



Prifysgol Cymru
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
University of Wales
Trinity Saint David

BMHP5021

Protecting and Supporting Families in Health and Care

Week 7

Factors that impact on the multi and inter-disciplinary responses and partnership working with families' practice

Trawsnewid Addysg; Trawsnewid Bywydau
Transforming Education; Transforming Lives

30/07/2026



www.uwtsd.ac.uk

Week beginning	Topic	Notes
1 8 th June	Introduction to Children Rights and Parenting	
2 15 th June	Factors influencing the experiences of children and families	
3 22 nd June	Safeguarding, assessment of needs and theories of child development	
4 29 th June	History of children Protection in the UK	
5 6 th July	Policy and Legislation related to Child Protection	
6 13 th July	Multi and inter disciplinary responses and partnership with children, young people and families	
7 20 th July	Factors which impact on the multi and inter disciplinary responses and partnership working with families' practice	Submission for the 24 th of July for C1 - reference list
8 27 th July	Impact of emerging digital technologies on the role of practitioner and service user	Assessment Presentations – round the table C1
9 3 rd August	Revision and Assignment Support	
10 10 th August	Assignment Support	C2 – 14th of August

Learning objectives

- Discuss challenges and factors that impact the multi and inter-disciplinary responses and partnerships working with families' practice.
- Evaluate the impact on the child/children involved within the case study investigated.
- Provide recommendations for improvement of multi-agency working.

- Baby Victoria was born in December 2022 and died in early 2023 after her parents, Constance Marten and Mark Gordon, concealed her birth and deliberately evaded statutory services. In 2025 both of baby Victoria's parents were convicted of gross negligence manslaughter, child cruelty, perverting the course of justice, and concealing the birth of a child.
- While the circumstances of baby Victoria's death are very rare, the review, [Protecting all vulnerable babies better](#), finds that the professional challenges and systemic safeguarding issues involved are much more common.
- The review highlights multiple risks in baby Victoria's family circumstances including several concealed pregnancies, repeated child removals, domestic abuse, poor engagement with services, serious offending, and frequent moves between different areas. Many of these issues appear repeatedly in serious safeguarding incidents.

Protecting all vulnerable babies better – David Holmes on the Baby Victoria National Review



Findings

Earlier and stronger pre-birth safeguarding, including national guidance that explicitly includes vulnerable unborn babies and infants, and clearer protocols for responding to concealed or late-disclosed pregnancies.

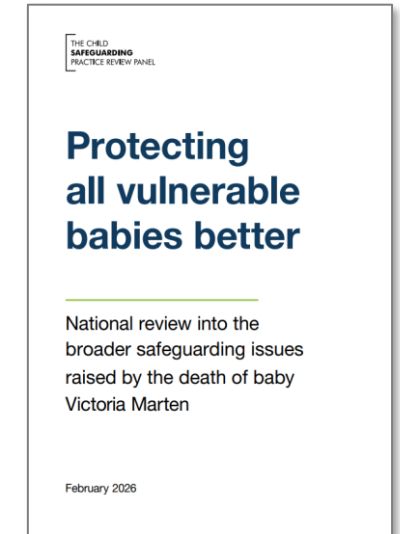
Trauma-informed practice, to help reach families who do not engage with services, recognising that avoidance of services often reflects grief and mistrust rather than deliberate refusal.

Better engagement with and support for parents before and after child removal, to help break cycles of harm and reduce repeat risk.

A preventative 'Think Family' approach, bringing together adult and children's services to provide a holistic view and identify issues that affect the whole family unit.

Stronger links between children's social care and offender management services, especially when serious sex offenders are parents or carers.

Clearer arrangements when families move, including formal information transfer, shared

