



HM Government

Changes to statutory guidance: Working Together to Safeguard Children

Government consultation

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Respond by: 6 September 2023

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Introduction

This consultation seeks views on *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023*, the revised statutory guidance which sets out what is expected of agencies, organisations and individuals to safeguard and promote the welfare of children¹ in their area. *Working Together* was last substantively updated in 2018, with a limited factual update in 2020.

Alongside legislation², *Working Together* sets out expectations for the system that provides help, support and protection for children and their families, giving practitioners clarity about what is required of them individually and how they need to work in partnership with each other to deliver effective services. *Working Together* applies at every level from senior leaders to those in direct practice with families and across all agencies and organisations that come into contact with children.

In February 2023, Government published *Stable Homes, Built on Love*³, which responded to the recommendations of the Independent Review of Children’s Social Care (the Care Review), the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel’s report ‘*Child Protection in England*’ (the National Panel Review) and the Competition and Markets Authority’s study of children’s social care⁴. In this strategy, government set out an ambitious plan to transform children’s social care, committing to support every child to grow up in a safe, stable and loving home. For most children this means growing up within their family. Where families do face challenges, meaningful and effective help from children’s social care and its partner agencies should be available, and where children need protection from harm from both inside and outside the home, there should be strong and effective multi-agency child protection arrangements in place. Updating *Working Together* is central to delivering on the first phase of this transformation journey, implementing strengthened multi-agency working across the whole system of help, support and protection for children and their families, re-balancing the system towards help at an early point and ensuring strong, effective and consistent child protection practice.

Alongside *Stable Homes, Built on Love*, government published the draft *Children’s Social Care National Framework*. This set expectations for practice for leaders and practitioners in local authorities. *Working Together* provides the expectations for all agencies and disciplines who have role in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of

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The document uses the term children to mean any individual up to the age of 18 years.

² Guidance is underpinned by the [Children Act 1989](#) (and associated Regulations) and the [Children Act 2004](#) (and Regulations), as amended by the [Children and Social Work Act 2017](#), which placed new duties on key agencies to make arrangements to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children locally.

³ [Children’s social care stable homes built on love consultation](#).

⁴ [The Independent Review of Children’s Social Care \(May 2022\)](#); [Child Protection in England: National review into the murders of Arthur Labinjo-Hughes and Star Hobson \(May 2022\)](#); [Competition and Markets Authority’s Children’s Social Care market study 2022](#).

children. Both of these will be revised following consultation and published together at the end of this year.

In parallel to this revision of *Working Together*, we are also launching the *Families First for Children Pathfinder*⁵, working with a small number of local areas over the next two years to implement the new Family Help reforms alongside reforms to child protection and family networks. The Pathfinders include multi-agency partners and will be important in shaping how the future system develops and how this informs revisions to the statutory framework. As part of the reform programme, we have made a commitment to update *Working Together* on an annual cycle to reflect emerging good practice.

Who this is for

Children⁶, particularly children with special educational needs or a disability, and children who have or have previously had a social worker, family support worker or personal adviser.

Parents and carers of children, including kinship carers, adoptive parents and foster carers. Family and friends of children who have or have had a social worker, family support worker or personal adviser.

Those who work in the three statutory safeguarding partners:

Local authority elected leaders and Chief Executives and Directors of Children's Services family hub, family support and early help workers; housing and tenancy officers; multi-disciplinary practitioners commissioned or employed by the local authority, e.g. public health or domestic abuse practitioners; providers of care services including residential children's home workers; and social workers and others in children and adult social care.

Health practitioners, commissioners and providers, including leaders of Integrated Care Boards (ICBs), named and designated professionals, paediatricians, GPs, nurses, midwives, health visitors and school nurses, speech and language therapists, psychiatrists, psychologists, adult and child mental health workers

Police and Crime Commissioners, police officers and support staff and those working in Violence Reduction Units.

⁵ [Children's social care stable homes built on love consultation.](#)

⁶ In this document, a child is defined as anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. 'Children' therefore means 'children and young people' throughout.

Others who are essential to children's safety and welfare:

- those who work in education and childcare including Virtual School Heads, Multi-Academy Trust leaders, school and college leaders, teachers, Designated Teachers for Looked-After and Previously Looked-After Children, Designated Safeguarding Leads, Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators and school governors
- those who work in the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service
- those who work in the probation service; the judiciary; youth offending teams
- youth workers and voluntary, community and charity workers

Issue date

The consultation was issued on 21 June 2023.

Enquiries

If your enquiry is related to the policy content of the consultation you can email:

WorkingTogether2023.consultation@education.gov.uk

If your enquiry is related to the DfE e-consultation website or the consultation process in general, you can contact the DfE Ministerial and Public Communications Division by email: Consultations.Coordinator@education.gov.uk or by telephone on 0370 000 2288 or via the [DfE Contact us page](#).

Additional copies

Additional copies are available electronically and can be downloaded from [GOV.UK DfE consultations](#).

The response

The results of the consultation and the department's response will be [published on GOV.UK](#) in Autumn 2023.

About this consultation

Working Together statutory guidance is clear that everyone who comes into contact with children and families has a role to play in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. Children who need help and protection deserve high quality and effective support as soon as a need is identified, and in every local area in England there is already a system in which agencies work together to respond to the needs of children and families. These systems are most effective when every individual, at every level and in every organisation, is clear about what is required of them and how they work in partnership with others to deliver the best outcomes for children, including making sure they are safe from harm.

What we are consulting on now

In this consultation, we are seeking views on how best to strengthen effective multi-agency help, support, safeguarding and child protection across the system. We are consulting on our revisions that keep a child-centred approach in a whole family focus and ensure that every individual and agency understands their role and is playing their part in delivering effective multi-agency support, intervention and protection. Proposed changes strengthen the guidance in five key areas:

- A shared endeavour introduces expectations for effective multi-agency working and practice principles for working with parents and carers.
- Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements clarifies roles and responsibilities, introduces a partnership chair and deepens accountability and transparency.
- Help and support for children and their families includes stronger expectations on Early Help and family networks, clarifies permissions on working with children under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 and emphasises support for disabled children.
- Decisive multi-agency child protection introduces new national multi-agency child protection standards for practitioners and approaches to harm outside the home.
- Learning from serious child safeguarding incidents.

There are 28 questions across the five consultation areas, 1 on impact assessment and 6 questions about you. Questions are included in the narrative for context and then summarised in Annex A as a single list. The draft guidance is published as a separate document, and we encourage you to read this alongside this consultation. You do not have to respond to every question to submit a response, if you have a particular area of interest then you can respond on only these proposals.

We are also making a series of technical and factual changes that either clarify existing guidance or correct factual inaccuracies. These updates are set out in Annex B for information. We are not consulting on these changes.

Following the consultation, we will update and publish the revised guidance as *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023*, alongside the government response setting out our rationale for changes.

What we will consult on in the future

In addition to the *Families First for Children Pathfinders*, there is a great deal of other activity that we will want to reflect in future revisions of *Working Together*. This includes the government responses to critical reviews such as the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel's *Safeguarding children with disabilities and complex health needs in residential settings*⁷ and the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse as well as an independent evaluation of Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hubs and the Law Commission's review of legislation for disabled children.

