

WORKING TOGETHER TO SAFEGUARD CHILDREN 2010 – Summary of Key Points for VCS

The Stoke on Trent VCS Safeguarding Partnership is a new forum that is being developed along the lines of the VCS Engagement Partnership (EP) and will report in directly to the Executive of the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB), as the EP does with the CYP Trust Multi-Agency Executive. The Chair of the Safeguarding Partnership will be a member of the LSCB Executive.

This document has been produced to bring to the attention of third sector partners the new Working Together 2010 document and the changes within it, in particular those changes that will impact on our sector.

**The full document can be downloaded from
<http://publications.dcsf.gov.uk/eOrderingDownload/00305-2010DOM-EN.pdf>**

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2006 set out how organisations and individuals should work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. It has been revised now in response to Lord Laming's Report.

It is addressed to practitioners and front-line managers who have particular responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, and to senior and operational managers in

- Organisations that are responsible for commissioning or providing services to children, young people and adults who are parents/carers and
- Organisations that have a particular responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

There is a particularly useful table on page 23 of the full document which prioritises which areas to read for particular individuals.

The statutory inquiry into the death of Victoria Climbié (2003), and the first joint Chief Inspectors' report on safeguarding children (2002) highlighted the lack of priority status given to safeguarding. The Government response to these findings included the Green Paper Every Child Matters, and the provisions, in the Children Act 2004. Three of the most important in this context are:

- The creation of children's trusts under the duty to co-operate.
- The setting up of Local Safeguarding Children Boards and;
- The duty on all agencies to make arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

The guidance reflects the principles contained within the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, ratified by the UK Government in 1991. It takes into account the European Convention of Human Rights, in particular Articles 6 and 8. It also takes account of other relevant legislation at the time of publication. It is particularly informed by the requirements of the Children Act 1989, which provides a

comprehensive framework for the care and protection of children, and the Children Act 2004, which underpins the *Every Child Matters* reforms and includes the provisions on Local Safeguarding Children Boards.

Within the Executive Summary of the document (attached) there is a brief overview of each of the chapters in the report, all the 200 plus pages or so. However, it bears pointing out here that safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is the responsibility of the local authority, working in partnership with other public organisations, the voluntary sector, children and young people, parents and carers and the wider community. *It is the duty of us all to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.*

Working Together to Safeguard Children states that all organisations that provide services or work with children and young people should have in place:

- Senior managers that are committed to children's and young people's well-being and safety.
- Clarity about people's responsibilities to safeguard and promote children's and young people's welfare.
- Effective recruitment and human resources procedures including checking all new staff and volunteers to make sure they are safe to work with children and young people
- Have procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse against members of staff and volunteers
- Training for staff to ensure that they do their job well.
- Procedures about how to safeguard and promote the welfare of young people.
- Have agreements about working with other organisations.

To fulfil their commitment to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people all organisations that provide services for children, parents or families, or work with children, should have in place:

- clear priorities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children explicitly stated in key policy documents and commissioning strategies;
- a clear commitment by senior management to the importance of safe guarding and promoting children's welfare through both the commissioning and the provision of services;
- a culture of listening to and engaging in dialogue with children – seeking their views in ways appropriate to their age and understanding, and taking account of those both in individual decisions and the establishment or development and improvement of services;
- a clear line of accountability and governance within and across organisations for the commissioning and provision of services designed to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people;
- recruitment and human resources management procedures and commissioning processes, including contractual arrangements, that take account of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people, including arrangements for appropriate checks on new staff and volunteers and adoption of best practice in the recruitment of new staff and volunteers;

