

WORKING TOGETHER 2023

OVERVIEW OF CHANGES



Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 was published in December 2023.

It outlines a number of changes to improve practice, processes and systems across the continuum of help and support by strengthening multi-agency working while keeping children at the centre of our work using a whole family approach.

These updates apply to all organisations and agencies that have a function relating to children. This includes, but is not limited to, all statutory partners (Health, Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council, Sandwell Children's Trust), all education providers and childcare settings, voluntary, charity, social enterprise and faith based organisations and private sectors, sports clubs and organisations, children's homes and secure facilities.

There is an expectation that everyone who provides support to children, young people and families should read Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 and understand what the changes mean for their practice.

Introduction

The revised Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 puts a renewed emphasis on supporting children and families within the Early Help spaces, both single and multi agency, as well as clarifying and expanding on agency's responsibilities around the role of the lead professional.

Revisions include;

- Principles for working with parents and carers to build trusting relationships and deliver tailored support for all families that need it.
- Expectations of multi-agency working that apply to all individuals, agencies and organisations working with, or in contact with, children and families.
- New national multi-agency child protection standards for improved practice and better outcomes for children and families.

This briefing is a broad overview of the changes within Working Together 2023. More detailed briefings will be released covering each chapter in detail in the coming months.

Summary of changes

Chapter 1- A Shared Responsibility

This is a new chapter bringing together new and existing guidance around strong multi-agency working across the continuum of help and support. This includes creating trusting, positive and co-operative relationships with families in order to deliver effective individual and tailored support to create and maintain improved outcomes for the child/young person.

Chapter 2- Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements

Changes have been made to strengthen how statutory partners work together to safeguard and protect children. including clarification of roles and responsibilities, introduction of a partnership chair role, emphasising the role of education within these arrangements and clarity on expectations for information sharing, independent scrutiny, funding and reporting. The inclusion of VCSE organisations are also encouraged within local arrangements.

WORKING TOGETHER 2023

OVERVIEW OF CHANGES



Alongside Working Together to Safeguard Children there is an expectation that practitioners also have an understanding of how the Children's Social Care National Framework 2023 impacts the work they undertake with children and families.

Reflective practice via supervision processes, team meetings and in conversation with peers is encouraged. It is important that support, plans and interventions align to the Social Care National Framework in order to achieve effective change and better outcomes for children and families. .

You can find the full Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 document here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>

You can find the full Social Care National Framework document here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/childrens-social-care-national-framework>

Summary of changes

Chapter 3- Providing Help, Support and Protection

Early Help: Strengthens the role of education and childcare settings including a child's right to education and risk factors that may be identified for children in need of Early Help support, either single or Multi-Agency. It includes a stronger emphasis on the use of children's wider support networks within decision making and intervention.

Safeguarding: Clarifies need for a broader range of Lead Professionals for children and families receiving support under a Child in Need Plan (section 17 of the Children's Act 1989). Local governance arrangements will be outlined to support this. There is also clarification on the role of children's social care to support Children with Disabilities, those at risk of harm from outside the family home, those in mother and baby units/prisons and children at risk from someone in prison or supervised by probation services.

Child Protection: Introduces new national multi-agency child protection standards around the actions, behaviours and considerations of professionals for improved outcomes for children and families. Clarification is given on multi-agency roles and responsibilities when responding to abuse and exploitation outside of the family home, extrafamilial harm and harm from online.

Chapter 4- Organisational Responsibilities

Highlights the benefits of information sharing, processes and responsibilities between prison and probation services and children's social care.

Chapter 5- Learning from Serious Child Safeguarding Incidents

Outlines the importance of keeping in touch with care leavers up to the age of 21 and the reporting of care leaver deaths up to the age of 25.

Note

-There is an increased focus on harm outside of the home

-There are also a number of clarifications and changes on use of language to reflect updates in national guidance and legislation.