The Secretary of State for Education will report to Parliament later this summer on the government's policy on information sharing in child safeguarding. Government will also be consulting on updating the non-statutory information sharing advice for practitioners this summer. The purpose of this advice is to provide a straightforward guide to practitioners on the core principles of timely and effective information sharing, that can be applied to day-to-day decision making. We are therefore not updating or consulting on the information sharing section in *Working Together* in this consultation but will do so in the future.

Respond online

To help us analyse the responses please use the online system wherever possible. Visit DfE consultations on GOV.UK to submit your response.

Other ways to respond

If for exceptional reasons, you are unable to use the online system, for example because you use specialist accessibility software that is not compatible with the system, you may request and complete a word document version of the form.

⁷ [Safeguarding children with disabilities in residential settings](#)

By email

WorkingTogether2023.consultation@education.gov.uk

By post

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Families Group
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Sanctuary Buildings
Great Smith Street
London
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Deadline

The consultation closes on 06 September 2023.

Section 1: A shared endeavour

This section includes propositions on:

- Renaming the statutory guidance to reflect the help and support that is provided to families.
- Introducing practice principles for working with parents and carers.
- Introducing expectations for effective multi-agency working at a strategic, management and direct practice level.

Renaming Working Together to recognise the importance of help for families and protection for children

We are proposing renaming the statutory guidance to *Working Together to Safeguard Children: a guide to multi-agency working to help, safeguard, protect and promote the welfare of children*. The intention is to centre the importance of providing help for parents and families, and the need for decisive action when children need protection from harm, alongside the Children Act 1989 duties on all individuals, organisations and agencies to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Consultation question 7

Do you agree that we should change the title of Working Together to reflect help and protection for children and families?

Principles for working with parents and carers

All parents can face challenges. Supporting parents at the right time is vital, whether through schools, providing help through local or voluntary organisations or when there are more significant needs that require targeted or intensive support and intervention. It is important that parents receive the right support to safely care for their child or prevent the situation from getting worse.

Parents and carers should be given the right information, at the right time and be supported to understand what help and support is on offer. Making sure parents and carers know what is expected of them and what to expect from services will mean they have the best chance of making changes and improving outcomes for their children. This will also support practitioners to make fair and accurate decisions about whether they can safely care for their children. The aim is for practitioners and parents to develop effective relationships where there is both support and challenge when improvements are needed. Strengthening how family networks are used also offers the

potential for better support for parents. Families can often offer help and support to take action to support the safety and wellbeing of the child and reduce the need for child protection.

Poor parental engagement is also a key practice theme identified in the analysis of serious incidents⁸. There is an urgent need to improve how the system engages and responds to fathers and men in a caring role⁹. Through revising *Working Together*, we want to strengthen support and information for parents and carers so that they are helped to engage and feel heard within the child protection process, have clarity about what is expected, and feel supported about what change is needed to safely care for their children.

Alongside the changes to *Working Together*, our *Families First for Children Pathfinder* will test approaches to providing parental representation in child protection. We will take the learning from the Pathfinder to update future revisions of *Working Together*.

Proposed revised text

See Chapter 1, pages 14-15 of the draft statutory guidance, '*Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023*'.

We have drafted clear, explicit expectations for how all agencies and practitioners should work with parents and carers so that they understand what is happening and can engage with services in a meaningful way. These new principles are drawn from good practice that already exists in local areas. Information about key decision-making points will support parents to understand the change that is expected to keep their child safe.

The four principles for working with parents are:

1. Effective partnership working with parents and carers happens when practitioners build positive, trusting and co-operative relationships.
2. Language should be respectful, clear and not punitive.
3. Practitioners enable parents and carers to participate in decision-making.
4. Practitioners involve parents, families and local communities in designing processes that affect them.

⁸ [Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel.](#)

⁹ [Safeguarding children under 1 year old from non-accidental injury.](#)

Consultation question 8

To what extent do you agree that the four principles are the right ones to drive better practice and engagement with parents and carers?

Expectations for multi-agency working

Multi-agency and multi-disciplinary¹⁰ working is key to help, support and protect children. The lives of children and families are complex, requiring different agencies to work together and provide a holistic offer of support for those who need it. When it comes to keeping children safe, no individual service or practitioner has all the knowledge, information or expertise needed to make the right decisions.

Numerous reviews, including those from the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel, have identified the need for much improved multi-agency working with more robust critical thinking within and between agencies. We have developed expectations to underpin this multi-agency working in the following areas:

- collaboration
- learning
- resourcing
- inclusion
- mutual challenge

They apply to all agencies and practitioners involved in safeguarding and protecting children. Specifically, these include police, local authorities, health services, probation, youth offending service, education and childcare settings, and voluntary and third sector organisations. The term practitioners used here refers to all those working in these services and settings. They are structured at three levels: strategic leaders, senior and middle managers and direct practice.

¹⁰

We define multi-agency working as: “work across organisations to meet children’s needs including effective information sharing, joint decision-making and co-ordinated interventions”. Multi-agency working in safeguarding is underpinned by the 2004 Children Act that places statutory safeguarding duties on the local authority, police and health.

We define multi-disciplinary working as: “a range of practitioners and professionals from different backgrounds working together as a team to enable the best outcomes for children”. Multi-disciplinary can be across organisations and/or within organisations.

Proposed revised text

See Chapter 1, pages 15-17 of the draft statutory guidance, '*Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023*'.

Consultation question 9

To what extent do you think the new expectations for multi-agency working will support leaders and practitioners to work together more effectively and improve outcomes for children and their families?

Consultation question 10

Is there anything else you want to comment on in *A Shared Endeavour*? In your feedback, please indicate what your comment relates to i.e., renaming *Working Together*, principles for working with parents or carers or multi-agency expectations.

Section 2: Multi-agency safeguarding arrangements

This section includes propositions on:

- clarifying roles and responsibilities, including distinguishing between lead safeguarding partners and their delegates
- introducing a partnership chair
- role of relevant agencies and education providers
- role of voluntary, charity, social enterprise (VCSE) organisations and sports clubs
- accountability and transparency

Protecting children from abuse and neglect is a multi-agency endeavour and one which requires join up and cooperation at all levels. Responsibility for this join up rests locally with the three statutory safeguarding partners who are set out in legislation as: Local Authorities, Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) and Chief Officers of the Police. It is their role to ensure the proper involvement of and oversight by all agencies – agreeing shared priorities, establishing systems and processes for working together and securing the right resources to undertake the work. Ensuring strong working relationships and contributions at the right level from these three partners is the first building block for wider reforms in family help and child protection, underpinned by a whole system, whole family approach.

Our ambition is to strengthen local multi-agency arrangements through this update to *Working Together*. We must keep the shared duties on partners but have clearer expectations for how multi-agency arrangements are properly resourced, provide strategic oversight of the system and delegate operational delivery. As well as improved front-line practice, we need greater collaboration and join up across leadership in the police, health, local authorities, and other relevant organisations. System leaders need to be clear on their roles and responsibilities as safeguarding partners to ensure that they work together more effectively. There needs to be increased transparency and accountability of arrangements to make them more robust and effective. Alongside this, education leaders should also have greater involvement in local multi-agency arrangements to reflect the significant role that schools, colleges, early years and other education providers play in children's lives.