- a clear understanding of how to work together to help keep children and young people safe online by being adequately equipped to understand, identify and mitigate the risks of new technology;
- procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse against members of staff and volunteers (see paragraphs 6.32–6.42) or, for commissioners, contractual arrangements with providers that ensure these procedures are in place;
- arrangements to ensure that all staff undertake appropriate training to equip them to carry out their responsibilities effectively, and keep this up to date by refresher training at regular intervals; and that all staff, including temporary staff and volunteers who work with children, are made aware of both the establishment's arrangements and their responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children;
- policies for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children (for example, pupils/students), including a child protection policy, effective complaints procedures and procedures that are in accordance with guidance from the local authority and locally agreed inter-agency procedures;
- arrangements to work effectively with other organisations to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, including arrangements for sharing information (see paragraph 2.12); and
- appropriate whistle blowing procedures and a culture that enables issues about safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children to be addressed.

While the safety and welfare of children is the responsibility of the local authority, working in partnership with other public organisations, the voluntary sector, and service users and carers. All services in a local authority have an impact on the lives of children and families.

Below is the section from the guidance specifically aimed at Voluntary and Private Sectors. The bold text within the paragraphs are the changes that have been made since the previous guidance.

The Voluntary and Private Sectors

2.183 Voluntary organisations, **both local and national**, and private sector providers play an important role in delivering services for children and young people, including in early years provision, family support services, youth work and children's social care and healthcare. Many voluntary organisations are skilled in preventative work and may be well placed to reach the most vulnerable children, young people and families. **The vast majority work in partnership and will play an important part in protecting and supporting a child and their family.**

2.184 Voluntary organisations offer, for example:

- therapeutic work with children, young people and families, particularly in relation to child sexual abuse;
- specialist support and services for children and young people with disabilities or health problems;

- services for children and young people who are being sexually exploited and for children who abuse other children; and
- advocacy for looked after children and young people, and for parents and children who are the subject of section 47 enquiries and child protection conferences.

2.185 Voluntary organisations play a key role in providing information and resources to the wider public about the needs of children and young people, and resources to help families. Many campaign on **specific issues** on behalf of groups.

2.186 The NSPCC is the only voluntary organisation authorised to initiate proceedings to protect children under the terms of the Children Act 1989 **and offers a number of services to children, adults and practitioners. It operates a helpline service advising adults and professionals on safeguarding matters and where necessary liaises with local statutory agencies to refer children at risk of abuse. The NSPCC also operates Child Line which provides a telephone helpline across the UK for all children and young people who need advice about abuse, bullying, and other concerns. These services, along with other help lines such as Stop it Now! (which specialises in child sexual abuse prevention) and Parentline Plus (which offers support to anyone parenting a child), provide information, advice and support as well as important routes into statutory and voluntary services**

2.187 The voluntary sector is active in working to safeguard the children and young people with whom it works. A range of umbrella and specialist organisations, including the national governing bodies for sports, offer standards, guidance, training and advice for voluntary organisations on keeping children and young people safe from harm. **In conjunction with other bodies, the NSPCC provides child protection advice; for example the Child Protection in Sport Unit, established in partnership with Sport England, provides advice and assistance on developing codes of practice and child protection procedures to sporting organisations. The Safe Network, jointly managed by the NSPCC and Children England, provides advice for the third sector and is working to create safeguarding standards for voluntary/ non-profit sector organisations.**

2.188 Organisations in the voluntary and private sectors that work with children need to have the arrangements described in **paragraph 2.11** in place in the same way as organisations in the public sector, and need to work effectively with LSCBs. Paid and volunteer staff need to be aware of their responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, and of how they should respond to child protection concerns in line with this guidance (**see *What To Do If You're Worried A Child Is Being Abused***). **There should be clear and published local guidance for the voluntary sector on access pathways to services and how thresholds are applied when making a**

referral to social care.

I hope that this has given a brief overview of the document. Further information and guidance will, in time, be developed and distributed through the Local Safeguarding Children's Board.

Sue Thomas
Champion for Children.

