

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2006

April 2006 saw the launch of the inter-agency guidance on safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. This much awaited document sets out how organisations and individuals should work together to safeguard children

All professionals who work with children and families need to be aware of its existence as we need to:

- protect children from maltreatment;
- prevent impairment of children's health and development;
- ensure that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe effective care (Children Act 2004, Section 11);
- enable children to have optimum life chances to ensure successful transition to adulthood.

Part One contains statutory guidance, explaining the roles, responsibilities and duties of people and organisations in managing cases.

Part Two contains non statutory practice guidance, summarising the impact of maltreatment upon children's health and development. It highlights areas/circumstances where children are particularly vulnerable and in need of additional support.

The full document can be found at:

<http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk>

Statutory agencies may be able to obtain hard copies from their designated child protection professionals.



Working Together defines common features of an organisation's commitment to safeguarding and promoting welfare:

- clear commitment by senior management;
- clear line of accountability;
- robust recruitment and human resources procedures;
- procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse;
- staff training;
- policies in place including child protection and information sharing;
- whistle blowing procedures.

This issue will cover:

- **Key Changes in Working Together 2006**
- **Allegations Against Professionals**
- **Private Fostering**
- **Children in Hospital**
- **Training**
- **New Inter-agency Child Protection Procedures**
- **West Yorkshire Procedures**
- **Substance Misuse Procedures**
- **Sexual Exploitation Procedures**
- **High Court Ruling Fabricated Illness**



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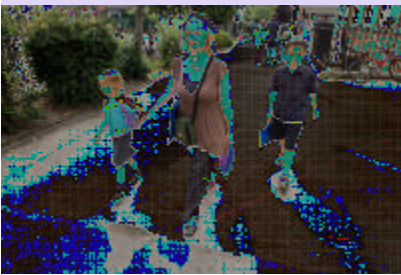
All organisations have a key role to play in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and the general principles they should apply are:

- aim to ensure all children receive appropriate and timely therapeutic and preventative interventions;
- professionals who work directly with children should ensure that safeguarding and promoting their welfare forms an integral part of all stages of care they offer;
- all professionals who come into contact with children, parents and carers in the course of their work need to be aware of their safeguarding responsibilities;
- all professionals can recognise risk factors and contribute to reviews, enquiries and child protection plans. As well as planning support for children and providing ongoing promotional and preventative support through proactive work.

Standard 5 of the *National Service Framework for children, Young People and Maternity Services* sets the standards for health and social care agencies work to prevent children suffering harm and to promote their welfare.

Visit our website for more information about the board at:

www.wakefield.gov.uk and search for 'safeguarding'.



Key Changes in Working Together 2006

Local Safeguarding Children Boards

This statutory body replaced Area Child Protection Committees as of 1st April 2006. Their objectives are to:

- co-ordinate local work to safeguard and promote welfare of children;
- to ensure the effectiveness of that work.

Wakefield District Safeguarding Children Board was formally launched in September 2005.

Managing Individual Cases

Working Together 2006 provides detailed guidance as to how individual cases of child concern are to be managed. This guidance remains largely unaltered from the 1999 Working Together, except in the following areas:

- The Government has brought the reporting of underage sexual activity within the domain of child protection procedures and states that there should be a *presumption* that sexual active children under the age of 13 years will be referred to Social Care Direct.
- Child Protection Registers are to be abolished by 2008. Emphasis is now to be placed on children subject to a child protection plan. The child protection process, including Section 47 investigations, strategy meetings, case conferences and subsequent child protection plans are to remain unchanged.

The local authority is required to provide an IT system to produce lists of children subject to child protection plans following case conference. This is to be delivered through the integrated children's system required to be in place by January 2007. New timescales have been introduced for the decisions of the Case Conference to be circulated to the meeting. This must be done within one working day of Conference.

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Continued from Key Changes in Working Together 2006

Child Death Review Processes (to be implemented by 2008)

As part of the wider range of responsibility for LSCB's a new responsibility for conducting child death reviews is proposed.