Whilst the Care Review and the National Panel Review agreed with changes introduced in 2017, placing a shared and equal duty on the three statutory safeguarding partners, they recognised that further work was needed to strengthen this relationship. In particular, roles and responsibilities are still unclear and often delegated too far, making it difficult to make strategic decisions. There is also limited oversight of performance and learning with partners not receiving the right data, information and practice insight to

assure performance at a strategic level, and a lack of accountability, especially around funding and resource decisions.

We are proposing the following changes:

- providing **greater clarity on the expectations on safeguarding partners** including distinguishing between those responsible for setting the vision and priorities (Lead Safeguarding Partners) and those leading delivery of arrangements (Delegate Safeguarding Partners) and outlining the joint functions as strategic leaders for the first time.
- introducing the role of **partnership chair** from amongst the delegated safeguarding partner group, to be agreed by all three agencies. It is envisaged that this individual will replace the need for an independent chair and allow a single point of escalation for risks and issues to the lead safeguarding partners.
- changing wording to **emphasise the role of education** in safeguarding arrangements, reflecting the importance they play in children's lives and the value in involving them in strategic decision-making. Strengthening *Working Together* is the first step before exploring whether further legislative changes are needed.
- providing more detail on key functions such as **independent scrutiny, funding arrangements, dispute resolution and reporting**; introducing for the first time a set date by which local areas should submit their yearly reports to encourage greater transparency and compliance.

Proposed revised text

See Chapter 2, pages 18 - 34 of the draft statutory guidance, '*Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023*'.

Clarifying roles and responsibilities of lead and delegated safeguarding partners

Changes in paragraphs 24 - 42 are intended to ensure that accountability for multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, including oversight of learning from serious child safeguarding cases is held at the highest level. This was the intention of the 2017 reforms but, as outlined in the Care Review, in many safeguarding arrangements, attendees do not have the authority to speak on behalf of their agencies or agree resources (funding or otherwise) to implement the changes needed to deliver effective partnerships.

We have therefore introduced a distinction between those who are responsible for providing senior, strategic leadership (Lead Safeguarding Partners - LSPs) and those responsible for leading operational delivery (Delegated Safeguarding Partners - DSPs) including the functions we expect to be undertaken at each level.

We have purposefully not defined the way in which, and how often, these two groups should convene, and instead outlined the joint core functions we expect them to undertake to allow for local area flexibility. For example, some areas may decide for their LSPs to meet to discuss strategic issues at a regional level, whilst operational level conversations still happen as place based. It is important that the DSP is at a sufficiently senior level to be able to deliver those core functions; however, we recognise that geographical footprint and local need will result in some local variation and therefore we have not specifically defined who should undertake this role. We nonetheless expect that person to be at Director or Chief Officer level.

Consultation question 11

To what extent do you agree that these proposed changes provide greater clarity on what the expectations are of safeguarding partners?

Consultation question 12

To what extent do you agree with the joint functions listed for Lead Safeguarding Partners and Delegated Safeguarding Partners?

Consultation question 13

In your local area, how would delegation from the lead safeguarding partner to delegated safeguarding partner be interpreted and delivered in practice?

Introducing a partnership chair

Paragraphs 48 - 50 outline the new role of the partnership chair. This has been included in direct response to the recommendation within the Care Review that the Director of Children's Services should be the primary interface between strategic (lead) and operational (delegate) leaders to facilitate effective multi-agency working. Although we agree that there should be a conduit between the LSPs and their delegates, providing feedback and escalating risks and issues as necessary, we want to ensure that there is collective agreement from the statutory partners on who takes on this role. We have therefore outlined that this individual is mutually appointed by the LSPs and reviewed regularly with any changes outlined in published arrangements.

We envisage this role will replace the need for an independent chair, which is still held in some local areas, but that partnerships will continue to be supported by the business office and independent scrutineer/scrutiny arrangements. The introduction of partnership chair should strengthen lines of accountability within local arrangements and engagement from safeguarding partners.

Consultation question 14

To what extent do you agree that having a mutually agreed representative from a safeguarding partner agency will increase ownership and accountability of partners?

Role of relevant agencies and education providers

Paragraphs 51 – 60 and 61 – 66 make changes to the sections on relevant agencies and education providers to clarify their roles and responsibilities in local safeguarding arrangements. As outlined in *Stable Homes, Built on Love* we agree that the education sector has an important part to play in children’s lives and it is our expectation that all education settings are involved in local safeguarding arrangements. This wording is intended to outline this expectation and encourage safeguarding partners to think innovatively about how they bring education to strategic discussions. In longer time we will be consulting on how and whether we can give education a more formal role as the fourth partner and would be happy to hear suggestions from local areas.

Consultation question 15

This first phase is about strengthening the role of education as a Relevant Agency in multi-agency safeguarding arrangements through an update to *Working Together*.

To what extent do you agree that these proposed changes will strengthen the role of education in multi-agency safeguarding arrangements?

Consultation question 16

Separately, we will explore whether legislative changes are needed and will consult on how and whether to make education a fourth safeguarding partner. We will be using the response to this consultation to build our evidence base.

To what extent do you agree that making education a statutory safeguarding partner is the only way to secure the right level of collaboration in multi-agency arrangements?

Role of voluntary, charity, social enterprise (VCSE) organisations and sports clubs

Many VCSE and sports clubs provide education and activities for children; and the staff and volunteers in these settings are often seen as trusted and influential adults by the children they work with. They may be the first adult that a child reports abuse to, and therefore have an important role to play in protecting them from harm. Paragraphs 67 - 68 make changes to the section on relevant agencies to highlight the importance of considering naming and engaging these organisations in published local arrangements if they are not already.

The report on [Oversight of out-of-school settings: lessons learnt from the DfE funded pilot](#), which was published in November 2022, highlighted that there are some gaps in local and national oversight of charities, sports and leisure clubs, and other activities for children, and that safeguarding practice can be inconsistent across this broad sector. Some out-of-school settings are charities or persons involved in the provision of sport/leisure, and so naming these organisations in local arrangements could improve local oversight and engagement and help drive consistent safeguarding practice.

Consultation question 17

Do you agree the proposed changes will encourage more engagement with VCSE and sports clubs as part of multi-agency safeguarding arrangements?

Accountability and transparency

Paragraphs 69 - 85 strengthen the wording on accountability by clarifying expectations around information sharing, independent scrutiny, funding and reporting. These changes aim to create more robust and effective systems of accountability in local arrangements, so that it is clear how all organisations make a difference and contribute to partnerships. This includes clarifying what is needed in published strategic plans and yearly reports, and setting a date by which yearly reports should be submitted to encourage greater consistency and transparency across local areas.

On funding, we have provided greater detail in line with what is achievable given the funding arrangements of each sector. We have provided examples of the types of costs that exist in multi-agency arrangements and placed greater emphasis on the review and

reporting of finances. This includes outlining the individual contributions of safeguarding partners to be transparent to children and families locally.

Consultation question 18

To what extent do you agree that these proposed changes will make multi-agency arrangements more accountable and transparent?