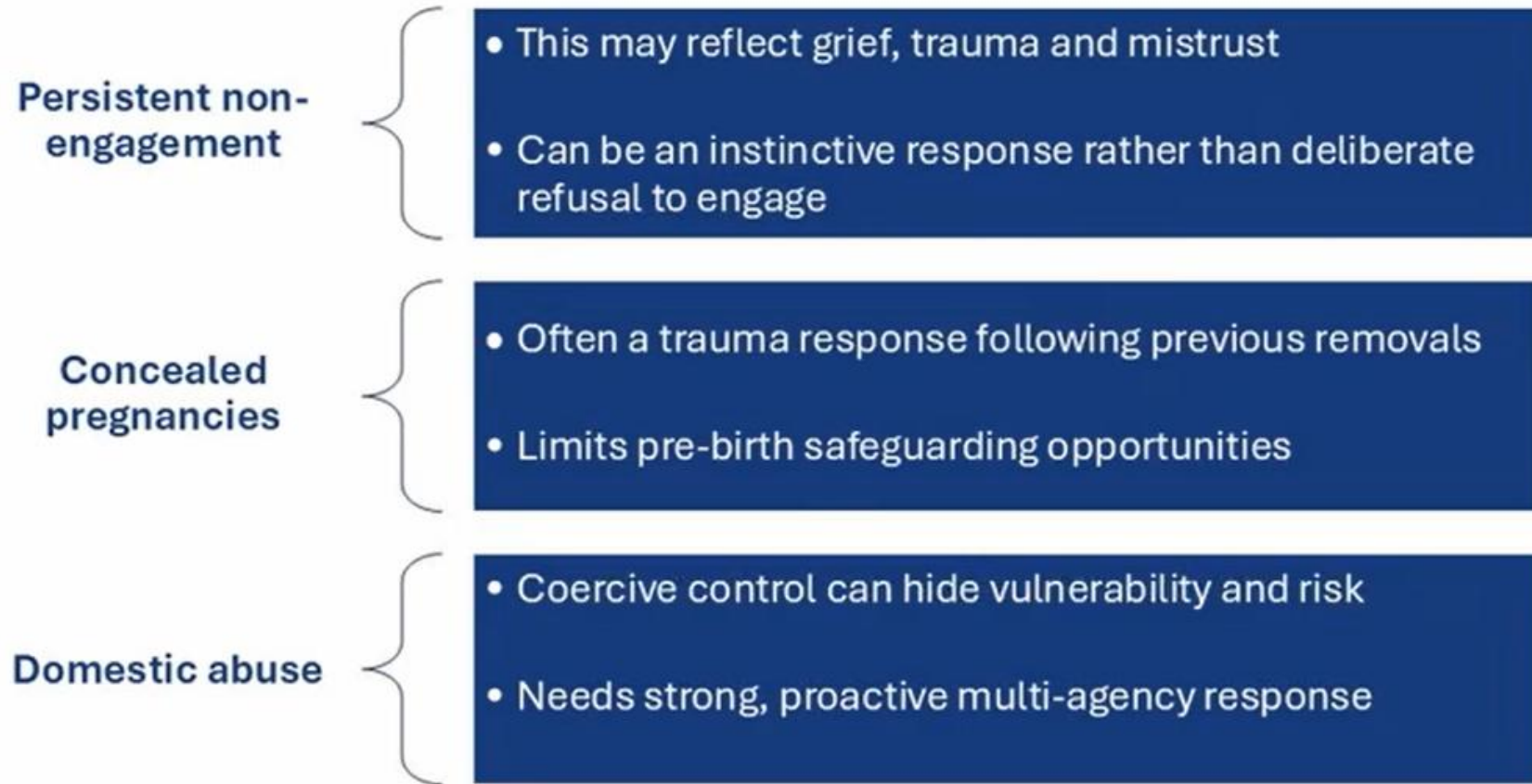


Read full report [here](#)



Read summary [here](#)

Key Learning



Baby Victoria National Review

Engaging parents

- Understand underlying reasons for non-engagement – e.g. trauma, grief, mistrust
- Create space for multi-agency collaboration to engage

Families who move frequently

- Treat frequent moves as a potential safeguarding risk
- Ensure timely, formal information transfer and clear accountability

Concealed pregnancies

- Concealment is a significant safeguarding concern.
- Building a relationship early is essential to understanding risk, supporting engagement and promoting safety.

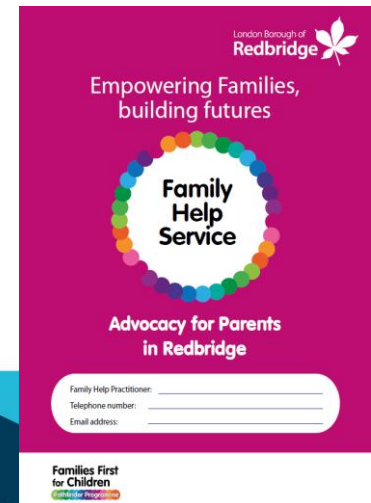
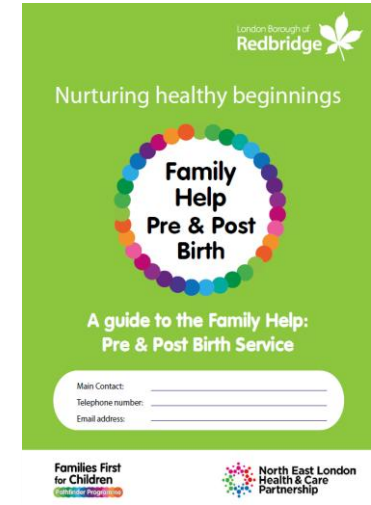
Serious offenders