Some issues to think of include:

- *Who is going to fund this training for the VCS Organisations that may not have the finances for a training programme?*
- *How are we going to support the community groups that work with many children and young people but do not necessarily have the support and guidance to ensure that they have appropriate documentation or indeed understanding of the safeguarding agenda?*
- *How are we going to ensure that those working as volunteers and staff with often our most vulnerable children and young people, can access the procedures and information within the LSCB, when the technology is not available to them and there is no printed guidance, policies or procedures?*
- *Who is going to fund the appropriate ISA Registration, CRB and other checks on staff and volunteers for the VCS agencies, and what is the procedure to ensure they are able to access any support that may be made available?*
- *Should we include some suggestions for policies and procedures within our Strategic Framework when it is developed, or wait for the guidance from the LSCB?*

Appendix 1.

Working Together to Safeguard Children : Executive Summary

Introduction

Working Together sets out how organisations and individuals should work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people in accordance with the Children Act 1989 and the Children Act 2004. It is important that all practitioners working to safeguard children and young people understand fully their responsibilities and duties as set out in primary legislation and associated regulations and guidance.

This guidance was most recently updated in 2006. This latest revision follows the publication of Lord Laming's report, *The Protection of Children in England: A progress Report*, in March 2009 the acceptance by the Government of all of his recommendations and the Government's detailed response and action plan published in May 2009. Many of Lord Laming's recommendations are reflected in or given effect by this revised Guidance. It has also been updated to reflect developments in legislation, policy and practice relating to safeguarding children.

Working Together is addressed to practitioners and frontline managers who have particular responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and to senior and operational managers in

- Organisations that are responsible for commissioning or providing services to children, young people and adults who are parents/carers and
- Organisations that have a particular responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people.

Part 1 of the document comprises Chapters 1 to 8, which are issued as statutory guidance. Practitioners and agencies will have different responsibilities that apply to different areas of the guidance and should consult the preface for a fuller explanation of their statutory duties.

Part 2 of the document incorporates Chapters 9 to 12 and is issued as non-statutory practice guidance.

This executive summary is not guidance in itself. It aims to help readers gain an overview of the document, and of main changes made to the 2006 version. Over time Working Together has become a lengthy document containing a good deal of material in addition to the core statutory guidance. The Department for Children, Schools and Families will:

- produce an easily navigable web-based version of this document, with hyperlinks to relevant supporting guidance;
- produce in partnership with stakeholders a short practitioner guide; and
- work with stakeholders to identify what might be done to present the document more effectively to ensure that the statutory requirements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people are not inadvertently obscured by non-statutory guidance.

Part 1: Statutory guidance

Chapter 1 sets the context for the revised guidance by discussing the reasons for the changes in safeguarding policy and practice since 2006. It also outlines the key definitions and concepts used in the guidance.

The publication of the *Every Child Matters* Green Paper in 2003 alongside the formal response to the Inquiry into the death of Victoria Climbié, and followed by the Children Act 2004, set out 'being safe' as one of five important outcomes for children and young people.

In this context, three key provisions were:

- the creation of Children's Trusts under the duty to co-operate¹;
- the setting up of Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs); and
- the duty on all agencies to make arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Lord Laming's progress report, *The Protection of Children in England: A Progress Report*, made 58 recommendations relating to: leadership and accountability, support for children, inter-agency working, children's workforce, improvement and challenge, organisation and finance and the legal framework.

The Government's detailed response to Lord Laming's recommendations was published in May 2009. Twenty-three of these recommendations have been addressed by this revised guidance.

Protecting children from harm and promoting their welfare depends on a shared responsibility and effective joint working between different agencies. This in turn relies on constructive relationships between individual practitioners, promoted and supported by:

- the commitment of senior managers to safeguard and promote the welfare of children; and
- clear lines of accountability.

¹ This has now been strengthened by placing Children's Trust Boards on a statutory footing from 1 April 2010.