Consultation question 19

Is there anything else you want to comment on in *Multi-agency safeguarding arrangements*? In your feedback, please indicate what your comment relates to i.e. roles and responsibilities, partnership chair, relevant agencies, VCSE, accountability

Section 3: Help and support for children and their families

This section includes propositions on:

- Early Help
- Family Networks
- Working with children under section 17 of the Children Act 1989
- Support for disabled children and families
- Support for children in mother and baby units
- Protecting children from prisoners who present an ongoing risk from within custody or whilst on probation

Early help

Our ambition is to provide families with the right support at the right time. While many families have good experiences, there is too much variation in the amount and quality of support families receive in what is currently known as the early help system. It has been estimated that early help services are provided to less than 1% of children in some areas and over 15% in others. Eligibility for help also varies across the country¹¹. We have drawn on learning and best practice from local areas that already have mature early help services and existing programmes. For example, we have learned from the Supporting Families Programme¹², the Strengthening Families and Protecting Children Programme¹³, and work by many local areas such as Camden and Lancashire.

The *Families First for Children Pathfinder* will test new approaches to delivering Family Help. It will be important to test how to implement Family Help effectively before revising the statutory guidance to set out the expectations for moving from the current system of early help to Family Help. The changes we are proposing now are intended to lay the foundations for this future system.

¹¹ This estimate is based on a Freedom of Information request sent to 150 upper-tier local authorities, which requested data on early help provision between 2015-16 and 2019-20. Responses were received from 131 local authorities to the request, of which 105 local authorities provided some of the requested data in a useable format (Action for Children (2022))
[Too Little Too Late Report Final.pdf \(actionforchildren.org.uk\)](#).

¹² [Supporting Families](#)

¹³ [Strengthening families, protecting children \(SFPC\) programme](#)

Proposed revised text

See Chapter 3, paragraphs 101-107 of the draft statutory guidance, '*Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023*'.

We have emphasised the focus on families for improving the outcomes of children. Practitioners should consider the needs of all members of the family as individuals and how their needs impact on one another. Our changes include expanding on definitions and examples of whole family working, ensuring they align with other key guidance including the Early Help System Guide¹⁴.

To fulfil our ambition of families receiving tailored support, at the right time, we have extended the range of risk factors that practitioners should be particularly aware of in the *Identifying children and families who would benefit from help* section. While not all children and young people who come under these categories are in need of early help services, these risk factors may be an indicator that a family needs additional support.

We also want to place greater emphasis on the contribution and support of education and childcare settings in keeping children safe. We have included a dedicated section on the role of education and childcare settings which draws together key considerations for practitioners when identifying a child who may need early help support such as attendance, behaviour and mental health.

Consultation question 20

To what extent do you agree that these changes will strengthen whole family working and tailored support for children and families ahead of wider system reforms?

Family networks

These updates to *Working Together* are intended to help everyone who works with children and families to have a renewed focus on family-led solutions from within their 'family network' first, prioritising a child's right to family life wherever this is possible. We are clarifying that a family network can be a blood-relative, or a non-related connected-person, such as a family friend or neighbour.

Working with family networks is already encouraged across support and services. *Working Together 2018* already sets out that a child protection plan should support the

¹⁴ [Early Help System Guide](#)

family and wider family members to safeguard and promote the welfare of their child, provided it is in their best interests.

Proposed revised text

See Chapter 3, paragraphs 119, 161, 164 and 175, and *Child protection review conference* on page 86 of the draft statutory guidance, '*Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023*'.

In this update to *Working Together*, we are being more specific about how and when family networks should be involved and supported throughout a family's involvement with children's social care. We want practitioners to work with families at the earliest point. We have replaced the term "wider family" with "family network" to reflect that someone's 'family' can include people who are not related to them. Practitioners work with families in different ways to provide help and support to keep children safe within their family. We are encouraging practitioners to consider engaging the family network at every stage, ensuring that families feel involved in the decisions made about safety and wellbeing of the child. In exceptional circumstances, local authorities offer financial support to parents and families under section 17 of the Children Act 1989. In this update of *Working Together*, we propose local authorities consider the family network for this support where this could help to overcome barriers.

One tried and tested way of working with families is through family group conferences¹⁵, a family-led meeting that allows a family network to come together and offer practical support to parents while keeping the child safe. A 2023 Foundations (What Works Centre for Children and Families) randomised controlled trial¹⁶ found that families who received a family group conference at pre-proceedings had a reduced likelihood (by 8.6 percentage points) of being in care 12 months following the pre-proceedings letter. In this update of *Working Together*, we have provided links to relevant guidance and legislation with more information about how to run family group conferences, emphasising that engaging families is important at every stage of offering help, support and protection. We have also outlined the core components of family group conferences: that they are a family-led forum, where a family network has all the resources, adequate preparation, relevant information, a safe and appropriate environment, and 'private family time' to make a plan to respond to concerns about a child's safety or wellbeing.

¹⁵ Family group conferences are a forum to empower family networks to create a family plan. DfE does not prescribe a specific model. See further information in the glossary.

¹⁶ [Foundations](#) (What Works Centre for Children and Families).

Consultation question 21

Do you agree that the features outlined for Family Group Conferences will improve family network engagement in decision making and supporting children?

Support under section 17 of the Children Act 1989

‘Child in need’ refers to the statutory support and services provided under section 17 of the Children Act 1989 for a child who is unlikely to reach or maintain a satisfactory level of health or development, or their health or development will be significantly impaired without the provision of children’s social care services, or the child is disabled¹⁷.

Working Together sets out the statutory responsibilities of local authorities under section 17 and the specific activity that should be carried out to manage assessment, planning and review of the support and services for these children and their families.

In *Stable Homes, Built on Love* we committed to bringing together support provided in “targeted early help”¹⁸ with support provided under section 17 to form a new single offer of Family Help. As set out above, we will test these reforms in the *Families First for Children Pathfinder* including who may be the most appropriate lead practitioners for children and families in this new offer of family help.

The duty to provide support under Section 17 is on the local authority and the primary legislation does not specify which professionals or practitioners should carry out specific functions under this duty. The duty was designed to be flexible, enabling local authorities to determine both how they provide this help and who they determine to be in need of support¹⁹. The duty also intended to promote children’s welfare, alongside safeguarding, but has predominantly been focused on those with the highest levels of need. We are taking the opportunity in this update of *Working Together* to re-clarify that the primary legislation permits a range of practitioners to be the lead practitioner for the family and that children and families supported under Section 17 should be along a continuum with a gradient of needs. We believe this will help to improve the quality of support that children and families receive, strengthen the relationship between families and a lead practitioner (who may or may not be a social worker) and help reduce risk of harm. However, we recognise that there are concerns with this approach, especially if cases are allocated, not based on who the most appropriate lead practitioner would be

¹⁷ [Children Act 1989, section 17.](#)

¹⁸ Targeted early help is a service provided to children and families who are identified by practitioners to have multiple or complex needs, or whose circumstances might make them more vulnerable. It is a voluntary service that provides support before statutory intervention is needed and takes a casework approach. A lead practitioner coordinates a whole family assessment to better understand the family’s needs and identify the most appropriate support for the child, young person or family.

