

The WSCP **Briefing**

Working Together 2023 Key Features

Dec 2023

1. What is Working Together?

- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023) is the statutory multi-agency guidance which sets out expectations for the safeguarding system to help, protect and promote the welfare of children.
- Working Together defines the key processes for organisations to follow to ensure all children are safeguarded and protected from harm
- The guidance also sets out the responsibilities all agencies and professionals have to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children
- The guidance applies to all organisations and agencies who have functions relating to children and must be followed

2. Changes from WT18

- A new chapter—A Shared Responsibility—emphasises that successful outcomes for children depend on strong multi-agency partnership working across the whole system, including effective work with parents, carers, and families.
- This section includes principles for working with parents and carers which are based in building positive, trusting and cooperative relationships
- Changes to strengthen multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, introducing a partnership chair, clarifying roles and emphasising the role of education,
- A renewed focus on how organisations provide help, safeguarding and protection for families
- Introduces expectation for keeping in touch with care leavers over 21

3. A Shared Responsibility

- Introduces four principles for working with parents and carers:
 - Effective partnership working with parents and carers happens when practitioners build positive, trusting and co-operative relationships.
 - Verbal and non-verbal communication should be respectful, non-blaming, clear, inclusive, and adapted to parents and carers needs, and be jargon free
 - Practitioners empower parents and carers to participate in decision-making.
 - Practitioners involve parents, carers, families and local communities in designing processes that affect them.
- Expectations for multi-agency working:
 - Organisations collaborate effectively
 - Staff learn together
 - Safeguarding practice is resourced
 - Everyone is accountable for the quality of safeguarding practice
 - Constructive challenge is encouraged

4. Multi-agency Safeguarding Arrangements

- Arrangements are led by the three statutory partners of the LA, Health (through the Integrated Care Board) and Police.
- Working Together 23 emphasises the pivotal role of Education in the local arrangements
- Separation of the strategic lead safeguarding partners (LSP) from those delegate partners who deliver the arrangements (DSP)
- A named partnership Chair to be appointed from the DSP's
- Defining that MASA annual reports must be published each September for the previous financial year
- Defining independent scrutiny functions

5. Early Help

- Ambition is to ensure all families are provided with the right support at the right time. Local areas should identify children and families who would benefit from early help
- Local Early Help system should be informed by the Early Help System Guide. Joined up early help services should be available through Family Hubs
- Partners must publish a threshold document
- Working with families is underpinned by building strong relationships
- Activity should be coordinated by a lead practitioner drawn from across the partnership, and might include social workers
- The delivery of services should be as local and accessible as possible
- Role and importance of education in Early Help is emphasised

6. Statutory Safeguarding

- Local protocols for assessment and support should be published, including who can be the lead practitioner under Section 17 (Child in Need), who might not always be a social worker—
- In these cases oversight will be provided by a social work qualified practice supervisor
- Local protocols should also reflect the specific needs of certain groups including young carers, unborn children, and children with special educational needs and/or disabilities
- WT23 introduces new national multi-agency child protection standards and clarifies the multi-agency response to harm from outside the home
- Processes for contacts and referrals and action to take when there are concerns about a child remain unchanged

7. Organisational Responsibilities

- This section sets out the statutory responsibilities of a range of agencies and organisations. These agency responsibilities are unchanged
- changes to the Prison and Probation sections highlights the mutual benefits of exchanging information with children's social care
- LADO responsibilities and managing allegations processes are unchanged

Learning from Reviews

- This section 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

Wirral Safeguarding Children Partnership
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