This will include:

- collecting and analysing information about each death;
- identifying public health or safety concerns arising from a child's death;
- co-ordinating a response to unexpected deaths.

For unexpected deaths a rapid response of key professionals is to be provided. This will include having such a response out of hours. The guidance suggests setting up this new service in close co-operation with the Coroner and such services should be provided for the children and young people populations of 500,000. This implies joint working of several LSCB's to undertake the function.

A sub-committee of WDSCB has been formed to undertake this function.

Vulnerable Children

Non-statutory guidance is provided in respect of the most vulnerable children. The guidance provides a rationale as to the particular needs of such groups in respect of vulnerability. New sections are included on the following:

- private fostering;
- children in hospital;
- missing children;
- migrant children;
- homeless families;
- unaccompanied asylum seeking children.

New Inter-agency Child Protection Procedures

In order to ensure the swift and timely implementation of the new Working Together, a number of time-limited working groups have been established. Each group is working to an action plan which will enable the required timescales to be met. Most of the changes have to be implemented by 1 October 2006. To this end, the WDSCB procedures have been amended to reflect these changes. The changes are highlighted in red within the document. The procedures are available on the WDSCB website.

Please ensure you update any paper copies of the procedures you have with the new version. No paper/hard copies will be sent out. It is possible to set the print to print out in A5 size, so that the new procedures can be put into your existing A5 binders.



Allegations Against Professionals

Allegations Against Professionals

Working Together (2006) provides detailed guidance on how to deal with allegations against professionals. This guidance affects **all organisations** who employ staff who work with children.

The new guidance tightens the existing procedure for allegations of abuse against professionals and broadens the criteria for applying the procedures. They are applicable when there is a concern or an allegation that any person who works with children, in connection with his/her employment or voluntary activity, has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; or
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children.

The procedures will also apply where:

- it is discovered that a person who is or has been working with children is known to have been previously involved in child abuse;
- an allegation of abuse relates to other children with whom a person working with children has contact, including his/her own children;
- an allegation of abuse is made against a partner, member of the family or other household member, which gives rise to concerns about the safety of children with whom a person has contact in connection with his/her work or voluntary activity.

It requires that each local authority has a designated officer whose role is to:

- be involved in the management and oversight of individual cases;
- provide advice and guidance to employers and voluntary organisations;
- liaise with the police and other agencies;
- monitor the progress of cases to ensure that they are dealt with as quickly as possible consistent with a thorough and fair process.

It also requires that each WDSCB member organisation should identify:

- a named senior officer with overall responsibility for ensuring that the organisation deals with allegations in accordance with these procedures;
- resolving any inter-agency issues;
- liaising with the WDSCB on the subject.

All agencies procedures should identify a senior manager to whom allegations or concerns should be reported, together with a deputy in his/her absence or if he/she is the subject of the allegation.

The WDSCB has established a working group to ensure these procedures are fully implemented. A copy of the procedures can be found on the WDSCB website. Events will be organised in the spring to ensure organisations are aware of their responsibilities regarding allegations against staff.

Substance Misuse Procedures

The new procedures are being developed and will be available on the website. The procedures are the first in Wakefield to combine procedures for Child Protection and the Child Well Being Model. They include guidance on thresholds for intervention and checklists to assist in the assessment of risk. A screening (or assessment) tool has been developed to assist professionals in assessing a young person's level of substance misuse and when to refer to Turning Point. This will also be available on the website.

Turning Point Contact Details:

Adult Treatment Services 01924 377704

Rebound (Young Peoples Service) 01924 211113

Private Fostering

A private fostering arrangement is essentially one that is made privately (that is to say without the involvement of a local authority) for the care of a child under the age of 16 (under 18, if disabled) by someone other than a parent or close relative for 28 days or more.



Privately fostered children are a diverse and sometimes vulnerable group. Under the Children Act 1989, private foster carers and those with parental responsibility are required to notify the local authority of their intention to privately foster or to have a child privately fostered, or where a child is privately fostered in an emergency.