¹⁹ [The independent review of children’s social care \(2022\) Final report](#) [Children Act 1989 Section 17.](#)

but driven by resources. This is why we are also making clear that a social work, qualified practice supervisor or manager must make key decisions and that the lead practitioner should always be a social worker for child protection enquiries. Furthermore, those local authorities who do not want to pursue using a wider range of practitioners working on Section 17 cases do not need to – this just gives those areas permission to use non-social worker practitioners where they have the knowledge, skills and capacity commensurate with the level of need.

Proposed revised text

See Chapter 3, section 2 and section 3 of the draft statutory guidance, '*Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023*'.

We know that some areas already have relatively fluid structures and working arrangements reflecting the dynamic and changing levels of a child's needs, including their likelihood of experiencing significant harm. In these arrangements, a range of practitioners might be involved in supporting the family – including but not limited to social workers. We know there are areas where family support workers and youth workers, for example, are involved in section 17 work with social worker oversight and others where social workers do all, or most of the direct work, with these families.

In this revision of *Working Together*, we are clarifying that a broader range of practitioners can lead the direct work with children under section 17, with social worker qualified practice supervisors and managers providing support and oversight for key decisions and activity. We want to ensure the right people, with the right knowledge, skills and relationships, provide families with support at the right time, whilst keeping children's safety and wellbeing at the centre of decision-making, planning and the provision of services. There are a range of practitioners who already work with these children including family support workers, drug and alcohol practitioners, domestic abuse workers, youth workers and others.

We propose replacing references to social workers in section 17 assessment, planning and review with the term 'lead practitioner' to indicate where a broader range of practitioners with the relevant skills, knowledge and capacity can undertake direct work with families, holding the primary relationship with the family and co-ordinating services.

We have clarified that when children are referred to children's social care and deemed to need support under section 17, social work qualified practice supervisors or managers should work with partners to agree to allocate a lead practitioner to work with the child and family. We would expect this decision to be taken in consultation with those already in the team around the child, where the child is known. Practice supervisors and managers will support the work of the lead practitioner, providing oversight for key decisions on the plan for support, approval of assessments and any review.

We are not proposing any changes where concerns are raised about a child experiencing actual or likely significant harm. Where enquiries are made under section 47 of the Children Act 1989, and a child protection plan is put in place, the lead practitioner should always be a social worker.

Consultation question 22

Do you agree that the proposed changes will help to improve the outcomes of children and their families who receive support under section 17 of the Children Act 1989?

Consultation question 23

Do the proposed provisions for the role of the social work qualified practice supervisor or manager ensure appropriate social work oversight?

Consultation question 24

In your opinion, are there practitioners who should not be lead practitioners? If yes, why?

Support for disabled children

We want a stronger focus on support and protection for disabled children in *Working Together*. This update represents the first step towards re-thinking how children's services can provide the best possible support to disabled children and their families. We have asked the Law Commission to review the patchwork of outdated legislation for disabled children and make recommendations to government on how this legislation could be simplified and streamlined. While we await the findings, we propose making changes to *Working Together* now, alongside ongoing reform implementation and testing across both the children's social care and the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities systems, to help us re-shape and improve the way children's services support disabled children and their families.

We want to support practitioners to consistently recognise there will be times when parents and carers need some practical, non-judgemental help and support for caring for their disabled child.

Proposed revised text

See Chapter 3, pages 57-58 of the draft statutory guidance, '*Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023*'.

We are proposing changes that aim to:

- clarify the role of children's social care in relation to disabled children and their families by stating that the role of children's services is to provide non-stigmatising help and support when needed
- strengthen the section on the assessment of disabled children and their carers by emphasising that the assessment should focus on achieving the best possible outcomes for the child, providing practical support and recognising any additional pressures facing the whole family
- make sure that disabled children are included and referenced where relevant and appropriate throughout the *Working Together*, for example where specific groups are listed as being eligible for support, so that their needs are fully recognised
- strengthening the language around the role of the Designated Social Care Officer (DSCO) to align with wider reforms to the SEND system²⁰

Consultation question 25

Do you agree with the proposed changes to strengthen assessment and support for disabled children?

Mother and baby units

There are six mother and baby units (MBUs) in England, 62 applications were made for placements in 2020-21. In 2019, Lord Farmer's review, *The Importance of Strengthening Female Offenders' Family and other Relationships to Prevent Reoffending and Reduce Intergenerational Crime*²¹, continued his work on the importance of family ties in improving outcomes for offenders, by looking at the issues for female offenders in the community and custody. In 2022, following the review, the Chief Social Worker for Children and Families carried out a case review of application decisions for MBUs in prison and the role of social work²². The review recommended that the mother's home authority should provide the Mother and Baby Unit Board with an assessment of suitability of a mother and baby placement and, in all cases, it should

²⁰ [Special Educational Needs and Disabilities \(SEND\) and Alternative Provision \(AP\) Improvement Plan: Right Support, Right Place, Right Time, March 2023.](#)

²¹ [Farmer Review \(2019\): The Importance of Strengthening Female Offenders' Family and other Relationships to Prevent Reoffending and Reduce Intergenerational Crime.](#)

²² [Applications to mother and baby units in prison: how decisions are made and the role of social work.](#)

be expected that a children's social care representative with responsibility for the case attend the Board.

In 2021, the Ministry of Justice introduced new guidance on the responsibilities of relevant agencies in the operation of MBUs. The guidance includes a requirement to have social work input in all MBU Board decisions.

Proposed revised text

See Chapter 3, page 61 of the draft statutory guidance, '*Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023*'.

We propose updating *Working Together* in response to the recommendations from the Chief Social Worker's review to clarify the role of children's social care in supporting babies to stay with their mothers, where the mother is serving a custodial sentence. *Working Together* will make clear that MBUs within the prison estate provide an opportunity for babies to remain with their mother in a safe setting, giving the chance for mother and child to bond and maintain a secure relationship.

Consultation question 26

Does the new information clarify the role of children's social care in the assessment of suitability and social work input for a mother and baby unit placement?

Prison and Probation Services

HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) have a role in working with children's services to protect children from prisoners who present an ongoing risk from within custody or whilst on probation. HMPPS have published guidance including the *HMPPS Child Safeguarding Policy Framework*²³ and the *Prison Public Protection Manual* which provides information about how they make safeguarding enquiries to local children's social care services and the risk assessment process for determining contact between prisoners or those on probation and children.

Proposed revised text

See Chapter 3, pages 62-63 of the draft statutory guidance, '*Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023*'.

²³ [The HMPPS Child Safeguarding Policy Framework](#).

In this update to *Working Together*, we are aligning the guidance on child safeguarding enquires and the child contact risk assessment process undertaken by prison and probation service staff with other existing guidance to ensure that all practitioners in children's social care understand the information they must provide and how to approach safeguarding for these children in partnership with others. We have included guidance on information sharing between agencies for the purposes of robust risk assessment, risk management and safe sentencing.

Consultation question 27

To what extent do you agree these changes will give practitioners across all agencies and organisations a clearer understanding of the work HMPPS do and the contribution HMPPS makes to keeping children safe?

