



Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023: Summary of Changes

Chapter 1: A Shared Responsibility

A new chapter bringing together new and existing guidance to emphasise that successful outcomes for children depend on strong multi-agency partnership working across the whole system of help, support and protection including effective work from all agencies with parents, carers, and families. This includes principles for working with parents and carers to centre the importance of building positive, trusting, and co-operative relationships to deliver tailored support to families, and expectations for multi-agency working that apply to all individuals, agencies and organisations working with children and their families, across a range of roles and activities.

Chapter 2: Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements

Substantive changes to strengthen how local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements (local authorities, integrated care boards and the police) work to safeguard and protect children locally, including with relevant agencies.

Changes include clarifying the roles and responsibilities of safeguarding partners, distinguishing between Lead Safeguarding Partners (LSPs) and Delegated Safeguarding Partners (DSPs), introducing a partnership chair role, emphasising the role of education in safeguarding arrangements and strengthening accountability by clarifying expectations for information-sharing, independent scrutiny, funding, and reporting. Agencies are encouraged to consider the importance of voluntary, charity and social enterprise (VCSE) organisations within arrangements to improve oversight, engagement, and consistency. This chapter also highlights the importance of considering naming and engaging voluntary, charity, social enterprise organisations and sports clubs in published local arrangements if they are not already.

No statutory roles or functions have been removed from the guidance.

Chapter 3: Providing Help, Support and Protection

This revision has a renewed focus on how organisations and agencies provide help, safeguarding and protection for children and their families. There are three sections: Early help, Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, and Child protection.

Early help strengthens the role of education and childcare settings in supporting children and keeping them safe, including information on a child's right to education and risk factors for practitioners to consider when identifying children and families who may benefit from early help. The approach to working with families has been strengthened throughout the guidance, outlining the role of family networks, including stronger guidance on the use of family group conferences to improve family network engagement in decision making and supporting children.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children clarifies a broader range of practitioners can be the lead practitioner for children and families receiving support and services under section 17 of the Children Act 1989, and the requirements on local authorities and their partners to agree and set out local governance arrangements. It clarifies the role of children's social care in supporting disabled children and their families, children at risk of, or experiencing, harm outside the home, children in mother and baby units (in prisons) and children at risk from people in prison and people supervised by the probation service.

Child protection introduces new national multi-agency child protection standards to set out actions, considerations and behaviours for improved child protection practice and outcomes for children. It clarifies the multi-agency response to all forms of abuse and exploitation from outside the home, consideration of children at risk of experiencing extra-familial harm in all children's social care assessments and includes resources to support practitioners understanding of the response to online harm.

Chapter 4: Organisational Responsibilities

Changes to the Prison and Probation sections highlights the mutual benefits of exchanging information with children's social care which strengthen and clarify processes and responsibilities for child safeguarding.

Chapter 5: Learning from Serious Child Safeguarding Incidents

Clarifies the expectation for keeping in touch with care leavers over the age of 21, and the non-mandatory reporting of care leaver deaths up to age 25 to improve learning and outcomes for this group of young people.

Chapter 6: Child Death Reviews

Factual changes only (covered below).

Factual Changes

Introduction

- Adds Domestic Abuse Act 2021 legislation and the National Framework statutory guidance to the list of guidance that supports a child-centred approach.
- Removes references to clinical commissioning groups and replaces with integrated care boards throughout guidance.

Chapter 1

- Updates to information sharing references to correct factual inaccuracies and reflect existing guidance.

Chapter 3

- Includes reference to young carers now recorded in school census, to reflect change in policy.
- Includes information on the pre-proceedings stage of the child protection process, to reflect existing guidance.

Chapter 4

- Clarifies roles and responsibilities of health practitioners with specific duties for child safeguarding.
- Updates to Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) section to reflect existing statutory MAPPA guidance.
- Updates to the armed services section to reflect MOD responsibilities/changes to internal structures and processes.
- Removes reference to secure colleges and referencing secure children's homes and secure schools.
- Removes references to Public Health England.

Chapter 5

- Clarifies the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel carry out thematic reviews, Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review process and signposting to panel guidance for clarity on serious safeguarding cases.
- Clarifies the process for submitting serious incidents notifications and the importance of accuracy to support data, reporting and learning.

Chapter 6

- Replaces reference 'Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) framework' with Child Death Review Statutory and Operational Guidance (2018)
- Modifies language around the child death review process where the death of a child occurs in an area outside where the child usual resides.
- Reflects new guidance of coroner's duty to include post-mortem reports with relevant child death review.
- Reflects change of name by removing independent review by child death review partners and replacing with child death overview panel.
- Modifies the language around the responsibility of professionals where relevant, to inform relevant safeguarding partners and the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel

Appendix A - Glossary

- Reflects new definitions, legislation, and policies where appropriate.
- Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan wording reflects reference to the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 0-25 (2015) to reflect legislation.

Appendix B

- New links to resource packs on female genital mutilation, forced marriage, sexual abuse, online safety, the child protection companion, and independent scrutiny and local safeguarding partnership.

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