

Cafcass Knowledge Alert

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018

This Knowledge Alert aims to update practitioners and managers on the statutory guidance provided in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018. It applies to all children up to the age of 18 years whether living with their families, in state care, or living independently. The guidance focuses on the core legal requirements, making it clear what individuals, organisations and agencies must and should do to keep children safe. In doing so, it seeks to emphasise that effective safeguarding is achieved by putting children at the centre of the system and by every individual and agency playing their full part.



Children are clear about what they want from an effective safeguarding system.

They have said they need.....



There are two significant differences to be aware of:

- New 'local safeguarding partners' will replace existing LSCBs. The statutory guidance explains their duties and how they will work together and in collaboration with others to improve safeguarding practice locally;
- A national learning system will replace the current serious case review process. Chapters 4 and 5 of the statutory guidance also set out the new arrangements, introduced by the Children and Social Work Act 2017, which include the creation of the national Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel.

From 29 June 2018, local authority areas must begin their transition from LSCBs to safeguarding partner and child death review partner arrangements. The transition must be completed by 29 September 2019.

The new local safeguarding arrangements will be led by three safeguarding partners (local authorities, chief officers of police, and clinical commissioning groups). The Children and Social Work Act 2017 places a duty on those partners to make arrangements for themselves and relevant agencies to work together for the purpose of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in their area.

“Relevant agencies” is a term for all bodies and groups whose functions play a crucial role in coordinating the safeguarding and welfare of children; Cafcass is a relevant agency under this guidance.

Once agreed, local safeguarding arrangements must be published and must include the relevant agencies the safeguarding partners will work with, why these organisations and agencies have been chosen, and how they will collaborate and work together to improve outcomes for children and families.

The safeguarding partners must publish a report at least once in every 12-month period. These must include evidence of the impact of the work of the safeguarding partners and relevant agencies, and ways in which the partners have sought and utilised feedback from children and families to inform their work and influence service provision.

Serious child safeguarding cases are those in which:

- abuse or neglect of a child is known or suspected **and**
- the child has died or been seriously harmed

When the local safeguarding partners receive information about a serious child safeguarding case they will undertake a concise initial investigative exercise to understand both the circumstances and the involvement of local agencies within five working days. They will send a copy of the findings to the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel.

They will also advise the Panel whether they consider that a local child safeguarding practice review is appropriate. The Panel will consider the information and will advise the safeguarding partners whether they intend to undertake a national child safeguarding practice review. The Panel is also responsible for commissioning and supervising reviewers for national child safeguarding practice reviews, where cases raise issues that are complex or of national importance.

The purpose of reviews of serious child safeguarding cases, at both local and national level, is to identify improvements to be made to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. The guidance advises that the review should be proportionate to the circumstances of the case, focus on potential learning, and establish and explain the reasons why the events occurred as they did. Review report recommendations should be clear on what is required of relevant agencies and others collectively and individually, and by when, and focussed on improving outcomes for children.



Resources

External:

[Working Together to Safeguard Children. Statutory guidance on inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.](#)

[Working Together: transitional guidance.](#)