

Revised guidance published: Working together to safeguard children 2018

Statutory guidance on inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in England

Department for Education (DfE) statutory guidance sets out what organisations and agencies who have functions relating to children must and should do to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children and young people under the age of 18 in England.

[NSPCC briefing](#) highlights the key changes in the new 2018 edition. This guidance replaces Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015).

Background to the new guidance

This briefing outlines the main changes set out in the Department for Education statutory guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children: a guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children (PDF). The new guidance follows a government consultation, launched in October 2017 which set out the changes needed to support the new system of multi-agency safeguarding arrangements established by the Children and Social Work Act 2017.

Additional Department for Education guidance also published

The Department for Education has also published transitional guidance and advice on information sharing for people who provide safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>

Key changes in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018

Assessing need and providing help

The guidance highlights specifically that “practitioners should, in particular, be alert to the potential need for early help for a child who:

- is disabled and has specific additional needs
- has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory Education, Health and Care Plan)
- is a young carer
- is showing signs of being drawn into anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups
- is frequently missing/goes missing from care or from home
- is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking or exploitation
- is at risk of being radicalised or exploited
- is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse
- is misusing drugs or alcohol themselves
- has returned home to their family from care
- is a privately fostered child.

The guidance also includes:

- a new section on referral highlighting that anyone with a concern about a child’s welfare should make a referral to local authority children’s social care

- a myth busting guide to information sharing
- a new section on assessment of disabled children and their carers; young carers; children in secure youth establishments
- a new section on contextual safeguarding.

Organisational responsibilities

The guidance includes a new section on “people in positions of trust” highlighting that “organisations and agencies working with children and families should have clear policies for dealing with allegations against people who work with children”.

Other changes relate to:

- all schools: specifies that “this guidance applies in its entirety to all schools”
- Early years and childcare: there is a new requirement that they must “have and implement a policy and procedures to safeguard children”
- Health: a new section on “designated health professionals”
- new section on “children’s homes”
- new section on “Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements” (MAPPA)
- Voluntary, charity, social enterprise, faith-based organisations and private sectors:

Highlights that “all practitioners working in these organisations and agencies who are working with children and their families are subject to the same safeguarding responsibilities, whether paid or a volunteer”.

The guidance also highlights that “charity trustees are responsible for ensuring that those benefiting from, or working with, their charity, are not harmed in any way through contact with it”.

Multi-agency safeguarding arrangements

Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) will be replaced by “safeguarding partners”

Under the new legislation, three safeguarding partners (local authorities, chief officers of police, and clinical commissioning groups) must make arrangements to work together with relevant agencies (as they consider appropriate) to safeguard and protect the welfare of children in the area.

The geographical footprint for the new arrangements is based on local authority areas. Every local authority, clinical commissioning group and police force must be covered by a local safeguarding arrangement.

Safeguarding partners:

- the 3 safeguarding partners should agree on ways to co-ordinate their safeguarding services; act as a strategic leadership group in supporting and engaging others; and implement local and national learning including from serious child safeguarding incidents
- to fulfil this role, the three safeguarding partners must set out how they will work together and with any relevant agencies

- all 3 safeguarding partners have equal and joint responsibility for local safeguarding arrangements.

Relevant agencies:

- relevant agencies are those organisations and agencies whose involvement the safeguarding partners consider is required to safeguard and promote the welfare of local children
- for local arrangements to be effective, they should engage organisations and agencies that can work in a collaborative way to provide targeted support to children and families as appropriate
- the safeguarding partners must set out in their published arrangements which organisations and agencies they will be working with to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Schools, colleges and other educational providers:

- all schools, colleges and other educational providers have duties in relation to safeguarding children and promoting their welfare
- the safeguarding partners should make arrangements to allow all schools (including multi academy trusts), colleges and other educational providers, in the local area to be fully engaged, involved and included in the new safeguarding arrangements
- it is expected that local safeguarding partners will name schools, colleges and other educational providers as relevant agencies
- once designated as a relevant agency, schools and colleges, and other educational providers, in the same way as other relevant agencies, are under a statutory duty to co-operate with the published arrangements.

Local and national child safeguarding practice reviews

- the guidance sets out the process for new national and local reviews
- the responsibility for how the system learns the lessons from serious child safeguarding incidents lies at a national level with the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel (the Panel) and at local level with the safeguarding partners
- the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel operates from 29 June 2018, and will consider all notifications of serious incidents.

Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel

- the Panel is responsible for identifying and overseeing the review of serious child safeguarding cases which, in its view, raise issues that are complex or of national importance
- the Panel must decide whether it is appropriate to commission a national review of a case or cases
- the Panel must set up a pool of potential reviewers who can undertake national reviews, a list of whom must be publicly available.

Local safeguarding partners:

- local safeguarding partners must make arrangements to identify and review serious child safeguarding cases which, in their view, raise issues of importance in relation to their area
- a copy of the rapid review should be sent to the Panel who decide on whether it is appropriate to commission a national review of a case or cases
- the safeguarding partners are responsible for commissioning and supervising reviewers for local reviews.

Information on the rapid review process and criteria, and guidance safeguarding partners must consider is also included.

Child death reviews

The guidance replaces the requirement for LSCBs to ensure that child death reviews are undertaken by a child death overview panel (CDOP) with the requirement for “child death review partners” (consisting of local authorities and any clinical commissioning groups for the local area) to make arrangements to review child deaths.

The guidance:

- specifies that “child death review partners may, if they consider it appropriate, model their child death review structures and processes on the current Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) framework”
- specifies there should be reviews of all deaths children normally resident in the local area and, if they consider it appropriate, for any non-resident child who has died in their area
- specifies that reviews have “the intention of learning what happened and why, and preventing future child deaths” and that “the information gathered ... may help child death review partners to identify modifiable factors that could be altered to prevent future deaths” (replacing the previous wording that set out that CDOPs should look to determine “whether the death was deemed preventable”)
- sets out that “further guidance will be published on child death reviews”.

The guidance has two appendices:

- Appendix A: Glossary
- Appendix B: Further sources of information including: Department for Education guidance; guidance issued by other government departments and agencies, and guidance issued by external organisation.