

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015



HIGH SPEED™
TRAINING

The Working Together 2015 guidance applies to local authorities and schools and replaces the 2013 version.

The legislation remains current since revisions were made in 2015, with a minor amendment in 2017. The minor amendment involved adding a definition of child sexual exploitation.

Full List of Revisions to Working Together To Safeguard Children 2015

- Referral of allegations against those working with children.
- Incidents involving the care of a child.
- Definition of serious harm.
- Amendments to the definition of preventable child deaths.
- New expectations regarding LSCB annual reports.
- The expectation that whistleblowing is integrated into training.
- Updates to guidance on information sharing.

Minor amends were made regarding:

- Probation.
- Channel Panels.
- Schools.
- Child protection for foreign national children.
- Young carers and parent carers.
- SEN provisions.
- Children returning home from care.



Read on for full details about the Working Together 2015 changes.

Referral of Allegations against Those Working With Children

The referral route update aims to improve coordination and make sure that the person or persons who deal with the allegations are qualified social workers. Any allegations made against people who work with children should be routed through children's social care. This way the referral can be dealt with alongside child welfare concerns.

Local authorities should have designated a particular officer, or team of officers (either as part of multi-agency arrangements or otherwise), to be involved in the management and oversight of allegations against people that work with children.

Any such officer, or team of officers, should be sufficiently qualified and experienced to be able to fulfil this role effectively, for example qualified social workers. Any new appointments to such a role, other than current or former designated officers moving between local authorities, should be qualified social workers.

Definition of Serious Harm

In the consultation, some members of the national panel raised concerns that LSCBs were unable to make appropriate decisions on what serious harm meant. To aid LSCBs, the new edition has a definition of 'seriously harmed' to help local authorities make decisions.

Serious harm includes, but is not limited to, cases, where the child has sustained, as a result of abuse or neglect, (a) potentially life-threatening injury or (b) serious or likely long-term impairment of physical/mental health or physical, intellectual, emotional, social, or behavioural development.

The update warns that 'this definition is not exhaustive.' In addition, even if a child recovers, this does not mean that serious harm has not occurred. LSCBs should ensure that their considerations on whether the child faced serious harm are informed by available research evidence.



Notifiable Incidents Involving the Care of a Child

During the consultation, local authorities expressed concerns about the clarity of the requirement to notify and what constituted a 'notifiable incident.' To make this clearer, the government added a section on notifiable incidents to the legislation.

A notifiable incident is an incident involving the care of a child which meets any of the following criteria:

- A child has died (including cases of suspected suicide), and abuse or neglect is known or suspected.
- A child has been seriously harmed, and abuse or neglect is known or suspected.
- A looked-after child has died (including cases where abuse or neglect is not known or suspected).
- A child in a regulated setting or service has died (including cases where abuse or neglect is not known or suspected).



Additional Changes to Working Together 2015

Whistleblowing

The Working Together 2015 guideline sets of the expectation that all organisations with safeguarding duties must have an internal whistleblowing policy in place. The policies should be clear about procedures and be integrated into training so that all employees are aware of guidelines. Furthermore, the policy should reflect the principles of Sir Robert Francis's Freedom to Speak Up review.

New Definition of Preventable Child Deaths

The update includes a new definition of preventable child deaths: 'this guidance defines preventable child deaths as those in which modifiable factors may have contributed to the death. These are factors defined as those, where, if actions could be taken through national or local interventions, the risk of future child deaths could be reduced.'

Changes to LSCB Annual Reports

Working Together 2015 asks LSCBs to conduct regular assessments of the Board partners' responses to child sexual exploitation and include information on the outcome of these assessments. Review findings should be reported to the Youth Justice Board.

The assessment should include:

- An analysis of how the LSCB partners used data to promote service improvement for vulnerable children and families, including in respect of sexual abuse.
- Appropriate data on children missing from care.

- How the LSCB is addressing the issue.
- A review of the use of restraint within that establishment.



New Information Sharing Advice

The new information sharing advice includes seven rules for sharing information effectively. The Working Together 2015 rules can be used to supplement local guidance and encourage good practice in information sharing.



Additional Amends

Young Carers and Parent Carers - The update includes the new duties to assess young carers and parent carers, as introduced in the Children and Families Act 2014 and the Care Act 2014.

Special Educational Needs/Educational Health and Care Plans - The update includes guidance with the new SEN provisions following the Children and Families Act 2014.

Child protection for foreign national children - The update has changed to reflect the publication of new guidance for working with foreign authorities on child protection cases and care orders.

Children returning home from care - The changes add clarity to the requirements and expectations for continued assessment, planning, support, and review for children who return home. The guidance offers advice for when this is planned and unplanned.

Probation - The update reflects structural changes under the Transforming Rehabilitation Programme and the findings of HM Inspectorate of Probation thematic inspection on protecting children.

Channel panels - The update reflects duties set out in the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 regarding Channel panels.

Schools - The update clarifies that the Working Together 2015 guidance applies in its entirety to all schools, including independent schools, academies and free schools, who all have duties concerning safeguarding and promoting the welfare of pupils, consistent with Keeping Children Safe in Education.