



Name of meeting: Children’s Scrutiny Panel

Date: 26th January 2024

Title of report: Update with regard to new published DfE Guidance – ‘Working Together to Safeguard Children - December 2023’

Purpose of report: This report outlines for Children’s Scrutiny Panel Members that in December 2023 the Department for Education published new Statutory guidance on multi-agency working to help, protect and promote the welfare of children and outlines the summary of changes made.

<p>Key Decision - Is it likely to result in spending or saving £500k or more, or to have a significant effect on two or more electoral wards? Decisions having a particularly significant effect on a single ward may also be treated as if they were key decisions.</p>	<p>Not Applicable</p>
<p>Key Decision - Is it in the <u>Council’s Forward Plan (key decisions and private reports)?</u></p>	<p>Key Decision –No Private Report/Private Appendix – No</p>
<p>The Decision - Is it eligible for call in by Scrutiny?</p>	<p>Not Applicable</p>
<p>Date signed off by <u>Strategic Director</u> & name</p> <p>Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Finance?</p> <p>Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal Governance and Commissioning?</p>	<p>Tom Brailsford 15/01/2024</p>
<p>Cabinet member <u>portfolio</u></p>	<p>Cllr Viv Kendrick – Children’s Services</p> <p>Cllr Elizabeth Reynolds – Learning and Aspiration</p>

Electoral wards affected: All

Ward councillors consulted: N/A

Public or private: Public

Has GDPR been considered? Yes – no individuals are referred to in this report. The information referred to is published on the DfE website.

1. Summary

In December 2023, the Department for Education published revised statutory guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 - A guide to multi-agency working to help, protect and promote the welfare of children'.

This update has been necessary to support some of the ambitions outlined in the government's new vision to transform children's social care that was published in February 2023, 'Stable homes built on love', and also to strengthen some aspects of multiagency partnership arrangements.

The full guidance can be accessed using the link below.

[Working together to safeguard children 2023: statutory guidance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1212123/Working_together_to_safeguard_children_2023_-_a_guide_to_multi-agency_working_to_help_protect_and_promote_the_welfare_of_children.pdf)

Alongside the full guidance the DfE published a summary of changes. These are detailed in appendix 1 attached.

The purpose of the report at Scrutiny is to make panel members aware of the changes.

2. Information required to take a decision

No decision is required, the report is for information, and a summary will be discussed at the Panel meeting which will indicate the opportunities the Council and its partners have to build on the strong practise that currently exists in the local area in considering the Guidance.

3. Officer recommendations and reasons

That the Children's Scrutiny Panel review the new Statutory Guidance.

4. Cabinet Portfolio Holder's recommendations

N/A

5. Contact officer

Tom Brailsford – Director for Children's Services, Civic Centre 1,
tom.brailsford@kirklees.gov.uk

6. Background Papers and History of Decisions

[Children's Social Care: Stable Homes, Built on Love consultation response \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1212123/Working_together_to_safeguard_children_2023_-_a_guide_to_multi-agency_working_to_help_protect_and_promote_the_welfare_of_children.pdf)

7. Service Director responsible

Vicky Metheringham – Service Director Child Protection and Family Support
Jo-Anne Sanders – Service Director Learning and Early Support
Kieran Lord – Service Director Resources, Improvement and Partnerships

Appendix 1

8. The DfE Summary of Changes – Published in December 2023



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.