

Our shared ambition - We want all children and young people in Norfolk to FLOURISH

Who this vision is for?

This vision is for all of us who want to work together to improve the lives and possible futures of children and young people in Norfolk and Waveney. It is for people working with children and young people; it is for families, friends and carers; it is for communities. Most importantly it is for children and young people themselves. Because this is about their lives and their futures. And if we can create some common purpose to loosely connect and bring our efforts together, we might achieve more.

What is this vision for?

There are many different services and agencies involved in creating the conditions in which children and young people in Norfolk and Waveney can flourish. We each have responsibility for services and support that impact different aspects of their lives. But we all recognize both that we can achieve more if we work together; and that if we don't pay attention to how our efforts impact collectively on children and young people, we may have unintended and - possibly - negative impact.

FLOURISH is the first time that we have started to articulate our shared ambition for the impact we might achieve - together - and importantly some of the ways in which all services working with children, young people and families should work.

This is a journey and we know we do not always live up to some of the ambition set out within FLOURISH. But we believe there is value and purpose in setting out our collective aspirations. Over the long term local public sector partners are committed to connecting and joining up services more effectively to improve both outcomes and the way in which children, young people and families experience services. The Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership Board is the formal place where different agencies come together to try to align our various responsibilities, to identify where we want to actively do more together and to provide collective leadership for children's and young people's services across the area. This board will support the development of FLOURISH across Norfolk and Waveney.

FLOURISH is a framework; we will use this model to provide a golden thread that brings our sector and organizational efforts together to achieve a common purpose. It does not replace the need for specific plans - but it should ensure that these plans and strategies are aligned and that this is more visible to staff and local people.

Family and Friends

Families – however they are defined – will be at the heart of our approach. We will consider the needs of the whole family. We will include families in decisions as much as we can. And we know that families and friends are often strong sources of support in the lives of children and young people; we will respect and value the contribution of families and friends as a force for good. Our approach across all services will support families staying together and connected – safely - and empower families to support their children and young people.

Learning

Children and young people will be able to access good quality learning from a young age. They will acquire the skills and curiosity that encourages lifelong learning. Regardless of where or how they learn, all children will have the opportunity to achieve their full potential and develop life skills in preparation for adult life. We recognise that learning takes place in many settings and different ways and we will deal with some of the common obstacles to learning as early as possible. We will work together with those children and young people with on-going needs and their families to create environments in which everyone can learn.

Opportunity

We will be ambitious for all children and young people, ensuring they are provided with a wide range of opportunities to develop as well-rounded individuals and explore their interests and talents. We value and support people who give time to children and young people in their communities.

We know that children and young people experience barriers to achieving their full potential. We will work together to tackle this and offer children and young people a say over things that are important to them.

Understood

We know that children and young people want to be heard and understood. We will ensure that children and young people are listened to and treated in a holistic way. In particular that they have access to the mental health and emotional well-being support that they might need as they move through childhood into adulthood.

We will build their own resilience and skills for life and will support those who have more complex or on-going needs. We will support children and young people to be able to communicate so they are heard, involved and able to impact on how services are shaped.

Resilience

We cannot protect children and young people from all the challenges of life. But we can stand alongside them, support them, give them skills and knowledge so that when life is challenging they can draw on their own resources and those around them to get through. If this is done well, they will emerge stronger and better able to deal with the ups and downs of life over the long term. We will keep children and young people informed about risks to enable them to make their own positive decisions about keeping safe.

Individual

Each child and young person is unique and valued with their own characteristics, talents and skills, aspirations, needs and circumstances. They deserve to be respected as individuals; to explore, value and celebrate their own identity and to appreciate differences in each other as a source of strength and joy.

And we know that children and young people flourish when they form positive relationships with family, friends and other trusted adults in their lives. We will ensure that we recognise this and that it is clear through our actions.

Safe and Secure

Every person is entitled to feel secure and be safe. We know this happens best when everyone takes responsibility. We will ensure that children and young people are informed about risks and able to make their own positive decisions about keeping safe. We will work together and share information to keep children and young people safe.

And when children and young people are in circumstances that are not safe and secure we will do our best both to keep that child safe and to tackle the underlying causes in a way that actively promotes healthy, long term development.

Healthy

We have a shared responsibility to create healthy environments, communities and the conditions that we know promote good physical and mental health. We will ensure that people have the knowledge and capacity to live healthy lives over the long term so they can achieve their full potential. We will work with children and young people to promote good physical and mental health and will act to prevent poor health. We will ensure that those who have health needs – short or long term – can get the treatment and support they need.