- Actively seek collaboration and engagement
- Check details about relationships and family circumstances

Domestic abuse

- Recognise coercive control even when not disclosed
- Act through coordinated multi-agency safeguarding pathways

Examples of service responses



Expert insights

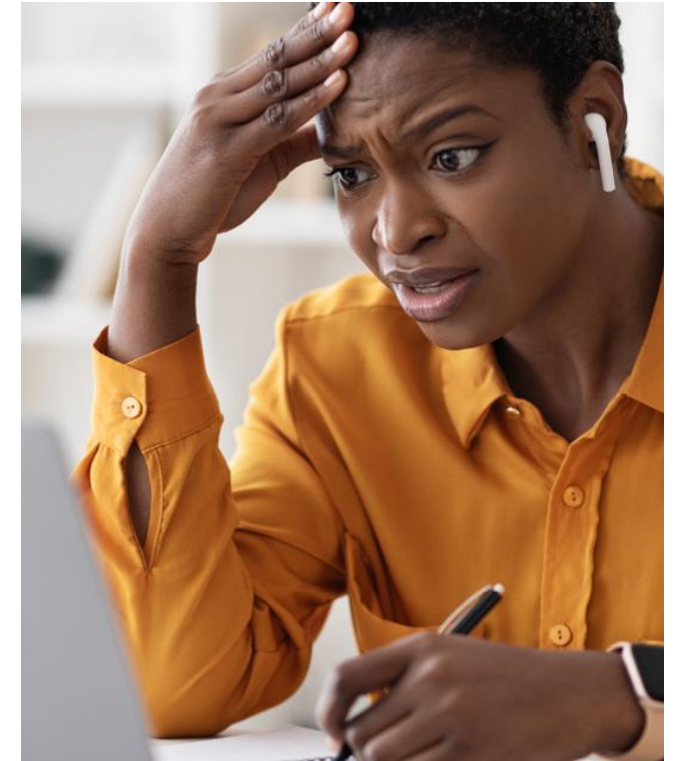
Why is it important to work with other agencies and share information?



In your groups collate a list of the barriers
to multi-agency working?

Communication

- Communication can be a key issue when different disciplines come together to work with a child and family.
- All professionals must have an overview of the child's mental health, but gaining the big picture can be difficult for a range of reasons.



Communication

- Professionals can feel as if they are holding an individual piece of a jigsaw, and may not be able to come together with other professionals to see how their piece of the jigsaw contributes to the big picture.
- This approach is often referred to as working in a silo, meaning that there is a lack of information sharing and collaboration.



Communication Barriers: Examples

- **Jargon and Terminology:** Different disciplines often use specialised language, leading to misunderstandings and difficulty in conveying information clearly.
- **Methodological Differences:** Researchers from different fields may have varying approaches to research, which can lead to conflicts in methodology and difficulty in integrating findings.
- **Lack of Shared Language and Knowledge:** Establishing a common understanding of the problem and goals can be difficult when team members come from diverse backgrounds.

Escalating concerns

- Whistleblowing is the raising of a concern, either internally, within the workplace, or an external agency, about a danger, risk, malpractice, or wrongdoing that affects others.
- All agencies must have a whistleblowing policy.



Whistleblowing

- Whistleblowing is the term used when a worker passes on information concerning wrongdoing.
- You're a whistleblower if you're a worker and you report certain types of wrongdoing.
- This will usually be something you've seen at work –or an external agency.
- The wrongdoing you disclose must be in the public interest.