Consultation question 28

Is there anything else you want to comment on in *Help and support for children and families*? In any feedback, please indicate what your comment relates to i.e. early help, family networks, section 17, support for disabled children, mother and baby units, Prison and Probation Services

Section 4: Decisive multi-agency child protection

This section includes propositions on:

- A sharp focus on child protection including introducing multi-agency child protection practitioner standards.
- Strengthening approaches to harm outside the home.

Our vision for child protection is an effective multi-agency system where practitioners across agencies have the highest levels of knowledge and skills, and work in a more integrated way across the full range of statutory child protection activities. The Children Act 1989 makes clear the duty on local authorities to make enquiries where there are concerns that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. It also makes clear the duty of certain agencies to cooperate in these enquiries to support children's wellbeing. This includes assessment and, where appropriate, strategy discussions, planning and review.

In this update of *Working Together*, we want to strengthen the expectations for multi-agency working in child protection activities and update guidance on multi-agency child protection planning, intervention and review in response to extra-familial harm and exploitation. We have proposed new principles for how all practitioners work with, engage, and support parents and carers (outlined in section 1), and have been clear that this includes where there are child protection concerns.

Our *Families First for Children Pathfinder* will test a new child protection lead practitioner role, which will establish co-working arrangements with family help workers in the new Family Help system, so that families experience a single response that provides both intensive support and a sharp child protection focus. The Pathfinder will also test how best to operationalise our vision of having dedicated and integrated multi-agency teams of highly skilled practitioners from local authorities, police and health who will deliver specific child protection functions.

A sharp focus on child protection including new national multi-agency practice standards for child protection

While there is much strong and effective child protection practice undertaken by practitioners from across agencies, too often there is a fragmented understanding of what life is like for children, and an episodic approach to help and protection. We want agencies working together in a much more integrated way, where practitioners with the right knowledge and skills lead child protection work.

In *Stable Homes, Built on Love*, government accepted a recommendation from the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel’s report into the deaths of Arthur Labinjo-Hughes and Star Hobson²⁴ to introduce standards for how partners work effectively and consistently together, to identify and protect children, based on the best evidence and focused on promoting practice consistency across the agencies involved.

Proposed revised text

See Chapter 3, section 3 of the draft statutory guidance, ‘*Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023*’.

In this update of *Working Together*, we are proposing a new section in chapter 3 that includes new national multi-agency practice standards for child protection for all practitioners who come into contact with children who may be suffering or have suffered significant harm; and more information about the types of harm children face from both inside and outside the home. We are seeking to place more emphasis on the skills, experience, and expertise that multi-agency practitioners need when working in child protection and more clarity about the actions all practitioners should take where there are concerns about actual or likely significant harm to a child. We have also outlined the critical elements for effective child protection at a system level which include effective practitioner supervision, promoting the conditions for effective challenge and critical thinking, and setting out clearly how practitioners can escalate concerns.

We have also strengthened references to multi-agency engagement throughout the process descriptor tables, emphasising multi-agency discussion and consensus at key stages including in strategy discussions and in the child protection conference, and where decisions are made about child protection planning.

We are proposing to include new national multi-agency practice standards for child protection for all practitioners involved in child protection work (paragraphs 203 – 205 and standards table). These standards set out the actions, considerations and behaviours that should lead to improved child protection practice and better outcomes for children. The standards are based on best practice evidence including from the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel.

Consultation question 29

To what extent do you agree these standards will be effective in supporting improved multi-agency child protection work?

²⁴ [Child Protection in England - May 2022: National review into the murders of Arthur Labinjo-Hughes and Star Hobson](#)

Harm outside the home

We know the child protection system is not always responding well where children are facing risks outside the home, including exploitation by criminal gangs or abuse within their own intimate relationships. These types of harms largely affect teenagers, with children over 16, now the fastest growing age group in child protection and care²⁵. While the current legislative and statutory framework does not prevent a child protection response where children are at risk of significant harm from outside the home, it was not designed to respond to these types of harm. This can lead to variation in approach at local level, with uncertainty about how best to apply the framework, fragmented responses between agencies on the ground, and a system in which parents can feel stigmatised for not protecting their children where the harm is coming from outside the family home.

Our ambition is for a tailored approach to these harms that acknowledges how protecting children in these circumstances can be different to responding to harm that occurs within the family. We are currently testing new approaches to children who experience significant harm from outside the home through our *Risk Outside the Home pilots*²⁶ and we will use the *Families First for Children Pathfinder* to test these approaches further, with a view to informing longer-term changes to the statutory framework.

The proposed changes for *Working Together* are intended to lay the foundations for the future system, drawing on learning from the Children's Social Care Innovation Programme²⁷, the Children's Social Care Covid-19 Regional Recovery and Building Back Better Fund²⁸ and the recently published multi-agency Practice Principles to respond to child exploitation and extra-familial harm²⁹.

²⁵ [Characteristics of children in need \(2021-22\)](#), Department for Education; [Children looked after in England including adoption: 2021 to 2022](#), Department for Education.

²⁶ The Risk Outside the Home pathway is based on a child protection planning and conference model developed by Wiltshire Council, which prioritises developing expertise and reducing caseloads for practitioners, stronger multi-agency working and working with families as partners. The Department for Education have funded 4 local authorities to test the ROTH pathway in 22-23. Durham University will publish a peer-reviewed paper on the pilot findings in summer 2023.

²⁷ The £200m [Children's Social Care Innovation Programme](#) aimed to test and share effective ways of supporting vulnerable children and young people who need help from children's social care, including support for adolescents facing complex risks.

²⁸ In 2021-22, the Department for Education provided £24 million through its [Children's Social Care Covid-19 Regional Recovery and Building Back Better Fund](#), supporting a range of projects to tackle issues facing the most vulnerable children. This included £1.5 million for 20 local authorities, across seven regions, to develop and strengthen multi-agency approaches to safeguarding adolescents at risk of harm outside the home.

²⁹ [Multi-agency Practice Principles for responding to child exploitation and extra-familial harm \(researchinpractice.org.uk\)](#) Funded by DfE and supported by the Home Office, the Department for Health and Social Care and the Ministry of Justice.

Proposed revised text

See Chapter 3, pages 59-60 of the draft statutory guidance and throughout chapter 3, section 3, '*Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023*'.

The changes to *Working Together* clarify that both section 17 and section 47 of the Children Act 1989 should be used to help and protect children that are or could experience harm in extra-familial contexts. The changes draw on what many local authorities already do well in their day-to-day work to keep children safe from harm.

We have proposed changes to clarify that the multi-agency safeguarding response applies to all forms of abuse, neglect and exploitation, including online. Proposed changes outline the key considerations for practitioners including working with children and partners to understand the extra-familial context in which harm is occurring, the role of partners in keeping children safe and providing support, and working with parents as partners to create safety for their child. We have also included references to extra-familial harm in the process descriptors for child protection.

Consultation question 30

To what extent do you agree that the proposed changes make clear that the multi-agency safeguarding response applies when harm, or risk of harm, comes from outside the home, including online?

Consultation question 31

To what extent do you agree that the updated section 'supporting children at risk of or experiencing harm outside the home' makes clear what practitioners need to consider in supporting this group of children?

