

**Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023**

**May 2024**

One Minute Guide



**What is Working Together to Safeguard Children?**

[Working Together to Safeguard Children](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65cb4349a7ded0000c79e4e1/Working_together_to_safeguard_children_2023_-_statutory_guidance.pdf) (2023) (Working Together) replaces the 2018 document. It is the multi-agency statutory guidance that sets out expectations for the system that provides help, support and protection for children and their families. It applies at every level, to all agencies and organisations that work directly with children and families. This includes:

• local authorities

• Integrated care boards (health)

• police

• other [relevant agencies](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2018/789/made), organisations and individuals that are essential to children’s safety and wellbeing.

As part of reforms to children’s social care, government has committed to set greater national direction for practice. The updated Working Together has been issued alongside the [Children’s Social Care National Framework](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/childrens-social-care-national-framework) (National Framework), which is statutory guidance on the principles behind children’s social care, its purpose, factors enabling good practice and what it should achieve.

These two pieces of statutory guidance provide clarity on how all safeguarding partners can work together towards the vision for supporting children, young people and families, which is set out in the government’s strategy, [Stable Homes Built on Love.](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/650966a322a783001343e844/Children_s_Social_Care_Stable_Homes__Built_on_Love_consultation_response.pdf)

**What changes have been made?**

In addition to simple factual updates (for example to include references to legislation published or changes to guidance and procedures since the last update), the 2023 update includes some substantive changes to the content; though it should be noted that no statutory roles or functions have been removed from the guidance.

The revision to the guidance focuses on strengthening multi-agency working across the whole system of help, support and protection for children and their families, keeping a child-centred approach while bringing a whole-family focus, and embedding strong, effective and consistent multi-agency child protection practice.

A full summary of changes can be accessed here:

[Working together to safeguard children 2023: summary of changes (publishing.service.gov.uk)](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65803ff395bf65000d7191a2/Working_together_to_safeguard_children_2023_-_summary_of_changes.pdf)

[Key provisions introduced in Working together to safeguard children 2023 (nspcc.org.uk)](https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/media/r0vgnjlq/key-provisions-working-together-safeguard-children-2023.pdf)

**Chapter 1: A Shared Responsibility**

This is a new chapter that brings together new and existing guidance to emphasise that successful outcomes for children depend upon strong multi-agency partnership working. This includes principles for working with parents, carers and families which focus on the importance of building positive, trusting and cooperative relationships to deliver tailored support to families and expectations for multi-agency working that apply to all individuals, agencies and organisations working with children, young people and families.

These expectations aim to ensure that practitioners:

* Share the same goals,
* Learn with and from each other,
* Have what they need to help families,
* Acknowledge and appreciate difference,
* Challenge each other.

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 equipping them with information, keeping them updated and directing them to further resources,
* Involving parents and carers in the design of processes and services that affect them.

**Chapter 2: Multi- Agency Safeguarding Arrangements**

The second chapter strengthens how the multi- agency safeguarding arrangements (local authorities, integrated care boards and the police) work to safeguard and protect children locally, including with relevant agencies.

The changes include clarifying the roles and responsibilities of safeguarding partners, emphasising the role of education in safeguarding arrangements. The chapter also considers the importance of voluntary, charity and social enterprise (VCSE) organisations within safeguarding arrangements.

**Chapter 3: Providing Help, Support and Protection.**

The revision of this chapter focuses on how organisations can provide help, safeguarding and protection for children and their families. It is split into three sections:

**Early Help:** strengthens the role of education and childcare settings in supporting children and keeping them safe. The approach to working with families has also been strengthened, outlining the role of family

networks and the use of family group conferencing.

**Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children** clarifies that a broader range of practitioners can be the lead practitioner for children and families receiving support and states that partners need to agree local governance arrangements in relation to this. It also clarifies the role of children’s social care in supporting disabled children and their families, children at risk of, or experiencing, harm outside the home, children in mother and baby units (in prisons) and children at risk from people in prison and people supervised by the probation service.

**Child Protection** introduces new national multi-agency child protection standards to set out actions, considerations and behaviours for improved child protection practice and outcomes for children. It clarifies the multi-agency response to all forms of abuse and exploitation from outside the home, consideration of children at risk of experiencing extra-familial harm in all children’s social care assessments and includes resources to support practitioners understanding of the response to online harm.

**Chapter 4: Organisational Responsibilities**

Chapter 4 highlights the specific statutory duties of individual organisations and agencies working with children and families to promote their welfare and ensure they are protected from harm. Updates to this chapter include Changes to the Prison and Probation sections highlights the mutual benefits of exchanging information with children’s social care which strengthen and clarify processes and responsibilities for child safeguarding.

**Chapter 5: Learning from Serious Child Safeguarding Incidents**

When a child sadly suffers a serious injury or death as a result of abuse or neglect, understanding not only what happened but also why it may have happened can help improve safeguarding responses in the future at both a local and national level. Child Safeguarding case reviews are used to identify this learning to seek to prevent or reduce the risk of recurrence or similar incidents.

Changes to the chapter include keeping in touch with care leavers over the age of 21 and the reporting of the death of care leavers up to the age of 25 to improve learning and outcomes for this group of young people.

**Chapter 6: Child Death Reviews**

The death of a child is a devastating loss that profoundly affects all those involved. The process of systematically reviewing the deaths of children is grounded in respect for the rights of both children and their families, with the intention of learning what happened and why, and preventing future child deaths. This is managed through the Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP). Factual changes have been made to the chapter as highlighted in the DofE [Summary of Changes](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65803ff395bf65000d7191a2/Working_together_to_safeguard_children_2023_-_summary_of_changes.pdf) document.

**What is happening in North Yorkshire?**

Safeguarding partners are working together to implement the changes made to Working Together and children’s social care national framework. All local areas have been asked to reflect on how to strengthen multi agency working across the whole system of help, support and protection for children and families.

Safeguarding leads are working to review current arrangements and identify what changes need to be made to comply with the updated statutory guidance.

Updates to arrangements need to be published by December 2024.

**What do the changes mean for me and my role?**

Everyone who provides support to children, young people and families should read Working Together to safeguard children and understand what the changes mean for their practice.

They should commit to reviewing current practice and identifying where improvements may be needed so that the best possible outcomes for children, young people and families are being achieved.

**Keeping up to date:**

Partners can keep up to date on the progress of the implementation of changes via the North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (NYSCP) business unit. Any updates will be shared with partners via the monthly NYSCP e-bulletin which can be accessed here [NYSCP (safeguardingchildren.co.uk)](https://www.safeguardingchildren.co.uk/professionals/nyscp-e-bulletin/)

A learning event has been scheduled on 4th December 2024 for all partners to attend, where all updates in relation to Working Together will be shared. This event will be delivered by the business unit, alongside statutory partners and relevant agencies to highlight the changes for all organisations. This event can be booked here: [North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (NYSCP) Developments in Safeguarding Masterclass Webinars - December 2024 | NYES Info](https://www.nyes.info/Event/210638)

If partners have any questions in relation to the changes, they can contact the business unit on [nyscp@northyorks.gov.uk](mailto:nyscp@northyorks.gov.uk)