



## HINTS AND TIPS FOR PRACTITIONERS

This document contains useful hints and tips for practitioners within Children and Families Service.

### OUTCOME FOCUSED SMART PLANS

**Outcome Focused SMART planning helps families and practitioners develop plans that are clear and address the identified risks and needs.**

The development of the plan is everyone's responsibility, practitioners, and the family. It should draw upon the resources available to both the family and the practitioners; their skills, expertise and knowledge and should demonstrate the wishes and feelings of the child. Practitioners should feel able and committed to challenging each other about aspects of plans that they feel are not Outcome Focused or SMART.

#### What does an Outcome Focused SMART plan look like?

Good practice will always focus on the outcomes that we're working to achieve with children, young people, and their families. Outcomes are about the things that matter to children, young people, families, and practitioners. Sometimes the outcomes we want may be different. But if we are clear about what each of us wants then we have the basis of a restorative working relationship.

At times, our efforts to achieve better outcomes are not helped by our processes and systems. That's why we have refreshed training, guidance and MOSAIC forms so outcomes are at the heart of our practice. This helps us to keep sight of where it is we're trying to get to or what we're trying to do.

Assessment, planning and reviewing should revolve around achieving the outcomes that we've developed and agreed with the family. This means that in all plans have consistent, and agreed outcomes, with clear SMART actions.

Outcomes focused practice is where we take all of this into account.



#### Specific

Outcomes and actions should be specific. They should describe the result that is desired in a way that is, detailed, focused and well defined.

#### Measurable

Measurement is hugely important because it will enable you to know whether an objective has been achieved.

#### Achievable

An objective can be said to be achievable if the necessary resources are available or similar results have been achieved by others in similar circumstances.

#### Realistic

The concepts of 'realistic' and 'achievable' are similar and this may explain why some use the term 'relevant' as an alternative.

#### Timely

It is necessary to set a date or time by which the objective should have been accomplished or completed and this contributes to making objectives measurable

## BE SPECIFIC



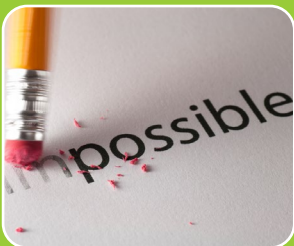
### Specific

- ✓ Whose are the roles/ actions/ responsibilities?
- ✓ What do we need to achieve for the child, young person and family?
- ✓ Where will actions take place?
- ✓ Why are we doing this?
- ✓ Are there contingency plans?
- ✓ Give a small breakdown of issues



### Measurable

- ✓ Can progress be measured?
- ✓ How will we know when it is accomplished?
- ✓ Are there short and long term goals?
- ✓ How to measure impact on the child? eg. does the child feel safer
- ✓ How can this be evidenced?



### Achievable

- ✓ Have constraints and limitations been considered?
- ✓ Have priorities been considered?
- ✓ Consider individual challenges
- ✓ Consider agencies' resources



### Realistic

- ✓ Are the family willing to engage?
- ✓ Are the family agreeable to change?
- ✓ Is this possible for all people involved, children, families, and professionals?
- ✓ Multiple small tasks are more realistic than one big task



### Timely

- ✓ Deadlines for short- and long-term objectives.
- ✓ Appropriate realistic timescales
- ✓ Set appropriate review dates
- ✓ "ongoing" and "asap" should never be used



## Things to do

- ✓ Involve the child or young person, and their family, in the planning process as much as possible.
- ✓ Use clear and concise language that is easy to understand for all involved. Always ask the child and their parents if they understand what is written down in their plan. If they can't understand what is being asked of them, how are they going to make progress?
- ✓ Remember to keep plans jargon free and remove acronyms. Take out anything that is not going to address any of the key risks/areas of concern.
- ✓ Use the [Dictionary of Care: Watch Your Words](#)
- ✓ Ensure that the outcomes and actions are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and timely.
- ✓ Consider the child or young person's strengths and resources when setting goals and planning interventions.
- ✓ Use evidence-based interventions and strategies that have been proven to be effective.
- ✓ Regularly review and evaluate progress towards achieving the desired outcomes and adjust as needed.
- ✓ Ensure that the plan is realistic and considers any potential barriers or challenges that may arise.
- ✓ Ensure you have a contingency plan which the child/young person, family and partners understand. This will help everyone be prepared if things don't go to plan.

## Things to avoid

- ☒ Don't set unrealistic or unachievable goals that may discourage engagement or progress.
- ☒ Don't use jargon or technical language that may be difficult to understand.
- ☒ Don't rely solely on one intervention or strategy. Use a range of approaches that are tailored.
- ☒ Don't assume that the child or young person's needs will remain the same throughout the planning period. Review and adapt the plan as needed.
- ☒ Don't overlook the importance of involving the child or young person and their family in the planning and decision-making process.
- ☒ Don't forget to document the progress made towards achieving the desired outcomes.

## Words to avoid in plans

There are some words that are best avoided in plans because they don't actually mean anything!

Examples of this are:

- ☒ "appropriate" (in who's view?)
- ☒ "ongoing" (when have you achieved your goal?)
- ☒ "monitor" (we need to be purposeful, and monitoring is not a purposeful activity)
- ☒ "support" (It is a superficial word, and we need to dig deeper).
- ☒ Try and avoid subjective terms like "clean and tidy" (use specific and objective terms like "free of clutter" or "baby bottles and milk preparation equipment to be clean and sterilised").