Chapter 2 explains the roles, responsibilities and duties of the different people and organisations that work directly with, and whose work affects, children and young people. It states that all organisations that provide services or work with children and young people should:

- have senior managers who are committed to children's and young people's welfare and safety;
- be clear about people's responsibilities to safeguard and promote children's and young people's welfare;
- check that there are no known reasons or information available that would prevent staff and volunteers from working with children and young people;
- have procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse against members of staff and volunteers;
- make sure staff get training that helps them do their job well;
- have procedures about how to safeguard and promote the welfare of young people; and
- have agreements about working with other organisations.

Section 11 of the Children Act 2004, section 175 of the Education Act 2002 and section 55 of the Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Act 2009 place duties on organisations and individuals to ensure that their functions are discharged with regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. An overview of these duties and the structure of children's services under the Children Act 2004 are set out in the preface to this guidance and in Appendix 1.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is the responsibility of the local authority, working in partnership with other public organisations, the voluntary sector, children and young people, parents and carers, and the wider community.

A key objective for local authorities is to ensure that children are protected from harm. Other functions of local authorities that make an important contribution to safeguarding are housing, sport, culture and leisure services, and youth services. Health professionals and organisations have a key role to play in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. The general principles they should apply are:

- to aim to ensure that all affected children receive appropriate and timely preventative and therapeutic interventions;
- those professionals who work directly with children should ensure that safeguarding and promoting their welfare forms an integral part of all stages of the care they offer;
- those professionals who come into contact with children, parents and carers in the course of their work also need to be aware of their safeguarding responsibilities; and
- ensuring that all health professionals can recognise risk factors and contribute to reviews, enquiries and child protection plans, as well as

planning support for children and providing ongoing promotional and preventative support through proactive work.

All health professionals working directly with children and young people should ensure that safeguarding and promoting their welfare forms an integral part of all elements of the care they offer.

The police also have a key role in safeguarding children. They recognise the fundamental importance of inter-agency working in combating child abuse, as illustrated by well established arrangements for joint training involving police and social work colleagues. All forces have child abuse investigation units and while they normally take responsibility for investigating such cases, safeguarding children is a fundamental part of the duties of all police officers.

The police are committed to sharing information and intelligence with other organisations and should be notified as soon as possible where a criminal offence has been, or is suspected of, being committed. LSCBs should have in place a protocol agreed between the local authority and the police, to guide both organisations in deciding how section 47 enquiries should be conducted, and in which circumstances joint enquiries are appropriate.

Probation services supervise offenders with the aim of reducing re-offending and protecting the public. By working with offenders who are parents/carers, Offender Managers can safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Probation areas/Trusts will also:

- provide a statutory victim contact scheme to the victims of violent and sexual offences;
- deliver unpaid work requirements to 16- and 17-year olds;
- fulfil their role as statutory partner of YOTs; and
- ensure support for victims, and indirectly children in the family, of convicted perpetrators of domestic abuse participating in accredited domestic abuse programmes.

Offender Managers should also ensure there is clarity and communication between risk management processes; these are described in greater detail in Chapter 12.

Governors/Directors of all prison establishments should have in place arrangements that protect the public from prisoners in their care. All prisoners who have been identified as presenting a risk of harm to children will not be allowed contact with them unless a favourable risk assessment has been undertaken by the police, probation, prison and children's social care services. Governors/Directors of women's establishments with Mother and Baby Units need to ensure that staff working on duty are prioritised for child protection training.

Governors/Directors of Young Offender Institutions (YOIs) are required to adhere to the policies, agreed by the Prison Service and the Youth Justice Board, for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children held in custody.

Secure Training Centres (STCs) house vulnerable, sentenced and remanded young people aged between 12 and 17 years. Each STC has a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of the children in its custody.

Youth Offending Teams are responsible for the supervision of children and young people subject to pre-court interventions and statutory court disposals. YOTs have a duty to make arrangements to ensure that their functions are discharged with regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Schools (including independent and non-maintained schools) and further education institutions have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils under the Education Act 2002. They should create and maintain a safe learning environment for children and young people, and identify where there are child welfare concerns and take action to address them, in partnership with other organisations where appropriate.