Consultation question 32

Is there anything else you want to comment on in *Decisive multi-agency child protection*? Please indicate what your comment relates to i.e. improving multi-agency responses to child protection, multi-agency practice standards for child protection, harm outside the home

Section 5: Learning from serious child safeguarding incidents

We know that care leavers face barriers to securing housing, are financially vulnerable, and are more likely to experience homelessness. This can prevent them from engaging in further or higher education, employment, and increases the risk of isolation and loneliness. Care Leavers are also more likely than their peers to have an unnatural death (by suicide, violence or accident). In *Stable Homes, Built on Love* we set out 6 key missions to drive improvement in outcomes for care leavers over the next two years.

As part of Mission 6: '*We will work closely with health partners to reduce the disparities in long-term mental and physical health outcomes and improve wellbeing for care-experienced people*', we committed to extending the reporting of deaths or serious incidents involving children to include deaths of care leavers.

Proposed revised text

See Chapter 5, pages 117-130 of the draft statutory guidance, '*Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023*'.

Currently, there is no legislation in place to make this reporting mandatory, therefore as part of this consultation we are proposing that local authorities should notify the Secretary of State and Ofsted of the death of a care leaver aged 18-25, where they are aware of their care leaver status. Reporting care leaver deaths will help us to link data on deaths with DHSC and DLUHC data on health and housing to build a greater picture on care leaver outcomes.

For local authorities, this would not yet be a legislative requirement, but we would encourage reporting the death of a care leaver, regardless of whether abuse or neglect is known or suspected, reflecting how the deaths of looked after children are currently reported. Safeguarding Partners would not be required to carry out a rapid review. However, if the local area felt that learning could be gained from the death of a care leaver, they may choose to undertake a review for their own purposes.

Local authorities would be expected to make notifications through the Child Safeguarding Incident Notification System in the same way as serious incidents are currently reported for children under the age of 18.

Consultation question 33

We are interested in the practicality of reporting the deaths of care leavers aged 18-25 (where their care leaver status is known). This would be an extension to the

notification of deaths of looked after children, regardless of whether abuse or neglect is known or suspected.

Will it be feasible for your local authority to submit notifications for the deaths of care leavers aged 18-25?

Consultation question 34

Is there anything else you want to comment on in *Learning from serious child safeguarding incidents*?

Section 6: Equalities Impact Assessment

Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010³⁰ requires the Secretary of State, when exercising the functions of the Secretary of State, to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

Government is carefully considering how these revisions might have an impact, whether positive or negative, on individuals and groups who share protected characteristics and those who do not. We will undertake a full equality impact assessment as part of our response to this consultation.

Consultation question 35

Do you have any overall comments about the potential impact, whether positive or negative, of our proposed changes on those who share protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010?

Where you identify any negative impacts, we would also welcome suggestions of how you think these might be mitigated.

³⁰ [Equality Act 2010 Section 149.](#)

Annex A: Consolidated list of consultation questions

To help us analyse the responses, please use the online system wherever possible. Visit www.education.gov.uk/consultations to submit your response. Please note that this consultation applies to England only.

We know that not everyone will wish or feel able to answer all of the questions in this consultation. You are encouraged to answer the questions you would like to respond to, but you do not have to respond to all of them.

Privacy notice

The personal data (name and address and any other identifying material) that you provide in response to this consultation is processed by the Department for Education as a data controller in accordance with the UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018, and your personal information will only be used for the purposes of this consultation. The Department for Education relies upon the lawful basis of article 6 (1) (e) of the UK GDPR, which allows us to process personal data when this is necessary for conducting consultations as part of our function.

We may share information we hold about you with certain organisations, where the law allows it, or we have a legal obligation to do so. There may be some circumstances where we'll need to share information about you with others without your consent. For example, this might be to prevent or detect a crime, or to produce anonymised statistics for research purposes. In all cases, we'll comply with the Data Protection Act 2018.

The personal information will be retained for a period of 12 months following the closure of the consultation period, after which it will be securely destroyed.

You can read more about what the Department for Education does when we ask for and hold your personal information in our [personal information charter](#).

Confidentiality notice

Information provided in response to consultations, including personal information, may be subject to publication or disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act 2018 or the Environmental Information Regulations 2004.

If you want all, or any part, of a response to be treated as confidential, please explain why you consider it to be confidential.

If a request for disclosure of the information you have provided is received, your explanation about why you consider it confidential will be taken into account, but no assurance can be given that confidentiality can be maintained. An automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not, of itself, be regarded as binding on the Department.

About you

The following introductory questions will help us understand more about you.

1. We want to hear from children in care and care leavers, as well as others in this consultation. Are you:

- A child or young person, under 18, or care leaver up to age 25
- An adult
- An organisation [If responding on behalf of an organisation, what is the name of your organisation]

2. To help us analyse our responses, could you please tell us in what capacity you are responding to this consultation. As a... [Select all that apply]

- Child or young person under age 18, or care leaver up to the age of 25
- Care leaver
- Birth parent
- Adoptive parent
- Kinship carer
- Foster carer
- Special Guardian
- Family member of a child who is in care
- Family member of a care leaver
- Director of Children's Services
- Chief Executive of a local authority
- Local authority practice leader
- Local authority – other
- Social worker
- Social work team member

- Family support worker
- Independent Domestic Violence Advisor
- Substance misuse worker
- Voluntary, community and charity worker
- Residential children's home worker
- Educational institution (e.g. early years setting, school, alternative provision setting, college, university)
- Academic
- Health practitioner
- Police officer
- Youth justice worker
- Probation officer
- Youth worker
- Other
- Prefer not to say

If you chose 'Other' or wish to clarify your response, please describe the role that best describes you

- 3. If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, what is your role within that organisation?** [Select one from: Front line practitioner, Manager, Senior leader (Director, Chief Executive), Corporate / Administrative]
- 4. Would you like us to keep your responses confidential?** [Yes / No]. If yes, please explain why.
- 5. In sharing findings from this consultation, may we quote from your response?** [Select one from: Yes - anonymously, Yes – attribute to my organisation, No]
- 6. This question is only for adults over the age of 18, or organisations. May we contact you if we have any follow-up questions about your response?** [Yes / No]. If yes, please provide your email address.