What this will mean for children and young people

FLOURISH is about a way of being, thinking and acting. But it is also about improving lives. If we are effective in how we all work together across Norfolk and Waveney we hope to positively impact the following aspects of the lives and outcomes for children and young people:

- Good physical and mental health
- More children and young people free from neglect and emotional harm
- Closing the gap in inequality
- An increase in social mobility
- Improved educational attainment
- Increased emotional resilience
- Children and young people connected and engaged in communities
- Fewer children and young people vulnerable to crime

How to use FLOURISH in practice

We hope that FLOURISH will be a bit different from how we have worked together before. It is not a top down strategy, a tick list or a detailed plan. And we hope it will include local community groups, and individual actions alongside the work of statutory agencies and local organisations with specific duties, aims and responsibilities. We view it more as a social movement – something that people and organisations will want to join in with rather than something that is mandated.

And in that spirit, please feel free to use the elements of FLOURISH in a way that is relevant to you and your service or activity.

Notes

The nature of FLOURISH

As we have worked together on FLOURISH we have been inspired by the work of Leeds and their children's partnership work – "child friendly city"; we have also recognised the affinity with (social) movements like Dementia Friends. We feel that the roll out and take-up of FLOURISH across the system would benefit from learning from these approaches rather than the manner in which we usually launch strategies (see below). We started to develop a logic model for FLOURISH, but this became very broad and almost become a logic model for the children's system. FLOURISH operates at a system level – in a complex adaptive system frame. We were wary of creating a logic model which might lead people to believe there are easy, binary interventions and services to switch on and achieve these outcomes. Equally, we recognise that there is a need to create materials and tools to help people and organisations engage with FLOURISH, to make it real, and to understand how it might be relevant and have impact in different settings and with different audiences.

Outcomes and measurement

The outcomes we have identified are a first go at a basket of outcomes that resonate with FLOURISH and also with a range of partners and activities. We think there is something there for everyone, but these need to be checked as part of the next phase of work.

We also think that this will provide a framework through which to capture and align key metrics – probably quarterly at most – and connect FLOURISH to a system scorecard and metrics happening today. Most of the outcomes we think can be measured through existing measurement mechanisms in the system or through national sources such as the public health fingertips tool. But there are a few where we think the system needs to consider an annual survey of children and young people – particularly relating to emotional resilience and connected and engaged in communities. Other counties in the region do this (Herts, Essex) and we understand that Norfolk has considered this in the past and has a model that could be used for this purpose

Making FLOURISH real

In order to bring FLOURISH to life and make it part of day to day work we think there are a number of key elements that need further development:

- Branding: create a brand and logo for FLOURISH that can complement other brands in the system. A brand that is suitable for co-branding and can be used on a range of collateral and merchandise like the dementia friends flower. Badges, lanyards, documents and publications, digital uses. Make the brand inclusive and aspirational so that individuals and organisations want to be associated with it. We have used the STP brand as a holding brand – but FLOURISH is broader than the STP.
- Website and digital footprint: create a small website for FLOURISH that captures the vision, signposts to other services and sources of information, and provides some tools and materials for organisations, staff, families and children and young people. Update this regularly with good news stories and case studies that show FLOURISH in practice. Develop a social media plan (twitter, facebook, Instagram) to spread FLOURISH across other platforms and reach out to children and young people directly. Keep this active and encourage leaders and others to tweet under the #FLOURISH tag
- Develop a self-assessment tool – something self-directed – that organisations can use to see how they live up to the values and ambitions in FLOURISH and can develop actions to raise their game.

- Consider some kind of annual event, celebration, festival of FLOURISH to bring people together, celebrate achievement, look ahead to future priorities and challenges – and keep the movement and vision relevant and visible
- Consider whether there is any benefit in adopting the dementia friends model – 1 hour of immersion in FLOURISH, led by people from the system, to share and explain our vision and ambition

We will need some limited resources to:

- Develop the brand and digital footprint (one-off)
- Maintain and develop the presence and narrative over time – comms resource (on-going but light)
- Collate and present outcomes on a routine basis (on-going but light)
- Develop an initial suite of tools (one-off)
- Support any FLOURISH events (as and when)

We don't think that FLOURISH is something that can be mandated – it is something that we want organisations and people to adopt and want to be associated with. Inclusive and aspirational.

Finally, we realised that we have missed out FUN – the most compelling way of getting things to happen. We hope that FLOURISH will be fun in its manifestation – but we need to think how to weave this in more strongly to the framework.

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