Whistleblowing

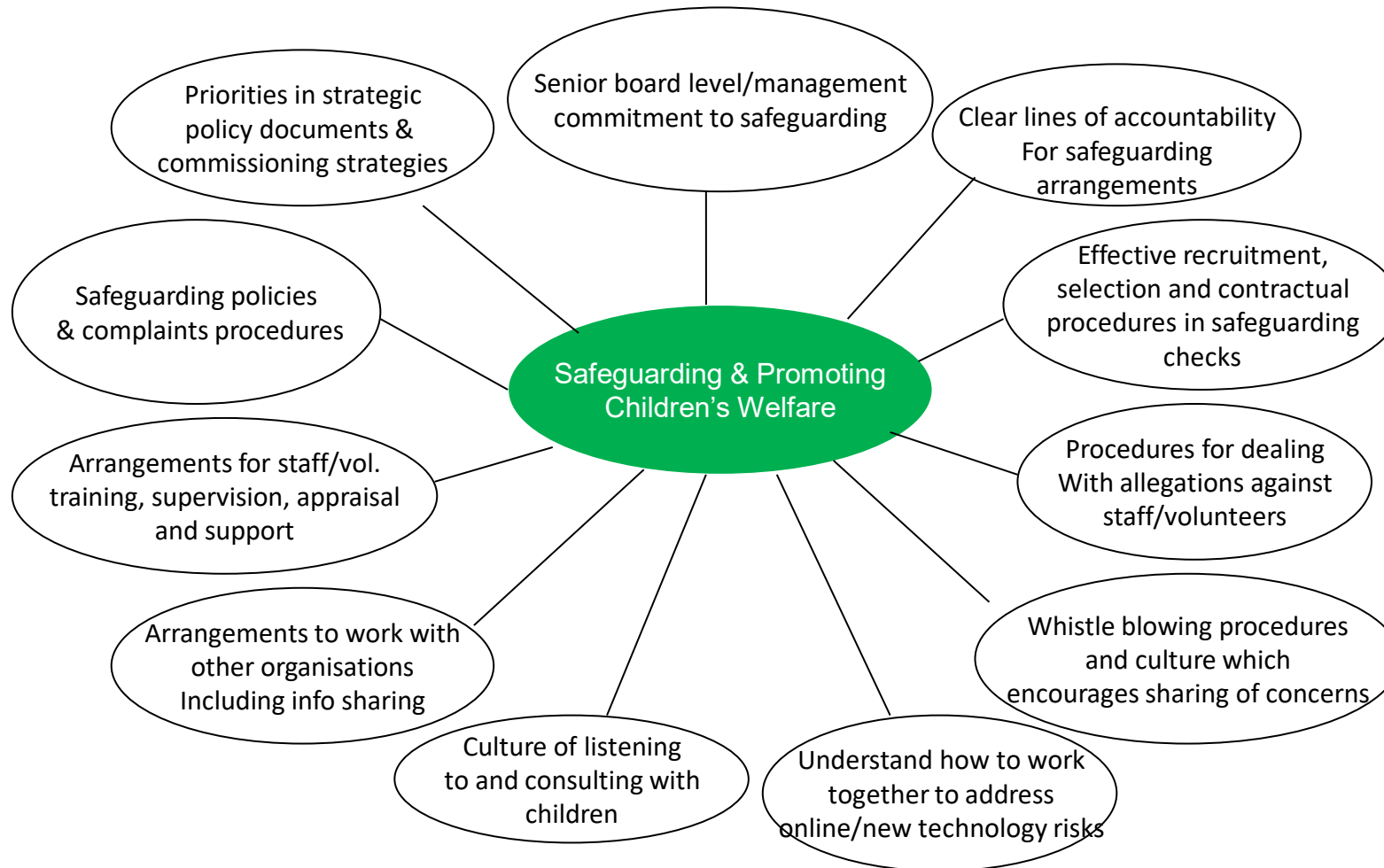
- As a whistleblower you're protected by law - you should not be treated unfairly or lose your job because you 'blow the whistle'.
- You can raise your concern at any time about an incident that happened in the past, is happening now, or you believe will happen in the near future.

Complaints that count as whistleblowing

You're protected by law if you report any of the following:

- a criminal offence, for example fraud
- someone's health and safety is in danger
- risk or actual damage to the environment
- the company is breaking the law, for example does not have the right insurance
- you believe someone is covering up wrongdoing

Services for children, parents or families should have in place:



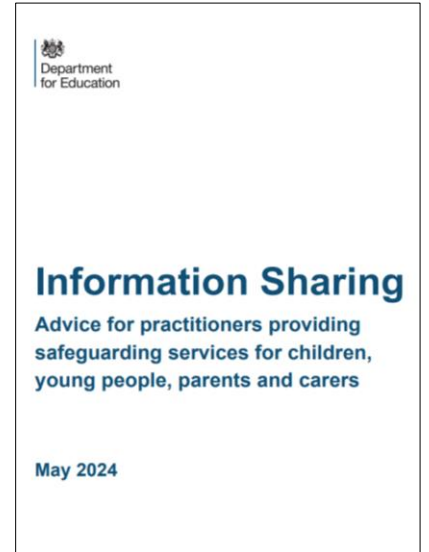
Information Sharing & Reporting child abuse and neglect

NSPCC Learning has published a Helplines insight briefing on barriers for professionals when reporting child abuse and neglect.

