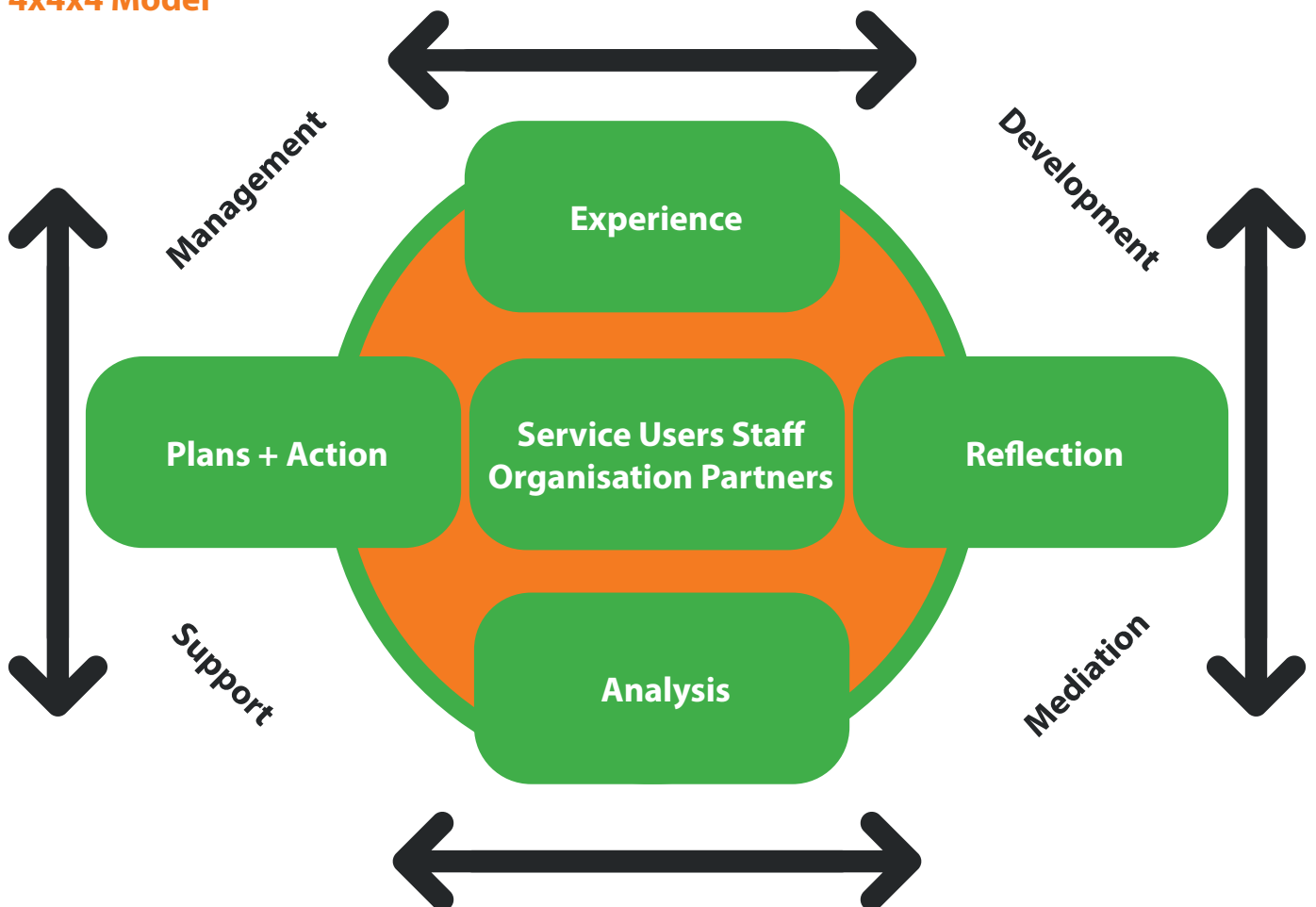
- Advocacy between the practitioner, senior management, the team, and any outside agencies
- The transfer of relevant information between the practitioners, senior management, the team, and any outside agencies/partners.

