

WORKING TOGETHER 2023

CHAPTER 1: A SHARED RESPONSIBILITY



What children have said they need:

Vigilance- For adults to notice when things are bothering them

Understanding and action- to be heard and understood and have concerns acted upon

Stability- develop ongoing stable relationships with trusted adults

Respect- to be treated as competent

Information and engagement- to be informed and involved with plans and decisions

Explanation- to be informed about outcomes and the reasons behind them

Support- to have their own support in their own right

Advocacy- to be provided with advocacy to help them get their views heard

Protection- to be protected from abuse, exploitation, and discrimination

Introduction

'Successful outcomes for children and young people depend on strong partnership working between parents/carers and the practitioners working with them'

All professionals working with children, young people, and families should take a child centred approach which should be considered in the context of the whole family. The needs of all individual members of the family need to be considered and how their individual needs impact on each other and the welfare of the child/ren.

Children and young people should be spoken to, listened to, observed and their views taken seriously. This might mean that appropriate adaptations are made to accommodate any individual needs of the child or young person such as those with English as an additional language, or with specific communication needs.

Principles of working with parents and carers

'Parents and carers need to understand what is happening, what they can expect from the help and support provided, what is expected of them and be supported to say what they think.'

Working with parents and carers gives us the best chance to support sustainable change and positive outcomes for children and young people. Professionals should use their skills to engage with all parents and carers, especially those that have been thought to be difficult to engage such as; parents or carers of disabled children, those that have been known to services for a long time and/or may have had a poor experience of services in the past, fathers and male carers and neurodivergent parents/carers. There are four principles that underpin successful working with parents and carers;

1- Strong, positive, trusting, and co-operative relationships

- using empathy, respect, compassion and creativity
- using strength based practice
- being sensitive to the impact of trauma
- being flexible and understanding and culturally aware of difference and diversity as well as mindful of unconscious bias
- being alert where words are not matching behaviour or actions

2-Communication

- Using respectful, non-blaming, clear and inclusive language
- Jargon free and easily understood
- Use interpreters and translated resources where possible

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Useful Links

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>

You can find the Equality Act 2010 in full here: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents>

You can find the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 here: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/17/contents/enacted>

You can find the Data Protection Act 2018 here: <https://www.gov.uk/data-protection>

You can find the Children's Act 2004 here: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/31/contents>

3- Empowering and Participative

- make parents/carers aware of meetings, attendees, and discussions that are taking place
- remind parents/carers they can have support from family or friends
- keep parents and carers updated, giving preparation time and making additional arrangements for access if needed
- signpost parents and carers to suitable local support
- help parents and carers to understand concerns, impact on their child/ren, changes that are needed, timescales, and possible outcomes

4- Processes and procedures

- Parents, carers, families and local communities are involved in shaping local processes
- Feedback is used to improve services and practice

Expectations for multi-agency working

Collaborate- Professionals working with the same child/re should proactively share information and collectively ensure the voice of the child is at the centre of plans and interventions

Learn- Professionals should learn together and from each other sharing their perspectives, experiences, and the best available research to ensure good outcomes

Resource- Strong relationships and sharing of resources across agencies and organisations

Include- Professionals recognise and respond appropriately where children are experiencing adversity due to economic and social factors and family stress and where children are being abused or neglected.

Mutual challenge- Professionals are able to challenge each other and their own assumptions and seek to resolve differences respectfully

Information Sharing

Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews have highlighted that missed opportunities to record, understand the significance of, and share information can have severe consequences for children, young people and families.

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What's coming...

April 2024 Chapter 2-
Revised Multi Agency Safeguarding
Arrangements

May 2024 Chapter 3-
Providing help, support, and
protection across the continuum of
support of support

June 2024 Chapter 4-
Organisational Responsibilities

July 2024 Chapter 5-
Learning from serious child
safeguarding incidents

August 2024 Chapter 6-
Child Death Reviews

Information sharing- the important bits

No single professional or organisation can have the full picture of a child's needs and their circumstances. Good information sharing is essential for the early identification and assessment of needs in order to keep children safe.

Professionals should share information as early as possible to identify, assess, and respond to concerns, this needs to be thought about when concerns are first raised or noticed.

Information sharing may be key to identifying patterns of behaviour where children are missing from home or from education.

Professionals should be confident about the conditions under the Data Protection act 2018 in how they should store and share information.

Your organisation or agency will have an information sharing process. This should be reviewed, all staff should be made aware of it, and it should be followed.

The Data Protection Act 2018 does not stop professionals from collecting, storing, or sharing information- it provides a framework to ensure that this is done appropriately.

The Data Protection Act 2018 should not stop professionals from sharing information where they are worried about the safety of a child or young person. It states that the 'safeguarding of children and individuals at risk' as one of the processing conditions that allows professionals to share information, including without consent under certain circumstances.

With this being said professionals should be transparent and open with families by telling them what information they are going to share and with whom, as long as it is safe for the child to do so.