Consolidated list of consultation questions

7. **Do you agree that we should change the title of Working Together to reflect help and protection for children and families?** [Select one from: Yes / No / Don't know]
8. **To what extent do you agree that the four principles are the right ones to drive better practice and engagement with parents?** [Select one from: Strongly agree, Agree, Neither agree nor disagree, Disagree, Strongly disagree]
9. **To what extent do you think the new practice principles for multi-agency working will support leaders and practitioners to work together more effectively and improve outcomes for children and their families?** [Select one from: Very likely, Likely, Neutral, Unlikely, Very unlikely]
10. **Is there anything else you want to comment on in *A Shared Endeavour*?** In your feedback, please indicate what your comment relates to i.e. renaming *Working Together*, principles for working with parents or carers or multi-agency expectations. [Free text]
11. **To what extent do you agree that these proposed changes provide greater clarity on what the expectations are of safeguarding partners?** [Select one from: Strongly agree, Agree, Neither agree nor disagree, Disagree, Strongly disagree]
12. **To what extent do you agree with the list of joint functions of lead safeguarding partners and Delegate Safeguarding Partners** [Select one from: Strongly agree, Agree, Neither agree nor disagree, Disagree, Strongly disagree]
13. **In your local area, how would delegation from the lead safeguarding partner to delegated safeguarding partner be interpreted and delivered in practice?** [Free text]
14. **To what extent do you agree that having a mutually agreed representative from a safeguarding partner agency will increase ownership and accountability of partners?** [Select one from: Strongly agree, Agree, Neither agree nor disagree, Disagree, Strongly disagree]
15. **To what extent do you agree that these proposed changes will strengthen the role of education in multi-agency safeguarding arrangements?** [Select one from: Strongly agree, Agree, Neither agree nor disagree, Disagree, Strongly disagree]
16. **To what extent do you agree that making education a statutory safeguarding partner is the only way to secure the right level of collaboration in multi-agency arrangements?** [Select one from: Strongly agree, Agree, Neither agree nor disagree, Disagree, Strongly disagree]

- 17. Do you agree the proposed changes will encourage more engagement with VCSE and sports clubs as part of multi-agency safeguarding arrangements?** [Yes, No - more resource is needed for safeguarding partners, No - additional guidance is needed for safeguarding partners, No - additional training is needed for safeguarding partners, No - VCSE and sports clubs need to be provided with guidance or other support to engage, No - other support (not specified above) is needed, Don't know]
- 18. To what extent do you agree that these proposed changes will make multi-agency arrangements more accountable and transparent?** [Select one from: Strongly agree, Agree, Neither agree nor disagree, Disagree, Strongly disagree]
- 19. Is there anything else you want to comment on in *Multi-agency safeguarding arrangements*?** In your feedback, please highlight what your comment relates to i.e. roles and responsibilities, partnership chair, relevant agencies, VCSE, accountability. [Free text]
- 20. To what extent do you agree that these changes will strengthen whole family working and tailored support for children and families ahead of wider system reforms?** [Select one from: Strongly agree, Agree, Neither agree nor disagree, Disagree, Strongly disagree]
- 21. Do you agree that the features we have outlined for Family Group Conferences will improve family network engagement in decision making and supporting children?** [Select one from: Yes / No / Don't know]
- 22. Do you agree that the proposed changes will help improve the outcomes of the children and their families who receive support under section 17 of the Children Act 1989?** [Select one from: Yes / No / Don't know]
- 23. Do the proposed provisions for the role of the social worker qualified practice supervisor or manager ensure appropriate social work oversight?** [Select one from: Yes / No / Don't know]
- 24. In your opinion, are there practitioners who should not be lead practitioners?** [Select one from: Yes / No / Don't know] If yes, please confirm why
- 25. Do you agree with the proposed changes to strengthen assessment and support for disabled children?** [Select one from: Yes / No / Don't know]
- 26. Does the new information clarify the role of children's social care in the assessment of suitability and social work input for a mother and baby unit placement?** [Select one from: Yes / No / Don't know]
- 27. To what extent do you agree these changes will give practitioners across all agencies and organisations a clearer understanding of the work HMPPS do**

and the contribution HMPPS makes to keeping children safe? [Select one from: Strongly agree, Agree, Neither agree nor disagree, Disagree, Strongly disagree]

28. Is there anything else you want to comment on in *Help and support for children and families*? In any feedback, please highlight what your comment relates to i.e. early help, family networks, section 17, support for disabled children.
[Free text]

29. To what extent do you agree these standards will be effective in supporting improved multi-agency child protection work? [Select one from: Strongly agree, Agree, Neither agree nor disagree, Disagree, Strongly disagree]

30. To what extent do you agree that the proposed changes make clear that the multi-agency safeguarding response set out in Working Together applies when harm, or risk of harm, comes from outside the home, including online?
[Select one from: Strongly agree, Agree, Neither agree nor disagree, Disagree, Strongly disagree]

31. To what extent do you agree that the updated section ‘supporting children at risk of or experiencing harm outside the home’ makes clear what practitioners need to consider in supporting this group of children? [Select one from: Strongly agree, Agree, Neither agree nor disagree, Disagree, Strongly disagree]

32. Is there anything else you want to comment on in *Decisive multi-agency child protection*? Please indicate what your comment relates to i.e. improving multi-agency responses to child protection, multi-agency practice standards for child protection, harm outside the home. [Free text]

33. Will it be feasible for your local authority to submit notifications for the deaths of care leavers aged 18-25? [Select one from: Yes, Yes – but require more support of guidance (please provide detail at end of this section), Not Sure - would need to know more, No]

34. Is there anything else you want to comment on in *Learning from serious child safeguarding incidents*? [Free text]

35. Do you have any overall comments about the potential impact, whether positive or negative, of our proposed changes on those who share protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010? [Free Text]
Where you identify any negative impacts, we would also welcome suggestions of how you think these might be mitigated.

Annex B: Technical clarifications and amendments

The table below includes other drafting changes we expect to make when we reissue guidance, but on which we are not seeking views as part of this consultation. We propose to amend 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018' as follows:

Clarification/Update	Reason for change
Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA)	Updated to reflect existing statutory MAPPA guidance.
Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel	Clarity on the panel to carry out thematic reviews, Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review process and signposting to panel guidance for further clarity on serious safeguarding cases
Information on pre-proceedings	Updated to reflect other existing guidance
Replace links of out-of-date guidance on forced marriage. Add links to new resource packs on female genital mutilation and forced marriage.	Updated to reflect new guidance
Update to the information on Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan with reference to the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 0-25 (2015)	Updated to reflect changes to legislation
Additions throughout the document to reflect the change to legislation and Domestic Abuse Act 2021	Updated to reflect changes in legislation
Replacement of the Armed Services section to update and reflect MOD responsibilities and changes to internal structures and processes.	Updated to reflect changes to policy
Addition of reference to young carers now recorded in school census.	Updated to reflect changes to policy
Adding and updating glossary to reflect new definitions, legislation and policies	Updated to reflect new definitions, legislation and policies

Clarification/Update	Reason for change
Deletion of references to Clinical Commissioning Groups and replace with Integrated Care Boards.	Updated to reflect changes in legislation
Removing reference to secure colleges and referencing secure children's homes and secure schools	Updated to reflect changes in naming
Deletion of references to Public Health England	Updated to reflect closure of Public Health England
Information Sharing	Updated to correct factual inaccuracies
Child death review partners must share child death data with the National Child Mortality Database	To strengthen and clarify existing processes to improve accuracy of data and learning
Replace links of out-of-date guidance on Child Death Review Statutory and Operational Guidance.	Updated to reflect new guidance
Child death review partners to model their structures and processes in the Child Death review Statutory and Operational Guidance (2018) and remove reference and footnote to the previous guidance Child Death Overview Panel	Updated to reflect new legislation
Update to reflect the designated doctor for child deaths should be a senior doctor and remove previous reference of senior paediatrician	To strengthen and clarify the process of who can take a lead role in the child death review process
Update to reflect coroner's duty to include post-mortem reports with relevant child death review partners	Updated to reflect new guidance
Remove independent review by child death review partners and replace with child death overview panel	Updated to reflect change of name



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