Early years services – children’s centres, nurseries, childminders, pre-schools, playgroups, and holiday and out-of-school schemes – all play an important part in the lives of large numbers of children. Everyone working in early years services should know how to recognise and respond to the possible abuse and neglect of a child. The Early Years Foundation Stage makes it clear that all registered providers, except childminders, must have a practitioner who is designated to take lead responsibility for safeguarding children within each early years setting and who should liaise with local statutory children’s services agencies as appropriate.

In care and related proceedings under the Children Act 1989, the responsibility of the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass) is to safeguard and promote the welfare of individual children who are the subject of family proceedings by providing independent social work advice to the court.

Under section 55 of the Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Act 2009 the UKBA has a duty to ensure that its functions are discharged with regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Looking after under 18 year olds in the armed forces comes under the Ministry of Defence’s comprehensive welfare arrangements, which apply to all members of the armed forces. There is already a responsibility on children’s social care services to monitor the welfare of care leavers, and those joining the armed forces have unrestricted access to local authority social care services staff.

The voluntary sector is active in working to safeguard the children and young people with whom they work, and plays a key role in providing information and resources to the wider public about the needs of children.

Faith communities provide a wide range of activities for children and, as such, should have appropriate arrangements in place to safeguard and promote their welfare.

Chapter 3 explains the role, functions, governance and operation of Local Safeguarding Children Boards.

The LSCB is the key statutory mechanism for agreeing how the relevant organisations in each local area will co-operate to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, and for ensuring the effectiveness of what they do.

The scope of the LSCB role falls into three categories: firstly, they engage in activities that safeguard all children and aim to identify and prevent maltreatment, or impairment of health or development, and to ensure that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with safe and effective care; secondly, they lead and co-ordinate proactive work that aims to target particular groups; and thirdly, they lead and co-ordinate arrangements for responsive work to protect children who are suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm.

The core functions of an LSCB are set out in regulations and are:

- developing policies and procedures including those on:
 - action taken where there are concerns about the safety and welfare of a child, including thresholds for intervention;
 - training of people who work with children or in services affecting the safety and welfare of children;
 - recruitment and supervision of people who work with children;
 - investigation of allegations concerning people who work with children;
 - safety and welfare of children who are privately fostered; and
 - co-operation with neighbouring children's services authorities (i.e. local authorities) and their LSCB partners.
- communicating and raising awareness;
- monitoring and evaluation;
- participating in planning and commissioning;
- reviewing the deaths of all children in their areas; and
- undertaking Serious Case Reviews.

County-level and unitary local authorities are responsible for establishing an LSCB in their area and ensuring that it is run effectively. LSCBs should have a clear and distinct identity within local Children's Trust governance arrangements.

It is the responsibility of the local authority, after consultation with Board partners, to appoint the Chair of the LSCB.

Membership of the LSCB is made up of senior managers from different services and agencies in a local area, including the independent and voluntary sector. In addition, the Board receives input from experts – for example, the designated nurse or doctor.

To function effectively, LSCBs need to be supported by their member organisations with adequate and reliable resources. The budget for each LSCB and the contribution made by each member organisation should be agreed locally.

LSCBs should ensure the effectiveness of work undertaken by member organisations through a variety of mechanisms including peer review, self-evaluation, performance indicators and joint audit.

Key changes to Chapter 3 since 2006 include the requirement for LSCBs to produce and publish an annual report on the effectiveness of safeguarding in the local area, the appointment of two representatives of the local community to each LSCB, statutory representation on the LSCB of schools and, subject to the passage of the Children Schools and Families Bill, a provision to ensure appropriate information is disclosed to the LSCB in order to assist it in the exercise of its functions. The revised chapter also provides further clarity over the complementary roles of the LSCB and the Children's Trust Board and makes clear that the Chair of the LSCB should be someone independent of the local agencies. Taken together, these changes aim to strengthen transparency and accountability of LSCBs.

