



One minute guide

Restorative Practice

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What is Restorative Practice?

Restorative Practice is a term used to describe an approach we have adopted in Leeds Children and Families. It describes a way of relating to each other and is based on the understanding that, as human beings, we are all interconnected and our relationships really matter when it comes to making a positive difference for children and young people.

It means that we place value on behaviours, interactions and approaches which help to **build** and **maintain** positive, healthy relationships, resolve difficulties and **repair** harm where there has been conflict.

When we work with and alongside people, there is strong evidence to say that outcomes for children and their families are improved.

Restorative practices enable those who work with children and families to focus upon building relationships that create and inspire positive change. Creating change sometimes requires challenge as well as support.

Why are we doing it?

Our [Children and Young People's Plan 2023 – 2028](#) explains that connections, conversations, and relationships with children, families and practitioners is how we work in Leeds. Whether we are delivering services or accessing them, our human needs for connection, trust and belonging are the same. Only when these needs are met can we fulfil our potential as leaders, practitioners, children and families. Relational and restorative practice maximises our chances of achieving this by working WITH each other rather than doing things TO or FOR each other.

Restorative Practice is at the heart of our [Leeds Practice Model](#) and is a key element of Leeds's ambition to become a [Child Friendly City](#). These approaches provide practitioners with a range of language, behaviours and tools that strengthen their relationships with children, young people and families, promoting accountability and a solution-focused approach, which supports positive and sustainable change. By investing in the relationships with children and families and involving them in the decisions that affect them, we are much more likely to see children and young people:

- Stay safe from harm;
- Do well at all levels of learning and have skills for life;
- Enjoy healthy lives;
- Have fun growing up; and
- Be active citizens who feel they have voice and influence.

How are we doing it?

We know that a workforce that feels safe, valued and respected will be empowered to work alongside children and families in a way that leaves them feeling safe, valued and respected. And when they feel this way, we can help create the circumstances in which they can achieve their goals.

We are guided by our Council values to drive and model restorative behaviours and practices that grow a culture of high support and high challenge, where we continually ask ourselves, 'Am I really approaching this in a restorative way?'

Some specific practices you might come across when working with us which help to foster our connections include:

- Using **circles** and **check ins** when we come together as a way to share power and voice, connect with each other and be seen, remove physical barriers to connection, and as a means to collective wisdom and decision making;
- Investing dedicated time in **connecting as humans** because this is part of the job too as is critical in building the necessary social capital for high performing teams who are best places to meet current challenges;
- **'Walking With' conversations** where Children and Families staff/ teams can receive high support, high challenge coaching support to apply restorative approaches in their work;
- **Restorative Practice Leadership Sets** where Children and Families staff develop their own learning communities that embed and promote restorative culture and practice;
- [Restorative Conflict Resolution](#), when seeking to understand and repair harm in our own relationships.
- [Family Group Conferencing \(FGC\)](#) An FGC is a meeting where a child's wider family come together, talk about concerns and make a plan for the future support and care of the child. FGCs are intended as a respectful and empowering process in which parents, children, wider family members and family friends are given clear information about safeguarding concerns and are asked to produce a plan to address those concerns; and
- **In Leeds, many schools** are now using restorative practices to structure their day and shape how staff and children communicate with each other.

Who are the key contacts?

For more information about restorative approaches in Leeds you can contact:

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