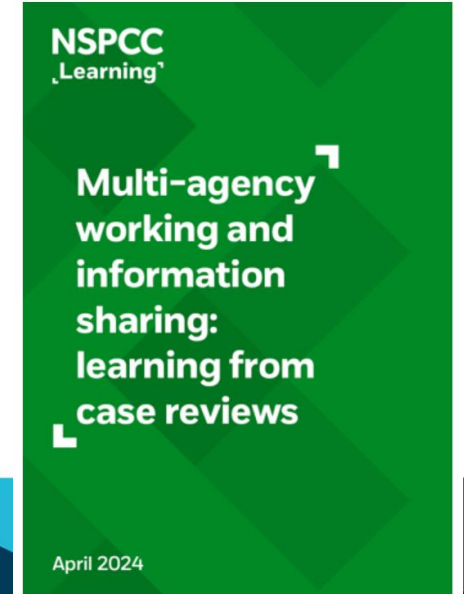
It is based on contacts to the NSPCC Helpline and NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line in 2022/23 by people working or volunteering with children and young people.

The briefing identified:

- Gaps in knowledge and confidence for some professionals including believing they needed to wait for permission to report concerns.
- There were also fears around sharing concerns, including worries about disrupting or breaking up families and fears for personal safety.
- Some professionals described organisational issues such as a lack of safeguarding processes and concealing of abuse

