

safeguarding and integrated working

"The support and protection of children cannot be achieved by a single agency. Every service has to play its part. All staff must have placed upon them the clear expectation that their primary responsibility is to the child and his or her family".

(Lord Laming in the Victoria Climbié Inquiry Report, January 2003).

What is safeguarding?

Safeguarding is about keeping children safe from harm and abuse. This means keeping children safe from accidents, crime and bullying and actively promoting their well-being in a healthy, safe and supportive environment.

Safeguarding is an important part of integrated working. When professionals work together in an integrated way, they put the child at the centre of all activities to help identify their holistic needs earlier to improve their life outcomes. It is important to see safeguarding as part of a continuum, where prevention and early intervention can help children and families get back on track and avoid problems turning into a crisis.

Background

Following Lord Laming's report into the death of Victoria Climbié, the subsequent publication of *Every Child Matters* and the Children Act (2004), integrated working across services has become integral in ensuring that children are safe and protected.

Every area now has a Children's Trust that oversees and co-ordinates services for children and their families and is responsible for improving the safety and well-being of all children and young people within their local area.

The government focus on safeguarding continues in the wake of the Baby P enquiry. Children's Secretary Ed Balls has recently announced that Lord Laming will review child protection systems and report in early 2009 and that the government will legislate to further strengthen Children's Trusts in 2008-09 (November 2008).

What is the difference between safeguarding and child protection?

Safeguarding means proactively seeking to involve the whole community in keeping children safe and promoting their welfare. Child protection is a central part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. It is the process of protecting individual children identified as either suffering or at risk of suffering significant harm as a result of abuse or neglect.

Who is responsible for safeguarding children and young people?

Every adult who works with a child or young person has a duty to safeguard and promote their welfare. Safeguarding is one of the six strands of the Common Core, which sets out the basic skills and knowledge needed by all the people who work, and volunteer, with children, young people and families.

www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/common-core.

Why should you get involved in safeguarding and why is your view important?

Everyone's opinion is important and everyone has a role in safeguarding children and young people. The most critical factor to consider is what is in the best interests of the child. Unfortunately, we know from evidence that practitioners have sometimes refrained from voicing their concerns when these have been challenged by others considered to be better qualified or who have more authority. Where there are disagreements these should be brought to the attention of your own line management.

Why is good record keeping important?

Clear and accurate records are essential to track an agency or practitioner's involvement with a child/family and to ensure sound decision making. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children often requires information to be shared between agencies supporting the child. By doing this, agencies can collaborate to make interventions evidence-based and effective.

The new HM Government advice on *Information Sharing: Guidance for practitioners and managers* aims to support good practice in information sharing by offering clarity on when and how information can be shared legally and professionally to help safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people.

www.ecm.gov.uk/informationsharing

What are Local Safeguarding Children Boards?

The Children Act (2004) requires each local authority to have a Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB). These boards replaced the Area Child Protection Committees. Their role is to plan, co-ordinate and monitor the effectiveness of relevant organisations in how they keep children safe and promote their well-being, in their locality.

LSCB duties include:

- developing policy and procedures for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the area
- training people who work with children or in services affecting the safety and welfare of children
- investigation of allegations concerning people working with children
- monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of what is done by local authority and board partners to safeguard and promote the welfare of children
- carrying out reviews of cases where children have been seriously injured or died

How do LSCBs link to Children's Trusts?

Children's Trusts have a wider role than LSCBs in planning and overseeing the work of key agencies involved in delivering services to children and young people in their area. LSCBs will feed into Children's Trust arrangements through the Children and Young People's Plan and contribute to the wider goals of improving the well-being of all children.

Where can I find more information?

Local authorities, with their Children's Trust partners and LSCBs, are responsible for ensuring that practitioners have access to training and development to help them safeguard and promote the welfare of children effectively. This is best achieved by a combination of single agency and inter-agency training.

For more information please refer to the *What to Do If You Are Worried A Child Is Being Abused* for a step-by-step guide on what you should do if you have concerns about a child.

www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/resources-and-practice/IG00182

Alternatively visit your local authority website for information on your LSCB.

This factsheet is one of a series of integrated working factsheets. For more resources and information, visit: www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/integrated-working