Chapter 4 covers training, development and supervision to enable those working with children to develop the necessary skills, judgement and confidence. Training for multi- and inter-agency working means training that will equip people to work effectively with those from other professions and agencies.

Employers are responsible for ensuring their employees are confident and competent in carrying out their responsibilities, and for ensuring employees are aware of how to recognise and respond to safeguarding concerns. Employers should also identify adequate resources and support for inter-agency training.

Through their work on the local Children and Young People's Plan, Children's Trust Boards are responsible for ensuring that workforce strategies are developed in their local areas. An LSCB should contribute to, and work within, the framework of the local workforce strategy.

The LSCB is responsible for developing local policies for the training of people who work with children or in services affecting the safety and welfare of children. This includes training in relation to child death review processes and Serious Case Reviews. LSCBs should review and evaluate the provision and availability of single and inter-agency training to ensure training reaches all relevant staff.

All training in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children should create an ethos that:

- is child-centred;
- promotes the participation of children and families in the processes;

- values working collaboratively;
- respects diversity; and
- promotes equality.

*The Common Core of Skills and Knowledge for the Children's Workforce (2010)*² sets out the six areas of expertise that everyone working with children, young people and families should be able to demonstrate. These include safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

Training and development for inter-agency work at the appropriate level should be targeted at practitioners in voluntary, statutory and independent agencies who:

- are in regular contact with children and young people;
- work regularly with children and young people, and with adults who are parents or carers, and who may be asked to contribute to assessments of children in need; or
- have particular responsibility for safeguarding children.

Training and development is also relevant to operational managers and those with strategic responsibility for services, in particular LSCB members.

Effective supervision is important in promoting good standards of practice, and supervisors should be available to practitioners as an important source of advice and expertise.

² www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/strategy/deliveringservices1/commoncore/commoncoreofskillsandknowledge/

Chapter 5 provides guidance on what should happen if somebody has concerns about the welfare of a child (including those living away from home) and, in particular, concerns that a child may be suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm. It also sets out the principles underpinning work to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

The chapter is structured according to the four key processes that underpin work with children and families: assessment, planning, intervention and reviewing. The *Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families (2000)* should be followed when undertaking assessments of children in need and their families. The chapter sets out in detail the processes to be followed when safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. These include:

- responding to concerns about the welfare of a child and making a referral to a statutory organisation (children's social care, the police or the NSPCC) that can take action to safeguard and promote the welfare of children;
- undertaking an initial assessment of the child's situation and deciding what to do next;

- taking urgent action to protect the child from harm, if necessary;
- holding a strategy discussion where there are suspicions that a child may be suffering significant harm and, where appropriate, convening a child protection conference; and
- undertaking a core assessment as part of the section 47 enquiries to decide whether a child is continuing to be likely to suffer significant harm and therefore should be the subject of a child protection plan, implementing the plan and reviewing it at regular intervals.

The key changes to Chapter 5 include emphasising the importance of keeping the focus on the child and his or her safety and welfare, understanding the daily life experience of the child, seeing the child alone where appropriate and using information about the family's history and functioning to inform decision making. It also stresses the importance of analysing the inter-relationships between strengths and protective factors and vulnerabilities and risk factors when deciding whether a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, and of the accurate recording of actions.

The chapter clarifies the relationship between the common assessment, referral to children's social care and an initial assessment. It also sets out that a referrer should be able to discuss their concerns with a qualified social worker.

The guidance extends the timescale for the completion of an initial assessment from seven to ten working days with effect from 1 April 2010. It makes it clear that the planning and reviewing processes for looked after children who are also the subject of a child protection plan should be integrated into one process during the coming year. This change is also reflected in the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010 and accompanying statutory guidance *Putting Care into Practice*.