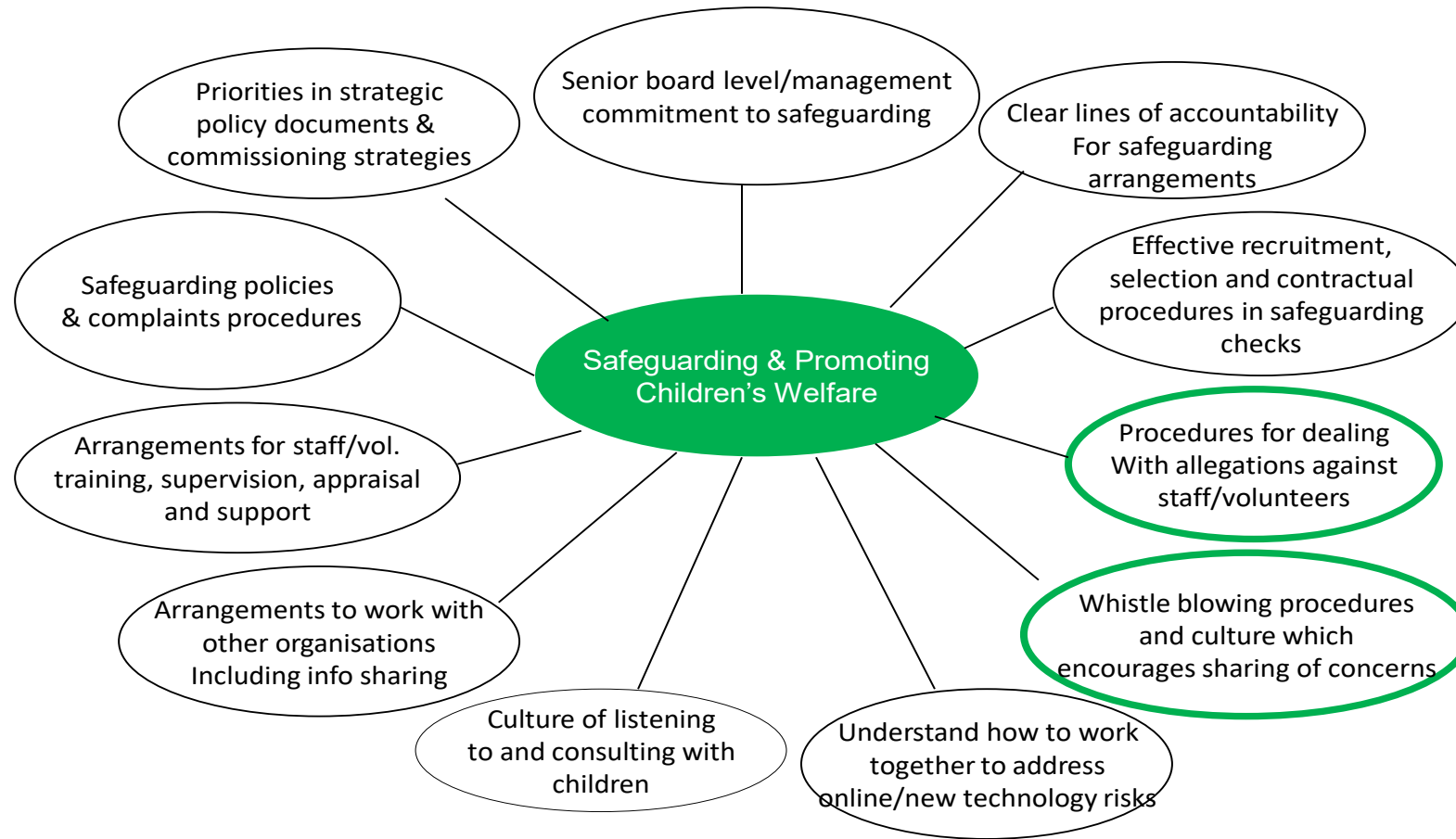


Read the guidance [here](#)



Read the briefing: [Barriers for professionals to reporting abuse and neglect: Helplines insight briefing](#)

Services for children, parents or families should have in place:





Helen Evans is Oxfam's former global head of safeguarding.

Shocking scale of sexual abuse at UK boarding schools revealed by ITV documentary

EXPOSURE | ⌚ Friday 16 February 2018 at 1:13pm



Credit: ITV Exposure (reconstruction)

Winterbourne View 'a case study in institutional abuse'

Serious case review diagnoses widespread failings of management, regulation, safeguarding and commissioning and calls for end to use of hospital placements for adults with learning disabilities and autism.

by Mithran Samuel on August 7, 2012 in Adults



Picture credit: Still from the BBC Panorama programme that exposed the Winterbourne View scandal
[?sa=L&xai=8db3DtwNcVYNsj5tut8OC4A7H7NaMC...](https://www.bbc.com/news/health-12345678)

NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line

- As commissioned by the Government, the NSPCC has recently launched a whistleblowing helpline to provide free advice and support to professionals wanting to raise concerns about how child protection issues are being handled in their own or other organisations.

For more information, see: [Whistleblowing Advice Line | NSPCC](https://www.nspcc.org.uk/whistleblowing-advice-line/)