## Effective supervision is:

- Regular: scheduled and uninterrupted.
- Both parties take opportunity to prepare for supervision.
- There needs to be a clear audit trail and record of supervision including actions required from the supervision with agreed timescales.
- Issues such as workload, health and wellbeing, personal issues, safety in dangerous situations and the emotional effect of difficult work or any issues of discrimination must be considered.
- A transparent, strengths-based approach to supervision is preferred; a blame culture will lead to defensive behaviour and the cover up of omissions.
- Family life and risk assessment can be complex; children, young people, families and care experienced young adults must be discussed in detail to ensure all issues have been reflected upon and understood.
- All managers need to be trained in supervision skills and have opportunity to reflect on their supervisory practice in an ongoing way.



**4x4x4 Model**



# Practice Guidance 3

## Culture and Support

### High Expectations

- Managers and practitioners are expected to adhere to minimum Management Practice Standards to ensure sound, safe practice; good communication, positive impact and best outcomes for children, young people/young adults and families.
- These standards apply to all managerial roles across Children's Services.

### High Support

Managers will lead by example and set standards of behaviour:

- Presentation and conduct that promotes good professional practice and positivity.
- Managers will cultivate an atmosphere that is inclusive, mutually supportive and draws on the professional strengths of all our people.
- Managers will ensure that individuals have manageable workloads, within guidelines and advice set.
- Managers will provide clear lines of communication, ensuring that important service policy and procedures are shared in a timely way, understood, and acted upon.
- Communication should be clear, regular and consistent. If a message is not being received, think about communicating this in a different way.
- Managers will provide regular supervision and meaningful annual appraisals that take account of strengths and areas for improvement; and seek to ensure that Children Services continues to invest in individual and team development to include team away days.

- Managers will ensure that the internal administrative and information sharing systems and arrangements support professional practice and adhere to GDPR; seeking appropriate advice if required.

### High challenge and professional rigour

- Managers will monitor the quality of the service they are responsible for through discussions about children, regularly scrutinising practice, audit activity and supervision and take steps to improve quality when poor practice is identified.
- Managers will look for opportunities to bring about improvements in practice and support their teams in delivering those improvements.
- Managers will keep up to date on research findings in practice and policy and guidance documents relevant to their area of work and routinely access Research in Practice events and materials provided through practice development websites and publications.
- Managers will complete mandatory training and any additional training identified to support them in their role and will encourage the same from those they supervise.
- Managers will expect individuals and teams to develop their professional skills and expertise by keeping up to date with research and developments.
- Managers will ensure that Social Workers adhere to Social Work England Professional Standards and teams adhere to relevant Management Practice Standards.
- Managers will ensure that their teams always conduct themselves in a professional manner, in terms of their dress, language, and behaviours; challenging where necessary.

[Performance Management Guidance Booklet.pdf](#)  
[HR - SBC Equality, Diversity & Inclusion](#)

<p><b>Safe Practice</b></p>	<p>We work together with all our partners to ensure our most vulnerable children and young people are safe from harm</p>
<p><b>Early Intervention</b></p>	<p>We will ensure that we will intervene at the earliest opportunity to effect positive change and offer timely and proportionate action to children's needs</p>
<p><b>Direct Work</b></p>	<p>We will ensure that our children, young people and families are supported to fully work with us</p>
<p><b>Workforce Development</b></p>	<p>We will ensure that we have competent skilled and stable staff including sufficient numbers of foster carers, who reflect the diversity of our Borough, so children receive timely responses to have their needs met</p>
<p><b>Children we Look After</b></p>	<p>All the Children we look after will be protected, educated, are healthy, and are fully prepared for adulthood</p>
<p><b>Impact and Outcomes</b></p>	<p>We will all continue to build an environment where social work practice will thrive and ensure all children and Young People achieve good Outcomes</p>

## At Swindon what we do really matters



We love 'our' Swindon. We want the best for it. We turn up each and every day to have impact, a place and people to be proud of.

## At Swindon we do things right



We are accountable to our residents and ourselves to make the best decisions we can, to try new things to make Swindon thrive now and in the future.

## At Swindon we make it happen together



We work together, with our communities, across the Council and with our partners to get the best we can collectively for Swindon.











**SWINDON**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL