



CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & FAMILIES SERVICES

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2021-2023

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Please note, we are in the process of reviewing and refreshing this strategy.

1. INTRODUCTION

Planning for workforce development is of great importance in a challenging national and local context of increasing demands and decreasing resources. In response to this context this strategy states the commitment to strengthen our position in BCP Council as a Learning Organisation.

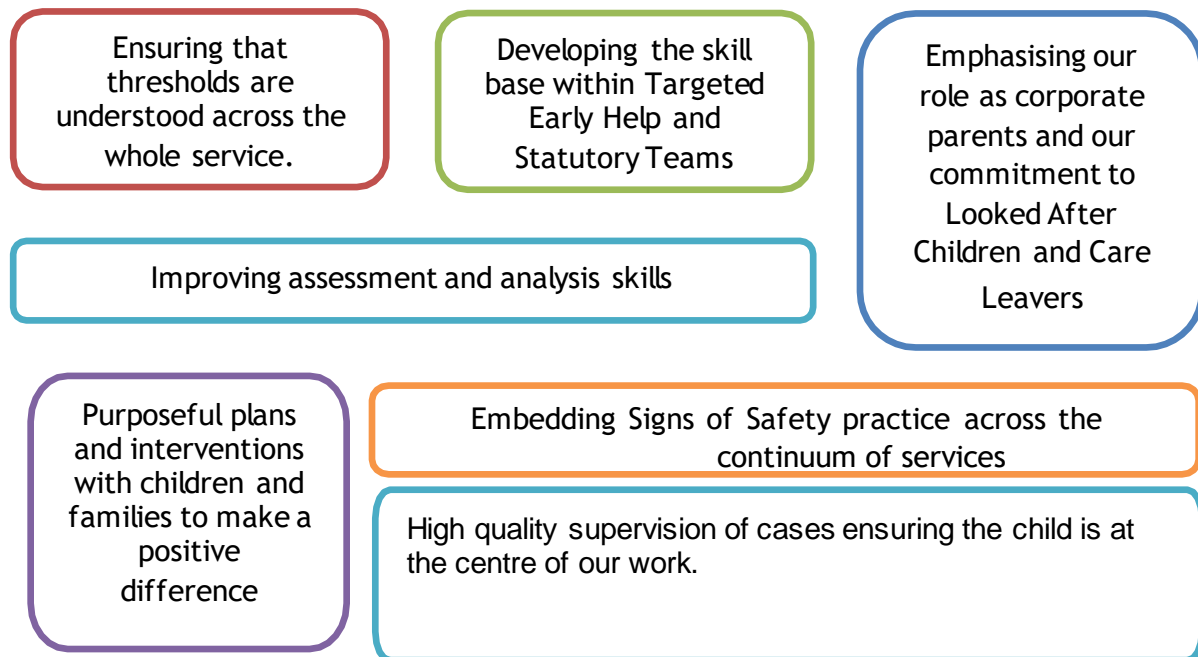
In order to become outstanding, important cultural changes are required that need to be achieved with pace, ambition and consistency to ensure that good outcomes are achieved for our children and young people. This requires our workforce and culture to be robust, passionate, competent and creative. We want BCP to be a place where people want to live and work. We value our workforce and recognise that they are our most valuable asset. We want to deliver high quality, professional development opportunities for all our staff.

Overall, our workforce development priorities are:

- Embedding and sustaining good practice right from the start; getting the basics right.
- Developing career pathways and staff that are committed to best practice standards.
- Embedding a strengths-based model of practice and ensuring the child is at the front and centre of everything we do in BCP Children's Services.
- Delivering services that keep children and young people safe and help families achieve positive outcomes.

Learning and development opportunities are key to the success of this strategy. In light of the challenging financial situation, it will be important to clearly understand the effectiveness of training in terms of value for money and social return on investment, i.e. evidence of improved outcomes for children and young people as a result of our learning and development commitment.

For the Workforce Development Strategy, this means that it is necessary to focus on:



Children's Social Care and Children and Young People Services restructured in 2019, as part of local government reorganisation and the development of BCP Council.

From April 2019 we have been providing shared training opportunities across the wider workforce and our partners as this will build working relationships and a shared philosophy of practice.

Our workforce development strategy is a key factor in the successful recruitment and retention of a passionate, committed and skilful workforce. Our practitioners need to feel safe, confident and supported in what is a complex and challenging profession.

What informs “connected” practice?

- Attachment and trauma informed practice, motivational interviewing skills, genuine service-user involvement, professional curiosity and a strengths -based model of practice.

What do families get out of it?

- Relational, effective, structured intervention to promote family well-being, allowing for children and young people to be safer and better nurtured; a positive working relationship with their practitioner/ lead professional which creates an environment for positive change.
- An improved seamless approach for the family across the continuum of need.

What does the organisation get out of it?

- A framework for a consistent approach and quality of practice.
- A shared understanding and language in relation to working with vulnerable children and young people, underpinned by evidence.
- A cascade effect of positive relationships, resulting in a culture of learning, transparency, support and “healthy” challenge.

We will offer learning opportunities in different ways, which will suit different learning styles:

- Formal learning and development e.g. training courses, post qualifying programmes.
- Informal learning e.g., Workshops, Group Supervision.
- Self-directed learning and development through our on-line resources e.g. CC Inform, Research in Practice, Signs of Safety Knowledge Bank.

Every practitioner will be able to engage in our Practice Fundamentals Programme when they join us (see training programme for details).

We will also provide a range of more specialised training offers to support career progression in BCP and we will provide leadership and management development opportunities. We want a clear direction of travel. If you join BCP as an ASYE/newly qualified social worker; we want to support you to work towards becoming an advanced practitioner, a Team Manager and even a Director of Children’s Services in the future!

2. STRENGTHS BASED MODEL OF PRACTICE AND SIGNS OF SAFETY:

The way we do things in BCP!

Stronger families mean safer children.



Our philosophy of practice is based on a systemic approach using Signs of Safety, Motivational Interviewing theories, Attachment and Trauma Informed Practice and Restorative approaches.

The focus is on relationship-based practice which views children, young people, parents/ carers and the wider family and community networks as **partners**.

Families and professionals form a system that works together to find a solution to the presenting problem. Professionals are not seen as holding all the solutions and answers. They work **in partnership** with the family on their understanding of the problems they face, helping to identify strengths and use these to create a way to move forward.

In practice this means that our workforce has to have the skills not only to apply a systemic approach in practice but also that the work with the child has to build on:

- a solid understanding of what it is like for a child to live in a particular family.
- in depth knowledge of the chronology of a family and the dynamics of relationships within families and their social networks.
- the appreciation of the strengths that exist in a family and a clear understanding of the worries.
- the skills of the practitioner to create effective professional relationships and become agents of change.

Signs of Safety



BCP Children's Services has been working collaboratively to embed the Signs of Safety (SofS) Practice Framework, which means you and our partners will begin to see this approach used in many different parts of our service.

These include:

- Early Help Services
- Assessment
- Children's Safeguarding and Protection
- Children in Care and Care Leavers
- Children's Disability Services
- Fostering and Adoption.

What does it mean?

In practice this means that when a practitioner (social worker, family support worker, youth worker, personal advisor etc.) visits a child, young person and/or family, or you or a partner agency representative attends a meeting where Children, Young People and Families Services are involved, you or another lead professional will be asking the following questions:

- What are we worried about?
- What do we know has happened in the past that has caused harm to the child/ young person?
- What are we worried might happen to cause harm in the future?
- What are the things that make it harder for the family to look after their children?

Signs of Safety is a **strengths-based approach** though, so we will also be asking the following very important questions:

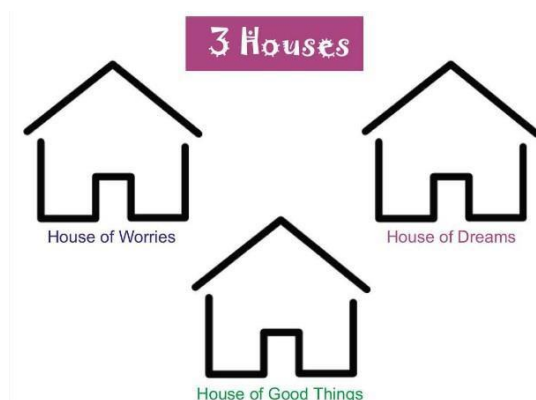
- What is working well?
- What are the family or friends already doing that are keeping the child or young person safe?
- What are the strengths in the family that might help to keep their child safe in the future?

As we learn more about the family, we develop a safety goal which outlines our best hopes for safety in the future.

We will work **with** the family and professionals to develop a safety plan.

We will always make sure that we get the child's views and one way we are doing this is by using the Signs of Safety 'three houses' tool as well as a wide range of other child friendly tools.

The lived experience of the child should be at the front and centre of everything we do, and their voice should inform all our assessments and plans across the service. Child inclusive practice is how we do things here.



We have brought together a SofS Practice Group that will look at the scope of implementation and future training needs and drive it forward across their teams and services.

Implementation follows the journey of the child, starting with Early Help and the MASH, Assessment Teams, then Intensive Family Support (Child Protection and Child in Need) Teams and the Child Health and Disability Team. We are also providing regular Partners Briefings so that the multi-agency teams around families understand and actively and consistently contribute to our practice framework, using a common language and approach to safeguarding children and young people.

We then need to include Children in Care Teams, Care Experienced Young People's Teams, Supported Lodgings, Private Fostering, Fostering and Aspire Adoption over the next 2 years.

It is important to remember that training is only 20% of implementation, the rest is learning by doing and then reflecting on the doing. That is where the learning magic happens.

As part of our implementation our aim is for all managers of frontline teams to be attending Group Supervision sessions every 8 weeks as this has proved to be key in helping other local authorities to embed the approach and develop their use of *Appreciative Inquiry*. *Case Mappings* will start to take place routinely in team meetings, planning meetings and supervision. *Practice Champions* will be identified in each team to support colleagues in the use of *Direct Work tools* in order to see more evidence of the lived experience and voice of the child informing our assessments and plans. Senior Managers will be actively involved, and they will use the '3 columns' approach to analyse at strategic and organisational levels.

Motivation and commitment to using Signs of Safety to make a real difference for children, young people and families is high. We are committed to a learning journey over the next 5 years, but we are aware that we have a long way to go to develop the depth of our practice.

3. EMPLOYER STANDARDS - COMMITMENT TO CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

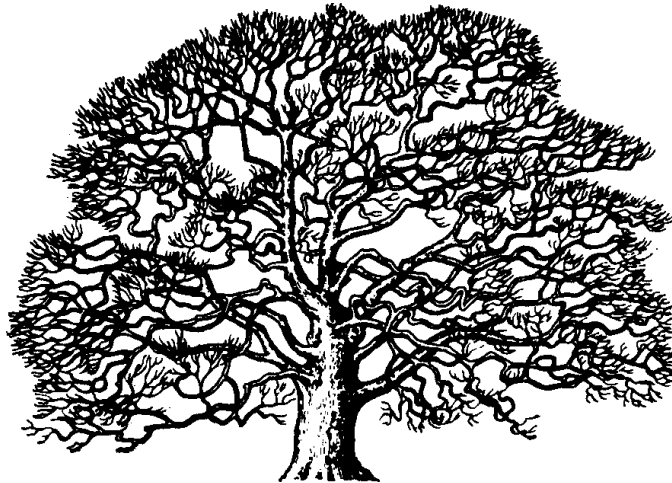
Children, Young People and Families Services are committed to the Employer Standards defined by the Social Welfare Reform Board. These standards outline a range of expectations relevant for workforce development that employers of social workers should adhere to. The standards should not be unique to social work and best practice would suggest these standards should apply to all practitioners working with vulnerable children, young people, and families.

The Employer Standards emphasise the importance of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) through access to research evidence and best practice guidance.

In relation to the workforce development strategy, as measures of success this means that Bournemouth, Christchurch, and Poole Council will:

- provide time, resources and support for CPD.
- Have fair and transparent systems to enable workers to develop their professional skills and knowledge throughout their careers.
- Provide appropriate support to workers to progress through the career structure and grade progression.
- Have effective induction systems and put in place tailored support through the Assessed Year of Employment (ASYE) programme for newly qualified social workers in their first year of practice; including robust induction, protected development time, a manageable workload, tailored supervision and mentoring.
- Support our workers to make decisions and pursue actions that are informed by robust and rigorous evidence so that families can have confidence in the service they receive.
- Enable workers to work with others engaged in research and practice development activities in universities and professional bodies, to further develop the evidence base for good practice.
- Enable experienced social workers to contribute to social work teaching on the BA, MA and Step Up to Social Work qualifying programmes at Bournemouth University and the Social Work Apprenticeship Scheme via the Open University.
- Ensure that practice educators are able to contribute to the learning, support, supervision and assessment of students and newly qualified social workers.

OUR COMMITMENT:



- We will establish a system in which CPD, and work-based learning is business as usual and our workforce does have the time and space to reflect on practice using learning to **improve outcomes** for children and young people.
- To achieve this, we will increase the number of practice educators and strengthen the support for those practitioners who are in their first year of practice (ASYE) through the development of our ASYE Academy.
- Managers will get bespoke training in supervision so that they can better support their staff in their learning and development.
- We will create forums in which practitioners can learn with and from each other and from quality assurance and auditing work.
- We will continue to commit to specialised training opportunities for all our staff including our non-social work staff, who are skilful, passionate and an essential and valued part of our workforce.

4. PATHWAYS TO PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Part of the Employer Standards is the development of strategic partnerships with higher education institutions.

It is important that BCP collaborates with our local University to grow the pool of excellent social work graduates. This means that the Council will continue to offer good quality placements, other types of practice learning and effective workplace assessments to help ensure that the right numbers of new social workers of the right calibre are trained. We will continue to “grow our own” through the Social Work Apprenticeship with the OU and our Step Up to Social Work Programme with Bournemouth University. We want to offer our Family Support Practitioners, Youth Workers and wider colleagues the opportunity to develop their professional careers with us.

Through a strategic partnership with Bournemouth University, we aim to develop a pathway for continuous professional development for all our staff. We want to make the best of the talent within our workforce and use the expertise of a range of people with different kinds of professional qualifications within our service.

We have just started an Academic Residency Pilot with a focus on improving practice around neglect. We will be encouraging our practitioners to work with the Resident Academic to write and publish articles focusing on best practice where neglect is a concern. We will be encouraging co-production of teaching materials with our service users and front-line workers, sharing what worked for them.



5. SOCIAL WORK ENGLAND STANDARDS

Social Work England (SWE) is the governing body for maintaining professional standards in social work. These standards help to define the requirements that our staff have to satisfy and thereby set out what our workforce strategy has to offer to assist social workers in maintaining their registration.

Ongoing training and professional development is key for practitioners to maintain their registration and practice professionally. SWE requires registered professionals to keep records not only of the courses and other learning events they have participated in but also to record the impact those events have had on their professional practice and on children.

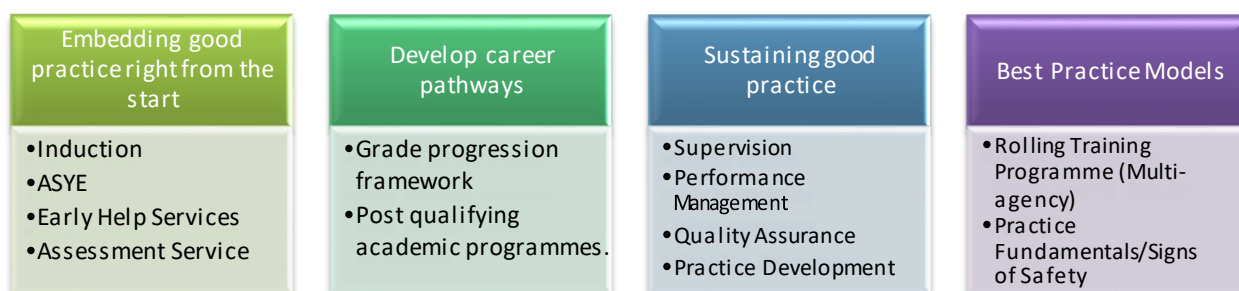
SWE has published standards of conduct that registered professionals have to adhere to in order to maintain their registration.

To help staff to maintain their registration with SWE we will provide the opportunities to attend training and enable time for work related learning.

Our job descriptions, person specifications, performance framework, and recruitment process will be aligned to the DfE Knowledge and Skills Statements (KSS). A process for progression through the grades is outlined alongside this document to ensure that practitioners can evidence that they meet the requirements for the level of practice needed for their particular role.

6. WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES

The organisational context, changing local demands, SWE standards, KSS and PCF inform the workforce development strategy in terms of key priorities:



We need to continue to support and develop our specialist roles in child sexual exploitation and criminal exploitation, domestic abuse, sexual harm, children and young people with disabilities, family group conferences, parenting assessments and our highly skilled practitioners across our Early Help Services workforce

7. ASSESSED AND SUPPORTED YEAR IN EMPLOYMENT (ASYE)

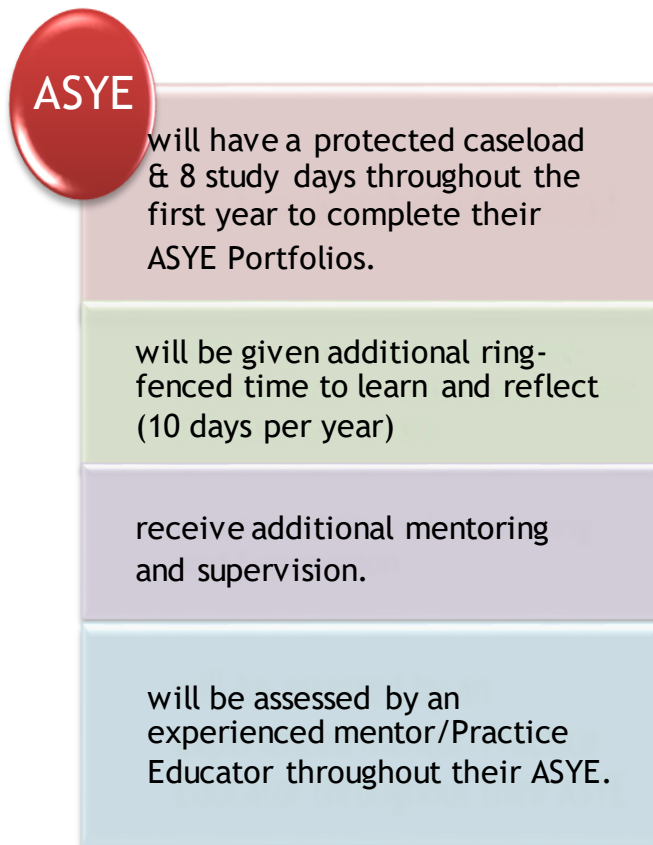
All newly qualified social workers joining BCP Council will be registered with Skills for Care on our ASYE programme to ensure that they get the necessary support at the beginning of their career to embed best practice right from the start.

At the end of the ASYE Programme social workers should have consistently demonstrated good practice in a range of tasks and roles, and have become more effective in their interventions, thus building their own confidence, and earning the confidence of others.

They will have more experience and skills in relation to particular settings and user groups and have demonstrated ability to work effectively on more complex situations.

They will seek support in supervision appropriately, whilst starting to exercise initiative and evaluate their own practice.

This means that those in their ASYE:



8. WORKFORCE ACADEMY AND CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

As members of a workforce academy, we want to emphasise the importance for ongoing continuous development across the whole of our workforce, including Early Help colleagues and our partner agencies. For social workers we will ensure that their learning continues after they graduate from University or leave the ASYE programme. Using an academy approach in partnership with Bournemouth University, we seek to anticipate, identify and address the ever changing needs of our workforce.

For our staff this means that we are expecting them to accept a similar level of professional scrutiny of their CPD portfolio, at Grade Progression Panels, as has been established in the ASYE programme, including evidence of reflective practice, observations of direct work, quality assurance audits and evidence of research they have undertaken to inform their practice and the practice of colleagues.

This strategy document is supplemented by our Training Programme, our Learning and Development Policy and our Grade Progression Guide. The training programme needs to be structured in a way that helps to achieve the objectives defined in this strategy and it needs to be responsive to new developments. It is important that the training programme is interlinked with the training efforts put in place by the LSCP and includes action learning from Case Reviews and Quality Assurance Audits.

We also need to prepare our workforce for the forthcoming National Assessment and Accreditation of Social Workers (NAAS) and the continuing registration requirements for our new regulator – Social Work England.

9. MEASURING THE IMPACT OF TRAINING

In light of the challenging financial situation, it is critical that we improve the ways in which we measure the impact training has had on increasing the capacity of staff to fulfil their roles and responsibilities in safeguarding children and young people. Measuring the return on investment of training is key to ensure that the limited resources are used in the most efficient way. This information needs to contribute to the planning cycle for our workforce development.

Measuring the impact of training is a challenge. Yet there needs to be a system in place that encourages our workforce to be engaged in the determination of the impact training had on them and their practice. This is part of their CPD requirements and therefore we need to have a robust system in place that does not treat training as a single event but as part of a career pathway and evidence for CPD. In addition, we need to ensure that **learning is shared** with others/ disseminated to our peers. Managers need to be heavily involved in measuring the effectiveness of training through appraisals and supervision to evidence that all training and development efforts can give answers to the following questions:

- **What impact should this training or development opportunity have on the organisation and its staff?**
- **Most importantly: What impact should this training or development opportunity have on the “lived experience of children and young people in BCP?”.**
- ***We must continuously ask ourselves the “so what” question. What did we do? How well did we do it? Is the child better off as a result? Asking these questions shows professional curiosity. This is crucial as little can be taken for granted in our work and the purpose of our work is to keep children safe and to make their lives better.***

10. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole recognise leadership as an essential part of professional development for staff. The Academy aims to ensure that anyone undertaking a management or supervisory role is offered appropriate support and development opportunities. All our managers are advocates for the professional development of their teams and ensuring their teams feel supported in using innovation and the very best current research to inform their day-to-day practice.

Well trained workers led by effective leaders and managers make a difference day in day out to the lives of children, young people and families who use our services. This is why BCP Children's Services is looking at developing a Leadership Academy as part of the next phase of our development.

The Leadership Academy will support leaders and supervisors as they cope with the value dilemmas and emotional content found in the “real world” of children and families services and the practical skills of managing staff performance and limited resources.

11. OUR PARTNERSHIP WITH BOURNEMOUTH UNIVERSITY

Key aims of the partnership.

- To improve recruitment and retention across all levels of the social work workforce with clear career pathways from qualifying; ASYE, specialist practice, leadership and management, including a specific career pathway for practice supervisors and practice educators.
- To lead the improvement of qualifying social work education which fully prepares high quality social workers for front line practice.
- To provide two placements for every student in BCP by 2021 and to subsequently recruit and develop those former students within BCP.
- To develop and increase research mindedness and research opportunities within practice, in partnership with Bournemouth University. This includes our Academic Residency Pilot as referred to earlier in this document.
- To further develop the involvement of front-line practitioners and their managers (including Early Help colleagues) in curriculum development and classroom teaching on the social work programmes (BA, MA and Step Up).
- To continue to lead our successful Step up to Social Work programme in partnership with Bournemouth University.

12. WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Objective	How
Objective: Our workforce development efforts have to focus on embedding the Signs of Safety model	<p>Clearly defined Social Work Model</p> <p>Develop with our partners the Signs of Safety model</p> <p>Maintain and develop Rolling Training Programme (multi-agency). Train the Trainer for future legacy planning for Signs of Safety</p>
Objective: Children, Young People and Families Services are fully compliant with the Employer Standards as a learning organisation	<p>Review current compliance (annual Autumn Health Check/Survey)</p> <p>Maintain training and professional qualification opportunities.</p> <p>Regular reflective Supervision</p> <p>Annual Appraisals</p>

<p>Objective: Working in partnership with Bournemouth University, this is also a key factor in our recruitment and retention strategy</p>	<p>Increase numbers of practice educators in the workforce.</p> <p>Continue to offer placements for social work students (BA, MA, OU and Step Up)</p> <p>Review of partnership arrangements</p> <p>Develop the Pan Dorset Health and Social Care Academy, and the Teaching Partnership Workstreams and continue to commit to and develop the Step Up to Social Work programme</p>
<p>Objective: Children, Young People and Families Services has a workforce that can deliver safe services to children and young people and can respond to changing demands. Deliver effective support with positive outcomes for children, young people and families in BCP</p>	<p>Training Programme</p> <p>Supervision and Appraisal</p> <p>Observations of Practice</p> <p>Quality Assurance Framework</p> <p>Performance Management</p> <p>Innovation/ Service Development</p> <p>Service User feedback/Co-Production opportunities</p>
<p>Objective: Retention of staff increases as a result of a meaningful employment offer based on Continuing Professional Development opportunities</p>	<p>Development of post qualifying CPD Offer in partnership with Bournemouth University.</p> <p>Research opportunities</p> <p>Development of a learning/ no blame culture. High support and high challenge</p> <p>Recruitment and retention payment for experienced staff.</p>
<p>Objective: Children, Young People and Families Services provides learning opportunities and space for reflection for staff to maintain their professional registration</p>	<p>Training Programme</p> <p>Post Qualifying CPD</p> <p>Action Learning Sets</p> <p>Peer Reflection</p> <p>Lunch time seminars</p> <p>Group Supervision for Motivational Interviewing and Signs of Safety</p> <p>CC Inform, the SofS Knowledge Bank and Research in Practice for online Learning Opportunities</p>
<p>Objective: The career framework for Children, Young People and Families Services is aligned to the Professional Capabilities Framework and the Knowledge and Skills Statement for Child and Family Practitioners (KSS.)</p>	<p>Appraisal Process aligned to the KSS</p> <p>Grade Progression Process aligned to the KSS.</p> <p>ASYE Programme aligned to the KSS.</p> <p>Aspiring Managers Programme aligned to the KSS</p>

<p>Objective: To guarantee staff are able, empowered and responsible for the delivery of effective, high quality services to children.</p>	<p>ASYE Programme Rolling Training Programme Induction Programme Performance Management / Appraisal Process Quality Assurance Framework / Audits Observations of Practice Supervision Team Training Needs Analysis Staff Conferences to celebrate best practice.</p>
<p>Objective: To build an offer for our Early Help colleagues and develop a pathway to gain a formal qualification and address the lack of equality of professional status over the next two years.</p>	<p>Planning and implementing a joint training programme and opportunities to specialise and to learn from each other.</p>

13. MONITORING, REVIEW AND GOVERNANCE

Our strategy and plan will be reviewed initially at quarterly intervals and we will be developing a BCP Children's Services Academy Board. Progress will be reported to the Senior Leadership Team with information on:

- The range of training opportunities available.
- Attendance at training courses.
- Impact evaluations of the training opportunities provided.
- Social work student progress in placements.
- ASYE progress.
- Training Needs Analysis
- Career progression outcomes.
- Recruitment and retention of staff.