Chapter 6 summarises the supplementary guidance to Working Together. This guidance includes:

- Home Office, Department of Health (2002). Complex Child Abuse Investigations:
- Inter-agency issues;
- Home Office (2004). Home Office Circular 10/2004 on The Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003;
- DCSF (2007). Safeguarding Children for Abuse Linked to a Belief in Spirit Possession;
- DCSF and Home Office (2007). Safeguarding Children who may have been trafficked;
- HM Government (2008). Safeguarding Children in whom Illness is Fabricated or induced;
- DCSF (2009). Safeguarding Disabled Children – Practice Guidance;

- HM Government (2009). The Right to Choose: Multi-agency statutory guidance for dealing with Forced Marriage, and HM Government (2009) Multi-agency practice guidelines: handling cases of forced marriage;
- HM Government (2009). Safeguarding Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation;
- HM Government (2010). Safeguarding Children and Young People who may be affected by Gang Activity; and
- Guidance on allegations of abuse made against a person who works with children, which can be found in Appendix 5 of this document.

This chapter has been updated to reflect new or revised guidance which relates to Working Together and has been issued since 2006.

Chapter 7 sets out the processes to be followed when a child dies in the LSCB area(s) covered by a Child Death Overview Panel. There are two inter-related processes for reviewing child deaths:

- a rapid response by a group of key professionals who come together for the purpose of enquiring into and evaluating each unexpected death of a child; and
- an overview of all child deaths in the area, undertaken by a panel.

Either of these processes can identify cases requiring a Serious Case Review (covered in Chapter 8).

The key changes to Chapter 7 include revised definitions of preventable child deaths and unexpected deaths, and clarity on the roles of coroners and registrars and on how to respond appropriately to the deaths of children with life limiting illnesses. An additional section has been included on parents and family members which clarifies the level of involvement parents and family members should have and the type of support they will need.

Chapter 8 sets out the processes LSCBs should follow when undertaking a Serious Case Review (SCR). The purposes of SCRs are to:

- establish what lessons are to be learned from the case about the way in which local professionals and organisations work individually and together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children;
- identify clearly what those lessons are both within and between agencies, how and within what timescales they will be acted on, and what is expected to change as a result; and
- improve intra- and inter-agency working and better safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

When a child dies (including death by suspected suicide), and abuse or neglect are known or suspected to be a factor in the death, the LSCB should always conduct a SCR. A SCR should also always be carried out when a child dies in custody, either in

police custody, on remand or following sentencing, in a YOI, a STC, or a secure children's home or where the child was detained under the Mental Health Act 2005.

LSCBs should always consider whether a SCR should be conducted in other circumstances where a child has been harmed. These circumstances are set out in the guidance.

The SCR should look into the involvement of organisations and professionals in the lives of the child and family, irrespective of whether local authority children's social care is, or has been, involved with the child or family. As the prime purpose of SCRs is to learn lessons for improving both individual agency and inter-agency working, it is important that their recommendations are acted on promptly and effectively.

A revised version of Chapter 8 was published in December 2009. It made clear that the prime purpose of a SCR is to learn lessons both at an individual and inter-agency/LSCB level; extended the time scale for completing a SCR from four to six months; strengthened the requirements in relation to executive summaries, and made clear that the Chair of the SCR Panel should be independent.

Further changes have now been incorporated, in particular the inclusion of a template for SCR executive summaries and a flow chart providing an overview of the SCR process.

In parallel, Chapter 3 makes clear that LSCBs will need to include in their annual reports progress updates on the actions that have been taken in response to current and recent SCRs.

Part 2: Non-statutory practice guidance

Chapter 9 summarises the impact of maltreatment on children's health and developmental progress, and sets out some of the key messages from research and inspection that have informed this guidance.