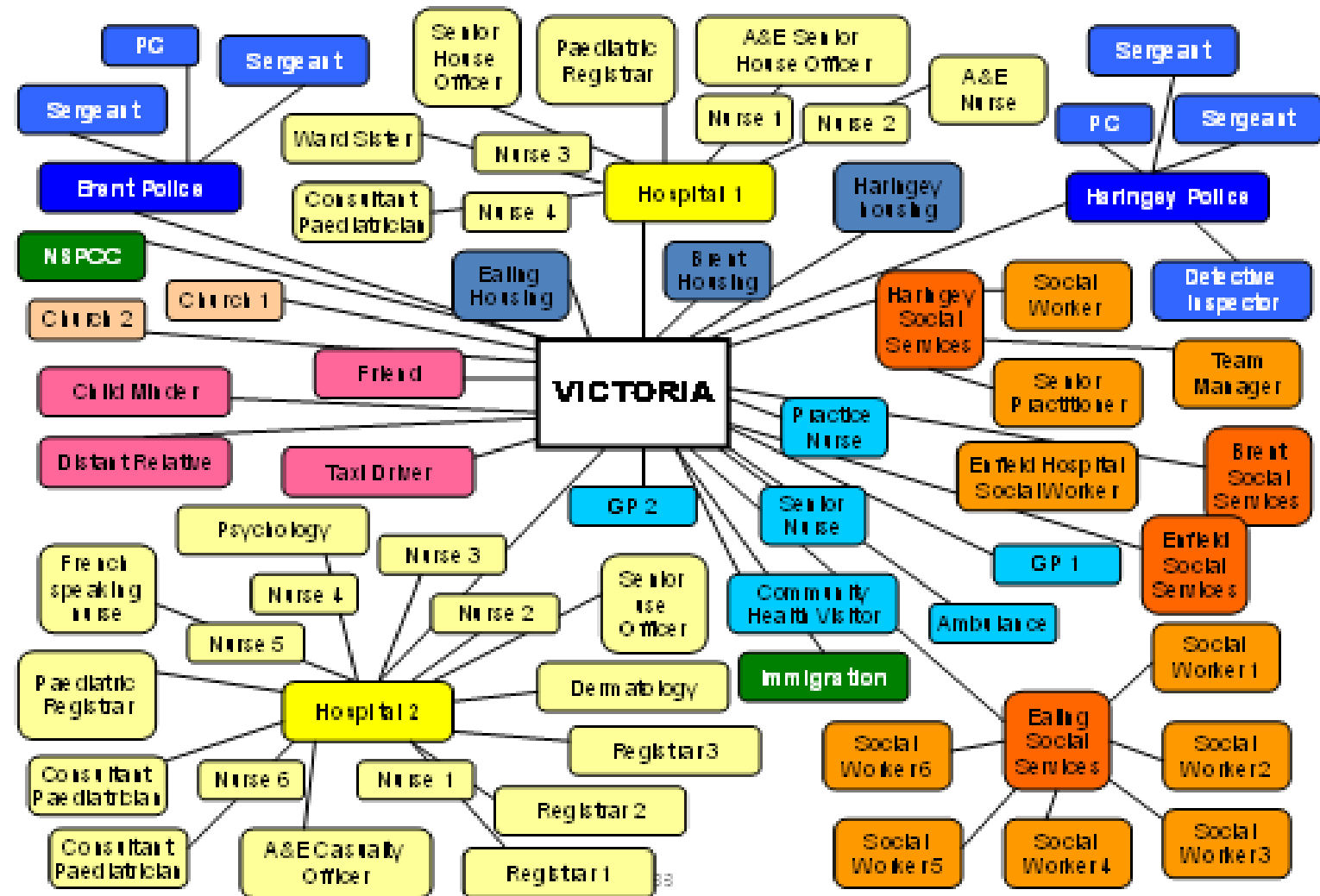
Differing Priorities and Perspectives:

- **Conflicting priorities:** Different disciplines and agencies may have varying priorities, leading to disagreements and delays in addressing the child's needs.
- **Lack of shared understanding:** Professionals may not have a common understanding of the child's situation, leading to misinterpretations and ineffective interventions.
- **Professional status and power dynamics:** The hierarchical structure of organisations can create power imbalances, making it difficult for some professionals to voice their opinions or perspectives.

Organisational and Structural Issues: Examples

- **Lack of clear roles and responsibilities:** Ambiguity in roles can lead to confusion and delays in decision-making.
- **Competing policies and procedures:** Different agencies may have conflicting policies and procedures, making it difficult to develop a consistent approach.
- **Limited resources and funding:** Insufficient resources and funding can hinder effective collaboration and limit the ability to provide adequate support to children and families.
- **Lack of co-terminus boundaries:** When agencies have different geographical boundaries, it can be difficult to ensure that children receive consistent support.

Crossing Boundaries



Cultural and Behavioural Barriers: Examples

- **Resistance to multi-agency working:** Some individuals or families may be resistant to the idea of multiple professionals involved in their lives, potentially hindering collaboration.
- **Cultural differences:** Professionals may have different cultural perspectives, which can lead to misunderstandings and communication barriers.
- **Lack of trust and respect:** Poor relationships between professionals can hinder effective collaboration and information sharing.

Star Hobson Arthur & Labinjo-Hughes



National review into the murders of Arthur Labinjo-Hughes and Star Hobson

Findings:

- **Lack of timely and appropriate information sharing** and **limited information seeking**
- **Evidence was not pieced together and considered in the round**
- **Listening to the views of the wider family and those who know the child well** - in Arthur and Star's stories a significant gap was the failure to talk to and listen to wider family members.
- **Appropriate response to domestic abuse** - the impact of domestic abuse on Arthur and Star was not explored in depth; concerns about domestic abuse towards Star's mother were considered episodically and not investigated sufficiently; information about Emma Tustin's history of domestic abuse was not triangulated between agencies.
- **Working with diverse communities** – assumptions and biases relating to culture, ethnicity, gender and sexuality affected how practitioners understood Arthur and Star's daily experiences and risks to their safety.
- **Critical thinking and challenge** - there were missed opportunities for critical thinking and challenge within and between agencies and to consider information altogether

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-review-into-the-murders-of-arthur-labinjo-hughes-and-star-hobson>

Other Factors: Examples

- **Difficult feelings and personal responses to working with traumatised children and families:** Professionals may experience emotional distress when working with traumatized children and families, which can impact their ability to work effectively.
- **Perceived or real lack of support:** Professionals may feel unsupported in their roles, leading to burnout and decreased motivation.
- **Time constraints:** Limited time for professionals to engage in collaborative activities can hinder effective teamwork.
- **Confidentiality and information sharing:** Different rules and protocols around information sharing and confidentiality can create barriers to effective collaboration.



