Leadership Capability Framework

Pathway 1: Practice Supervisors

The Leadership Capability Framework is intended to outline the skills and attributes that effective Middle Leaders demonstrate that leads to improved outcomes for children and families. Drawing from Seven Features of Practice and Seven Outcomes, PQS for Practice Supervisors & KSS for Practice Leaders and Frontline research and experience, this framework is intended to be used by leaders to understand their leadership direction and journey for Pathway 1.
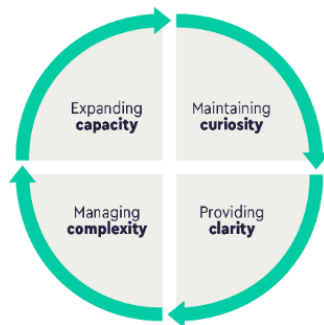
Next to each effective attribute is an indication of the curriculum area it links to:

Leadership Essentials	Listening to Children & Families	Diversity and inclusion	High quality supervision	Making Decisions	Research & Best Practice	Influencing & Inspiring	Leading Change	Working with Partners
🌰	👂	♥	🌳	🧠	🎒	🎙	📊	👪

Maintaining Curiosity

Maintain a curious approach to understanding yourself, others and the context in which you work in order to remain aligned to your values, build effective relationships and advocate for children and families' best interests.

Sub-capability	Effective attribute
Curiosity of values & moral purpose Maintain curiosity around your personal motivation, values and moral purpose to ensure actions and decisions centre around the best interests of children and families.	• Displays curiosity in relation to their values, personal motivation and moral purpose, articulating clearly how this informs how they show up at work. 🖌
Curiosity of self Demonstrate self-reflexivity by rigorously and forensically assessing personal strengths, potential and areas for growth, understanding how language and behaviour can impact on others.	• Clear on own strengths and development areas, and confident of next steps in relation to these. 🖌 • Aware of language and behaviour, reflecting regularly on how this influences leadership of supervisees. 🤼
Curiosity of biases and prejudices Pay attention to emotional triggers, biases and prejudices, identifying ways to manage these effectively; have an awareness of aspects of your own identity, how these impact on how you are seen and interacted with to empower yourself and ensure a non-discriminatory approach.	• Developing awareness of own biases and prejudices, while displaying an active commitment to anti-oppressive practice. ⬤
Curiosity of workforce Be visible and accessible to those you work with. Extend curiosity to your team; know the business, have familiarity with them – their strengths and areas for development - as well as their work, seeking and welcoming frank feedback on your relationships.	• Builds confidence in giving constructive challenge and encouraging accountability with supervisees, providing support using a strengths-based approach. 🤼 • Actively seeks out and acts on feedback from peers, direct reports and managers. 🤼
Curiosity of leadership and governance Identify and maintain stable, focused leadership at all levels to foster effective, professional governance	• Recognises the importance of stable leadership when leading others, and reflects curiously on how to cultivate this within themselves. 🖌
Curiosity of partners Engage with the local and national context, senior partners and multi-agency audits to review wider practice and support the improvement of social care services promoting up to date knowledge and practice	• Recognises the benefits of sharing best practice with multi-agency partners, and is active in improving collaborative working. 🫶
Curiosity of the service Remain outward facing, engaging with direct practice with children and families, encouraging open and inquisitive curiosity of what is happening for individuals within their service, including systemic or structural factors such as experiences of discrimination and the impact of poverty. Notice whose voices are less heard from in the community and sector and question why this might be: seek to rebalance this with a drive to inclusive feedback loops and fostering representation.	• Actively aware of the work of supervisees and the experiences of the children and families they are working with. 🤼 • Able to access, interpret and apply research, including existing models to identify and initiate strategies to support the development of direct work (observations, co-visits etc.). 💼

Providing Clarity

Sustain an unwavering vision of what good outcomes look like for children and families; know what is needed to achieve this both within and beyond your service, providing clarity on the role you and others play in this.

Sub-capability	Effective attribute
Clarity of vision, expectations, and goals Communicate a clear vision that keeps children at the heart of decision making; articulating high expectations and ambitious goals, ensuring these are achieved by holding others accountable to perform in line with expectations. Good practice is commended, shared and modelled.	• Communicates the importance of high quality and timely work for children and families, and can raise concerns where standards fall short.
Clarity of leading workforce Inspire staff and unite them around the goal to work directly with families to improve their life experience, holding high ambitions for children and their futures.	• Increasing understanding of goals of the wider service and how these inform their immediate work with supervisees.
Clarity of anti-oppressive practice Establish a safe and inclusive environment. Inspire teams to take ownership of the responsibility for dismantling racism and other forms of discrimination within the organisation and community and promote the importance of taking clear action supported by the principles of anti-oppressive and anti-discriminatory direct practice.	• Understands why an anti-oppressive and anti-discriminatory culture is central to social work practice. • Seeks out opportunities to challenge discrimination and champion difference, role modelling this approach with their team.
Clarity of empowerment Empowers practitioners to see themselves as active change agents, working with families with high intensity and consistency, rooted in a strengths-based framework. In turn, practitioners will empower families to take ownership of their own solutions and create sustainable change, whilst keeping children safe and managing risk.	• Models best practice, informed by feedback from families, and actively works to empower the same behaviour in supervisees.
Clarity of family focus Work across the professional network to formulate a shared understanding of family histories and functioning informed by, and in collaboration with the family	• Initiates relationships with other teams and services, seeing the benefit of a wider network on own ability to positively impact families.
Clarity of relationships and influence Leverage power and professional authority responsibly to influence others at all levels and across agencies. Build relationships and engender confidence by understanding others and using excellent interpersonal skills to bring others round to your perspective. Balance this with an openness to the priorities of others where this will have best impact on outcomes for children.	• Builds positive working relationships with supervisees which keeps the impact on outcomes for children and families at its heart.
Clarity of strategy and implementation Dedicate time to focus on long term priorities, continually developing a vision and strategic plan that is right for the organisation. Utilise robust financial planning, engaging partners to align thresholds and maintain a secure front door, sustaining shared goals.	• Able to articulate a personal, child-centred vision, and use this skilfully to inform goal-setting and team expectations.