NB - Teachers, health and other professionals should notify the local authority of private fostering arrangements that come to their attention.

From July 2005 the Children (Private Arrangements for Fostering) Regulations 2005 require local authorities to satisfy themselves of the suitability of a proposed arrangement **before** it commences (where advance notice is given). The new LSCBs have been charged with the responsibility of ensuring that professionals and the general public are aware of their responsibilities regarding private fostering.

West Yorkshire Procedures

The WDSCB has entered into an arrangement with our colleagues across West Yorkshire to develop one set of safeguarding procedures. Currently, each of the West Yorkshire authorities, made-up of

Children in Hospital

When children are in hospital, this should not in itself jeopardise the welfare of the child or young person further. The National Service Framework requires hospitals to ensure that their facilities are secure and regularly reviewed. There should be policies relating to breaches of security.

Children should not be cared for on an adult ward. Hospitals should be child friendly, safe and healthy places for children.

Additionally, Section 85 of the Children Act 1989 requires Health to notify the 'responsible authority' – i.e. the local authority for the area where the child is ordinarily resident or where the child is accommodated if this is unclear, when a child has been or will be accommodated by Health for three months or more (for example in hospital). The local authority will then undertake a Core Assessment under the framework for the Assessment of Children and their Families (DOH 2000) to decide whether services are required under the Children Act 1989.

Wakefield, Leeds, Bradford, Kirklees and Calderdale, have their own Child Protection procedures. This means that agencies which work across geographical boundaries, such as West Yorkshire Police, West Yorkshire Probation, West Yorkshire Ambulance Service, are working to five sets of procedures. Developing one set of procedures is seen as a major step forward. Currently only four of the local authorities are signed up to the process. It is hoped that Bradford will come on board soon.

The new procedures will be designed to be electronically accessed and it is not envisaged that paper versions will be made available.

High Court Ruling Fabricated Illness

A case reviewed at High Court found numerous failings by social workers and magistrates. Particular lessons for us are:

- 1 Always seek medical view in cases where Fabricated Illness is a factor.
- 2 When seeking an Emergency Protection Order, minutes of Child Protection Case Conferences must be made available to the bench.

Any queries raised by the newsletter should be directed to WDSCB@wakefield.gov.uk

Training

The new WDSCB Training programme for 2007 - 8 is now available on the WDSCB website. Please note no hard copies of this document will be sent out. This year for the first time the programme incorporates training offered under the Child Well-being Model.

Due to the continued need, and very positive evaluation of the Sexual Exploitation course this course has been included in this year's training plan.

E-Learning

The WDSCB has joined with a number of other LSCBs and the private training company Virtual College to develop the e-Academy Advisory Panel. The role of the group is to share knowledge and expertise in order to produce e-learning packages around safeguarding children. The first module is a basic child protection module and is available for members of the WDSCB. Please contact your designated child protection professional for information on how to access this module.

Future modules hoped to be developed are Domestic Abuse and the Common Assessment Framework.

Neglect

27 November 2006

A one day neglect course was run this year to raise the profile of neglect and assist workers in understanding thresholds and assessing risk. The course was well evaluated. It is envisaged that a similar course will be run again during the coming year.

Attendance on courses

I am pleased to say that attendance on all courses has improved on last year's figures. Thank you to everyone for ensuring places (and therefore resources) have not been wasted.

Core Group Training

Two one-day courses on Core Groups and Child Protection Plans were run in July. These received very mixed reviews. This is an important aspect of CP practice. As our Performance Management report shows, it continues to be an area for concern.

To this end, a new course will be commissioned by an independent trainer.

Sexual Exploitation Procedures

These procedures have been updated to reflect the new wording in Working Together regarding sexually active children under the age of 13 years. These are available on the website.

Many thanks to Catherine Hall for her contribution to this newsletter.

If any one has any comments, articles or letters for inclusion in the next newsletter please contact us by e-mail at: WDSCB@wakefield.gov.uk

Alternatively you can contact:

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Or for more information visit our website:

<http://www.wakefield.gov.uk/HealthAndSocialCare/>

