

# Social work: families & relationships

## Quick summary sheet

NICE supports child-centred assessment and support through the development of evidence-based guidelines and quality standards.

### Guidelines:

- Comprehensive set of recommendations for action
- Focused on a particular topic/setting
- Aimed at a range of audiences
- Show the underpinning evidence

### Quality standards:

- Set of statements to help improve quality
- Focused on areas of poor quality or variation in practice
- Can be used to measure improvement or demonstrate good quality

### Examples of guidance topics relevant to children's Social Workers:

Children's attachment ( <a href="#">NG26</a> & <a href="#">QS133</a> )	Social & emotional wellbeing in primary school ( <a href="#">PH12</a> )
Child abuse & neglect ( <a href="#">NG76</a> & <a href="#">QS179</a> )	Social & emotional wellbeing in secondary education ( <a href="#">PH20</a> )
Harmful sexual behaviour ( <a href="#">NG55</a> )	Transition from MH inpatient to community ( <a href="#">NG53</a> & <a href="#">QS159</a> )
Looked-after children & YP ( <a href="#">PH28</a> & <a href="#">QS31</a> )	Depression in children & young people ( <a href="#">NG134</a> )

The scenarios below show how NICE guidance could be used in social work practice. We recognise that NICE guidance would be used alongside other sources of information to support professional judgement.

## Scenario 1—Open and honest relationships with parents

### Situation:

A social worker makes an initial home visit to a family, following concerns of potential neglect highlighted by the school.

Katie, the mother, becomes very angry with the social worker. She feels that the social worker is interfering and has no right to be in their home asking such personal questions when she's no worse than other mums she knows.

### Examples of NICE guidance:

*Child abuse & neglect*  
([NG76](#)—recommendations 1.1.11)

Includes advice to be open and honest when working with parents, including sharing the legal context in which they are involved.

### Action:

The social worker remembers a group supervision session which covered content from the NICE Child abuse & neglect guideline, including ways to build open and honest relationships with parents.

She then explains more clearly to Katie the legal context for her visit. This helps to depersonalise the situation and makes Katie feel more informed.

## Scenario 2—Family involvement in care planning

### Situation:

Chloe is 14yrs and has a history of self-harm. She has recently been admitted to an inpatient mental health unit following an overdose.

Chloe lives with her dad, Jakob. Jakob works night shifts and relies on public transport. He complains to Chloe's social worker that he has not been involved in any care planning discussions since Chloe has been admitted.

### Examples of NICE guidance:

*Transition between inpatient mental health settings and community or care home settings*  
(NG53—recommendation 1.4)

Includes practical advice on building relationships with and supporting families, parents and carers throughout admission. This includes accommodation of working patterns and other responsibilities when organising meetings.

### Action:

Chloe's social worker uses relevant recommendations from NICE guidance to highlight with staff on the ward the importance of supporting and involving families.

The social worker is able to persuade the psychiatric team to arrange meetings at different times, to fit with Jakob's working pattern and reliance on public transport.

## Scenario 3—Supporting inter-generational need

### Situation:

Farzana 13 yrs is blind, has a moderate learning disability and is experiencing depression following the loss of her father.

Farzana's mum, Shazia, has highlighted how worried she is about Farzana. She also says that she feels overwhelmed as she is a carer for her own mother, who has dementia and lives with them in the family home.

### Examples of NICE guidance:

*Depression in children & young people*  
(NG134— all recommendations)

*& Dementia* (NG97— recommendation 1.11)

Include advice for various audiences about recognition and management of depression in children.

Dementia guideline highlights that people living with a person with dementia could be at an increased risk of depression.

### Action:

Farzana's social worker uses NICE guidance to feel assured that Farzana is being offered appropriate support for her depression. They also use it to help prepare for a sensitive discussion with Shazia about her needs.

Following the discussion Shazia agrees to a carer's assessment and information about how her mother could be supported by adult services.

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