Managing Complexity

Critically engage with the systems you inhabit, applying creative, evidence-informed approaches and harnessing these to prioritise activities which are meaningful, proactive and centred around the needs of children and families.

Sub-capability	Effective attribute
Complexity of knowledge & skills Demonstrate extensive knowledge and skill in the profession of child and family social work, leading by example to promote and govern excellent practice.	• Proactively stays up to date with research and social work theory, ensuring day-to-day decisions are grounded in best practice. 🎒
Complexity of operations Recognise where developing routines to track progress, process and judicious use of resources can enable staff to do skilled direct work. Capture rationale for decisions in a comprehensive and well-expressed way. Be attentive to where unnecessary or excessive bureaucracy could hinder this.	• Skilled in breaking down knowledge and resources into streamlined tools that can be directly applied to work with families. 🧠
Complexity of decision making Critically evaluate data and evidence to analyse complex scenarios and spot patterns between potentially unrelated concepts, effectively managing risk to make informed decisions at pace. Support teams to sit in safe uncertainty throughout casework.	• Makes informed decisions based on a clear understanding of risk, knowledge of families' needs and awareness of the wider system. 🧠
Complexity of case discussion and supervision Engage and support the workforce to manage complex cases and their responses to these by undertaking effective group case discussion and individual supervision, enabling open and reflexive discussion around diversity and inclusion as it relates to relationships and practice.	• Approaches supervision from a systemic, child-centred perspective. Skilfully using open communication and reflexive discussion to hold risk and consider multiple options. 🤼 • Uses supervision to critically reflect on discrimination, guiding supervisees to identify and ultimately challenge oppressive practice. 🤼
Complexity of quality assurance Lead quality assurance activities to review the performance of the service and individuals, including facilitating practice observations to enable feedback.	• Uses structured observations and co-visits to support supervisees, provide developmental feedback and maintain high-quality practice with families. 🤼
Complexity of reflective practice Champion and create the conditions for practitioners to take a whole family focus and utilise a systemic practice approach to tackle the root causes of problems and create long term solutions working alongside other professionals and families themselves.	• Uses case discussions to advocate for a systemic, whole family approach to problem-solving, using this and other mechanisms to review the experience of families in touch with the service. 🤼
Complexity of evaluation Evaluate rigorously ensuring the flow of cases reflects a child's journey.	• Building awareness of best practice evaluation of cases when working with supervisees. 🤼

Expanding Capacity

Through learning and innovation, expand what can be achieved by influencing others – improve systems, maximise relationships and create greater capacity for change that impacts positively on the lives of children and families.

Sub-capability	Effective attribute
Capacity for resilience & wellbeing Embed a culture of resilience at all system levels which acknowledges staff wellbeing in challenging circumstances, allows focus on work with children and families and enables the ability to bounce back even in the most trying situations.	• Instigates conversations around the emotional labour of social work, supporting staff to prioritise their wellbeing alongside the responsibilities of their day-to-day role.
Capacity for resourcefulness & impact Invest and allocate time and resources where it is needed, measuring priorities by the highest expected impact, and integrating solutions appropriately until improvement is embedded.	• Able to prioritise tasks and allocate resources based on existing gaps in the team, monitoring regularly to ensure greatest impact.
Capacity for impacting organisational culture Proactively embrace the opportunities created by new experiences, creating a learning culture where mistakes can be learned from. This is modelled for teams, empowering them to develop practice and make real, significant professional growth, taking advantage of coaching techniques to develop staff from within. Hear and learn from others who have diverse perspectives, identities and lived experience - seek to expand your understanding and use this to inform work which culturally competent.	• Seeks out opportunities for self and staff to learn from mistakes and celebrate successes, developing coaching strategies that support continuous improvement. • Aware of their role in ensuring families' voices are central to wider organisational change, and role modelling this with supervisees.
Capacity for innovation Involve staff in service development, enabling the use of initiative and creativity to discover different ways of doing things. Foster innovation, piloting new ideas carefully and influencing partner agencies and external bodies to secure buy-in for innovations at a systems level. This will facilitate multi-disciplinary skill sets to work together effectively.	• Identifies obstacles faced by supervisees, proactively implementing innovative solutions to ensure team stays on track. • Reflects regularly on how to maximise time spent on case discussions and direct work, minimising unnecessary bureaucracy.
Capacity for leading change Lead others through change and critical periods for the organisation	• Proactively engages in the change process, taking steps to identify issues and contribute to team's cycle of change. • Supports staff to feel actively engaged in change, while recognising and acting on barriers.
Capacity for positive interactions Raise the status of the social work profession, demonstrated through positive community and multi-agency interactions.	• Committed to raising the status of social work, regularly discussing the importance of the profession with their team.
Capacity for advocacy Incorporate the experiences of children and families into service improvement and innovation.	• Holds authority when leading conversations with multi-agency partners, using influencing strategies to advocate for families' needs.