

Children Partnership Newsletter

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Key Provisions introduced in Working Together to Safeguarding Children 2023

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This briefing highlights the key updates introduced in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023. A link to the full document is available [here](#).

Alongside the Working Together statutory guidance, the Government published:

- an updated Working Together (Statutory Guidance) (WOTG), which sets out the legislative context to safeguarding
- the Children's Social Work (England) Regulations 2023, which set out expectations for social workers, practice supervisors and practitioners in local authorities
- guidance on reporting practice with children, young people and families, which provides advice for local areas on embedding the Working Together guidance and the Children's Social Work (England) Regulations 2023

Shared Responsibility (Chapter 1) This new chapter highlights how positive outcomes for children depend on strong multi-agency working.

Multi-agency responsibilities for all practitioners This guidance introduces a set of multi-agency expectations for all practitioners involved in safeguarding and child protection. These expectations aim to ensure that practitioners:

- share the same goals
- have a clear role and responsibilities
- know what they need to help families
- understand and appreciate differences
- challenge each other

They are divided into three levels:

- strategic leaders (such as chief executives)
- senior and middle managers (such as heads of services, team managers, head teachers)
- frontline practice (such as frontline social workers, police constables, teachers)

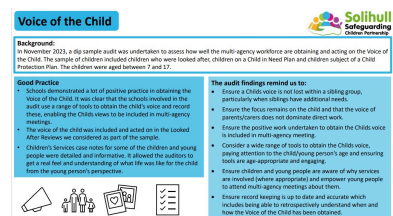
Working with parents and carers The updated guidance sets out four principles that professionals should follow when working with parents and carers:

- effective partnership and the importance of building strong, positive, trusting and co-operative relationships
- respectful, non-blaming, clear and inclusive verbal and non-verbal communication that is adapted to the needs of parents and carers
- empowering parents and carers to participate in decision making by providing them with information, helping them to understand and directing them to further resources
- making choices and plans in the design of processes and services that affect them

As you all know, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 was published in December 2023. We have pulled together a set of slides showing the key changes to the document for professionals. The slides can be accessed [here](#).

Voice of the Child Audit

In November 2023, the SSCP Audit Group conducted a dip sample audit to assess how well the multi-agency workforce are obtaining and acting on the Voice of the Child. The audit highlighted both areas of good practice and aspects of practice the multi-agency could consider and learn from. A summary of the audit can be found [here](#).



Voice of the Child

Background: In November 2023, a dip sample audit was undertaken to assess how well the multi-agency workforce are obtaining and acting on the voice of the Child. The sample of children included children who were looked after, children on a Child in Need Plan and children subject of a Child Protection Plan. The children were aged between 7 and 17.

Good Practice:

- Schools demonstrated a lot of positive practice in obtaining the voice of the Child. It was clear that the schools involved in the audit used a range of tools to obtain the Child's voice and record their views, enabling the Child's voice to be included in multi-agency meetings.
- The views of the child were included and acted on in the Looked After Reviews as considered as part of the sample.
- Children's Services case files for some of the children and young people were detailed and informative. It allowed the auditors to get an in-depth understanding of what life was like for the child from the young person's perspective.

The audit findings remind us to:

- Ensure a Child's voice is not lost within a planning group, particularly when settings have additional needs.
- Ensure the focus remains on the child and that the voice of practitioners does not dominate direct work.
- Ensure the positive work undertaken to obtain the Child's voice is included in multi-agency meetings.
- Conduct a wide-range of tools to obtain the Child's voice, paying attention to the child/young person's age and ensuring tools are age appropriate and engaging.
- Ensure children and young people are aware of why services are involved, before appropriate and empower young people to attend multi-agency meetings about them.
- Ensure record keeping is up to date and accurate which includes being able to retrospectively understand when and how the voice of the Child has been obtained.

Safeguarding Practice Learning Forum



The Safeguarding Practice Learning Forums are facilitated by the SSCP and Solihull Safeguarding Adults Board (SSAB) and are a way of bringing practitioners and managers from a range of partner agencies together to share learning as well as providing a 2-way consultation process for the SSCP and SSAB to hear directly from frontline practitioners. The next

Safeguarding Practice Learning Forum will take place on Tuesday 24th January from 2pm - 4pm at Sans Souci. The focus will be 'Think Family'. For more information and how to book please click [here](#).

SSCP Sexual Abuse Training - Places Available

There are still places available for Module 9 - Sexual Abuse: Impact on Child Development which is being held on Tuesday 30th January 9:30am - 4:30pm at Sans Souci. This training will help practitioners to carry out or contribute to assessments where sexual abuse is suspected along with other key learning objectives. For more information and to book your place, please click [here](#).

Community Development Team - Contact Details

In our last newsletter we included an article from Marston Green Infant School. In the article they recommended contacting the Community Development Team to see what services are available in your local area. Contact details and a map showing who to contact depending on your locality can be found [here](#).



Partnership Improvement Updates

News from Childrens Services

Edge of Care

Two new Edge of Care workers will be starting in Children's Services on Monday as part of the new "Families Together" service. There are a number of families already identified that they will begin working with. Their initial focus will be on children in care who need additional support to safely return home. As the service develops, the focus will extend to children aged 10 – 15 to ensure they can safely remain with their families and who may otherwise have to come into care. It is expected that the full team will be in post by Mid-March.

Family Group Conferences - a refreshed service!

Solihull Children's Services are bolstering their Family Group Conference (FGC) capacity, working with Birmingham Children's Trust (BCT). This means they are enhancing their offer to families and ensuring we focus on family solutions, so that children have every opportunity to stay at home.

An FGC is a process whereby professional and family networks realign and come together, with the help of an independent co-ordinator, to develop plans for children. The outcomes can often be very positive and long lasting.

They are in the process of forming a joint Solihull and Birmingham FGC team, so that all FGC referrals can be managed by a unified team, based in both Birmingham and Solihull offices.

If you have any comments or suggestions for the SSCP Newsletter, please email:

sscp@solihull.gov.uk

For more useful information, advice and guidance, please

visit <https://www.safeguardingsolihull.org.uk/lscp/>

To access multi-agency training provided by the SSCP, please

visit <https://training.solihulllscp.co.uk/Learning-and-Development.aspx>



**Listening, Learning and
Improving Outcomes for
Children and Young People**

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