The maltreatment of children – physically, emotionally, sexually or through neglect – can have major long-term effects on all aspects of a child's health, development and wellbeing. Professionals must take special care to help safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people who may be living in particularly stressful circumstances. These include families:

- living in poverty;
- where there is domestic violence;
- where a parent has a mental illness;
- where a parent is misusing drugs or alcohol;
- where a parent has a learning disability;
- that face racism and other forms of social isolation; and
- living in areas with a lot of crime, poor housing and high unemployment.

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The research evidence in Chapter 9 has been updated since the 2006 edition.

Chapter 10 sets out in more detail specific aspects of working with children, young people and families.

Family Group Conferences (FGCs) may be appropriate in a number of contexts where there is a plan or decision to be made. The family is the primary planning group in the process. Where there are plans to use FGCs in situations where there are concerns about possible harm to a child, they should be developed and implemented under the auspices of LSCB. FGCs should not replace or remove the need for child protection conferences.

Children and families may be supported through their involvement in safeguarding processes by advice and advocacy services, and they should always be informed of services that exist locally and nationally.

Local authorities have a responsibility to ensure that children and adults understand the processes that will be followed when there are concerns about the child. Information should be made available in the family's preferred language.

Children from all cultures may be subject to abuse and neglect, and while professionals should be sensitive to differing family patterns and lifestyles, they must be clear that child abuse cannot be condoned for religious or cultural reasons.

Chapter 11 outlines the circumstances of children who may be particularly vulnerable. It is intended to help inform the practice that underpins the procedures in Chapter 5, which set out the basic framework within which action should be taken when a parent, professional or any other person has concerns about the welfare of a child.

The chapter gives advice to organisations and individuals on safeguarding in the context of:

- children living away from home;
- abuse by children and young people;
- bullying;
- children whose behaviour indicates a lack of parental control;
- race and racism;
- violent extremism;
- domestic violence;
- child abuse and information communication technology (ICT);
- children with families whose whereabouts are unknown;
- children who go missing;
- children who go missing from education;

- children of families living in temporary accommodation;
- migrant children; and
- unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC).

Chapter 12 provides practice guidance and information about a range of mechanisms that are available when managing people who have been identified as presenting a risk, or potential risk, of harm to children.

The Children Act 1989 recognised that the identification and investigation of child abuse, together with the protection and support of victims and their families, requires multi-agency collaboration. As part of that protection, action has been taken, usually by the police and social services, to prosecute known offenders or control their access to vulnerable children. The Sexual Offences Act 2003 introduced a number of new offences to deal with those who abuse and exploit children in this way.

The term ‘Schedule One offender’ should no longer be used for anyone convicted of a crime against a child. The focus should be on whether the individual poses a ‘risk of harm to children’. Home Office guidance explains how these people who present a potential risk of harm to children should be identified. Practitioners should use the new list of offences as a ‘trigger’ to further assessments.

Where the offender is given a community sentence, Offender Managers monitor their risk to others and liaise with partner agencies. Prison establishments undertake a similar responsibility where the offender has been sentenced to a period of custody.

The Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) provide a national framework for the assessment and management of risks posed by serious and violent offenders. The Responsible Authorities need to ensure that strategies to address risk are identified, and plans developed, implemented and reviewed on a regular basis.

The MAPPA framework identifies three separate but connected levels at which risk is managed:

- ordinary risk management;
- local inter-agency risk management; and
- Multi Agency Public Protection Panels (MAPPP).

There are other processes and mechanisms for working with and monitoring people who may present a risk to children. For example, the Vetting and Barring Scheme (VBS) aims to ensure that unsuitable people do not work with children, whether in paid employment or on a voluntary basis. Since October 2009, the duties to refer concerns regarding individuals under List 99 and the Protection of Children Act

1999 have been replaced with a duty to provide information to the Independent Safeguarding Authority.

As another example, people placed on the sex offender list are served with a notification that ensures the police are informed of their whereabouts in the community.