

Chapter 1. Safeguarding children is a ‘shared responsibility’

To ensure children¹, young people and families receive the most appropriate and effective support and protection all agencies **must** work together. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children – and in particular protecting them from significant harm – depends on effective joint working between agencies and professionals that have different roles and expertise.

It is the responsibility of each partner agency to ensure their respective staff understand this basic premise and are aware of their role and responsibilities as set out in *Working Together to Safeguard Children (2010)*, understanding how their role fits with those of colleagues within partner agencies, and follow the procedures outlined within this document.

In order to achieve effective joint working, there will need to be constructive relationships between individual workers, promoted and supported by:

- a strong lead from elected or appointed authority members, and the commitment of chief officers in all agencies – in particular, the Director of Children’s services and Lead member for Children’s Services.
- effective local co-ordination by the Local Safeguarding Children Board (*para 1.13*).

All agencies and professionals should:

- be alert to potential indicators of abuse or neglect;
- be alert to the risk that individual abusers, or potential abusers, may pose to children;
- prioritise direct communication and positive relationships with children, ensuring the child’s wishes and feelings underpin assessments and any safeguarding activities;
- share and help analyse information to that an assessment can be made of whether the child is suffering or is likely to suffer harm, their needs and circumstances;
- contribute to whatever actions are needed to safeguard and promote the child’s welfare;
- take part in regularly reviewing the outcomes for the child against specific plans; and
- work co-operatively with parents, unless this is inconsistent with ensuring the child’s safety (*para 1.14*).

All staff, working with children, young people and their families should understand that these procedures and ensure they are adhered to when safeguarding concerns regarding children and young people arise, regardless of their role, or area of primary responsibility.

Safeguarding children and young people should remain a priority in all work with children, young people and their families.

¹ The Children Act 1989 defines a child as anyone who has not yet achieved their 18th birthday. The term ‘young person’ is a courtesy term which has no legal status but is often used as a sign of respect to older children.