Expert insights

What are the barriers to working with other agencies and sharing information?

Multi agency working

The Department for Education (DfE) has updated Working Together to Safeguard Children, its statutory guidance on multi-agency working to safeguard children in England.

Changes include:

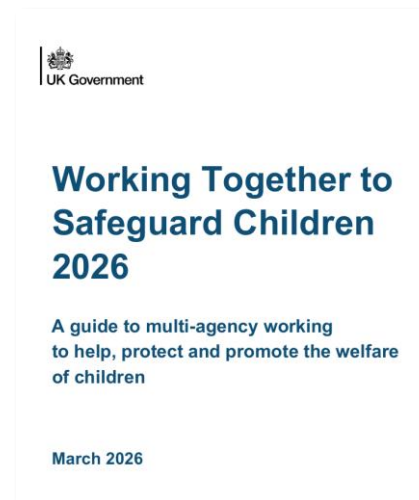
- identifying, understanding and challenging racism and discrimination; recognising the specific needs and experiences of babies;
- understanding the impact of domestic abuse on children and families; information on Operation Encompass;
- consideration of children experiencing simultaneous harms or multiple harms; strengthened inclusion of children in care; and
- guidance on Family Help.

Read the guidance: [Working together to safeguard children](#)

Read the supporting information: [Improving practice with children, young people and families](#)

Access the framework: [Children's social care national framework](#)

Read the briefing: [Key changes introduced in Working together to safeguard children 2026](#)



Factors that can positively impact multi and inter-disciplinary working: Examples

Strong leadership:

- Clear leadership can help to establish shared goals, promote collaboration, and resolve conflicts.

Commitment and loyalty:

- Professionals who are committed to multi-agency working and feel a sense of loyalty to the team are more likely to collaborate effectively.

Resources:

Adequate resources, including funding, training, and support, are essential for effective multi-agency working.

Good work relationships:

Positive working relationships between professionals can foster trust, respect, and open communication.

Shared decision-making:

Professionals should be involved in shared decision-making processes, ensuring that their perspectives are valued and that decisions are made in the best interests of the child.

Clear communication protocols:

Establishing clear communication protocols can help to ensure that information is shared effectively and that misunderstandings are avoided.

Training and professional development:

Providing training and professional development opportunities can help professionals to develop the skills and knowledge they need to work effectively in a multi-agency context.

Focus on the child's best interests:

Keeping the child's best interests at the forefront of all decisions and actions can help to ensure that all professionals are working towards the same goals.

Children-Centred Approach

Assessments should be child-centred and responsive to the voice of the child.

This means decisions should be made in the child's best interests, rooted in child development, age-appropriate, sensitive to the impact of adversity and trauma, and informed by evidence.

In addition, assessments should:

- be focused on action and outcomes for children
- be multi-agency and multi-disciplinary, based on information gathered from relevant practitioners and agencies, and drawing in the relevant expertise
- be discussed with the child and their parents or carers, as appropriate.

Cont.

- build a full picture of all aspects of a child's and their family's life, including their strengths and interests as well as any previous referrals and interventions
- be holistic in approach and address presenting and underlying issues and each of the child's needs, giving sufficient recognition and priority to the specific needs of disabled children and young carers and to any risks the child faces within or outside the home, including online.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u9Figs7Pir8>

Task

- In your group, evaluate the factors affecting multi-agency working and its impact on the child or children involved in your case study.
- Provide recommendations for improvement of multi-agency working.



Reference List

NSPCC (2023) *Multi-agency working*. Available at: <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-protection-system/multi-agency-working-child-protection/>

SCIE, Multidisciplinary teams working for integrated care. Available at: <https://www.scie.org.uk/integrated-care/research-practice/activities/multidisciplinary-teams>

Some other resources:

An overview of Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AKEbxFLVi8M&t=384s>

Learning from Serious Case Reviews

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u9Figs7Pir8>