

Working Together Updated 2023





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Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023

A guide to multi-agency working
to help, protect and promote the welfare
of children

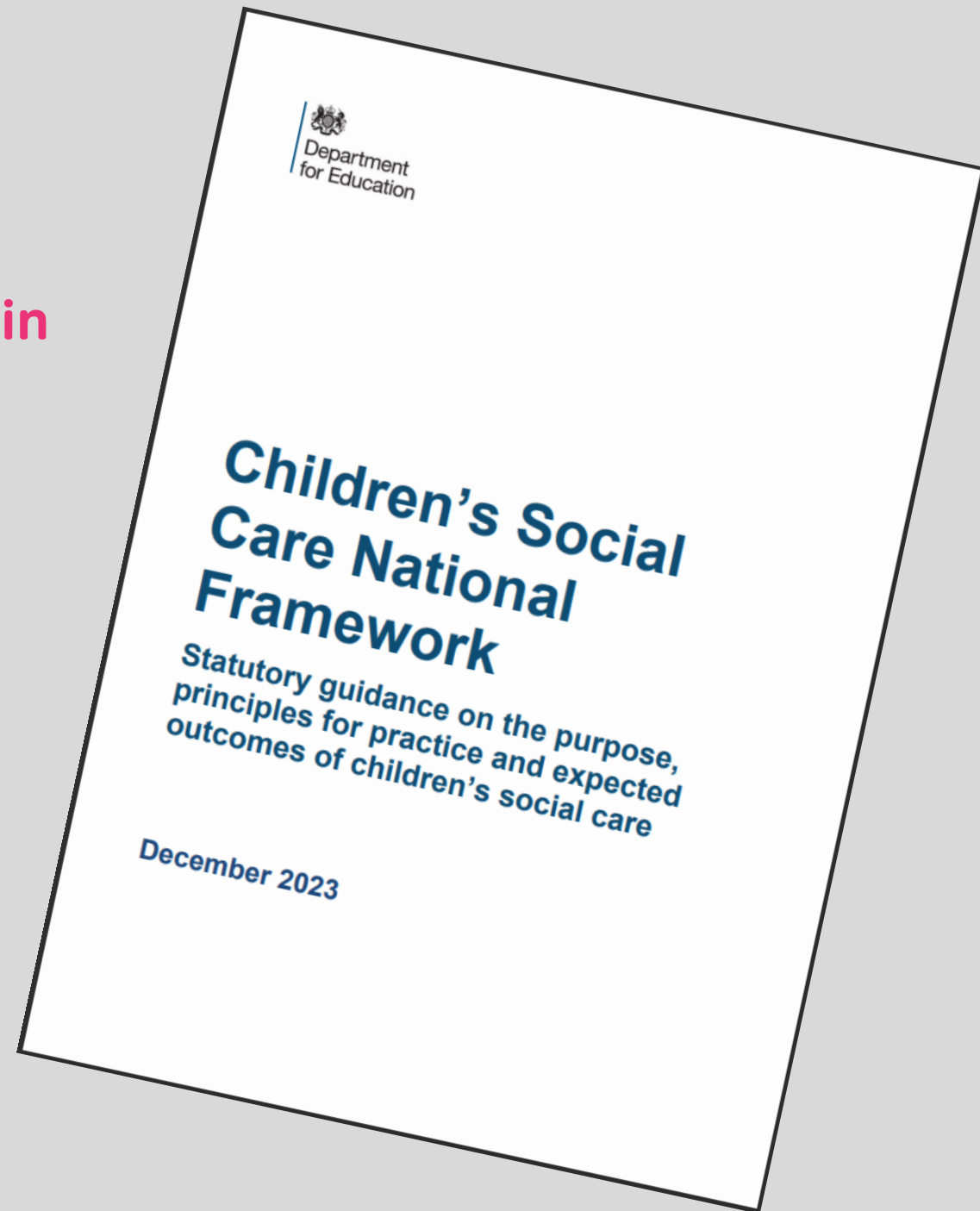
December 2023

- Released Friday 15th December 2023 without much fanfare.
- Substantial rewrite.
- Consultation took place from 21 June 2023 until 6 September 2023 with the government's response being published the same day as the new Working Together.



safeguarding
network

“This guidance is written for those who work **in and with** local authority children’s social care and contains information that may be useful to children, young people and families who receive support from children’s social care.” (p.6)



“Understanding each individual case is very important as everyone has different needs and **actually listening to us** of what we need **otherwise the help you are trying to provide is pointless**. Researching and understanding what we need is vital otherwise **if you don't have [a] clue of our needs you will just mess around and cause us more distraught.**”

Information sharing

- Separate consultation running at same time as Working Together consultation.
- Updated advice was due to be released in at same time as revised Working Together.
- Further legal and policy consideration required.



Information sharing

Advice for practitioners providing
safeguarding services to children, young
people, parents and carers

July 2018

General changes

- Change in subtitle from “inter-agency working” to “multi-agency working”.
- Significant emphasis on the role of education and education providers.
- Change to the definition of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.
- Changes to the definition of abuse and the definition of neglect.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined for the purposes of this guidance as:

- providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge
- protecting children from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the home, including online
- preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- promoting the upbringing of children with their birth parents, or otherwise their family network through a kinship care arrangement, whenever possible and where this is in the best interests of the children
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes in line with the outcomes set out in the Children's Social Care National Framework.

Abuse - A form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others. This can be particularly relevant, for example, in relation to the impact on children of all forms of domestic abuse, including where they see, hear, or experience its effects. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or extra-familial contexts by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

Neglect - The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing, and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers)
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment
- provide suitable education

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs

Chapter 1: A shared responsibility

- Successful outcomes for children depend on **strong partnership working** between parents/carers and the agencies working with them, and **a child-centred approach** to **meeting the needs of the whole family**.
- Adds emphasis around not all disclosures being verbal and the need for “putting **special provision in place** to **support dialogue** with children who may not be able to convey their wishes and feelings as they may want to.”
- Introduces **principles for working with parents and carers**.

Chapter 1: A shared responsibility

Strategic Leaders

- Includes Chief Executives, PCCs and Heads of Trusts

Senior and middle managers

- Includes Heads of Service, team managers, named professionals and senior police officers

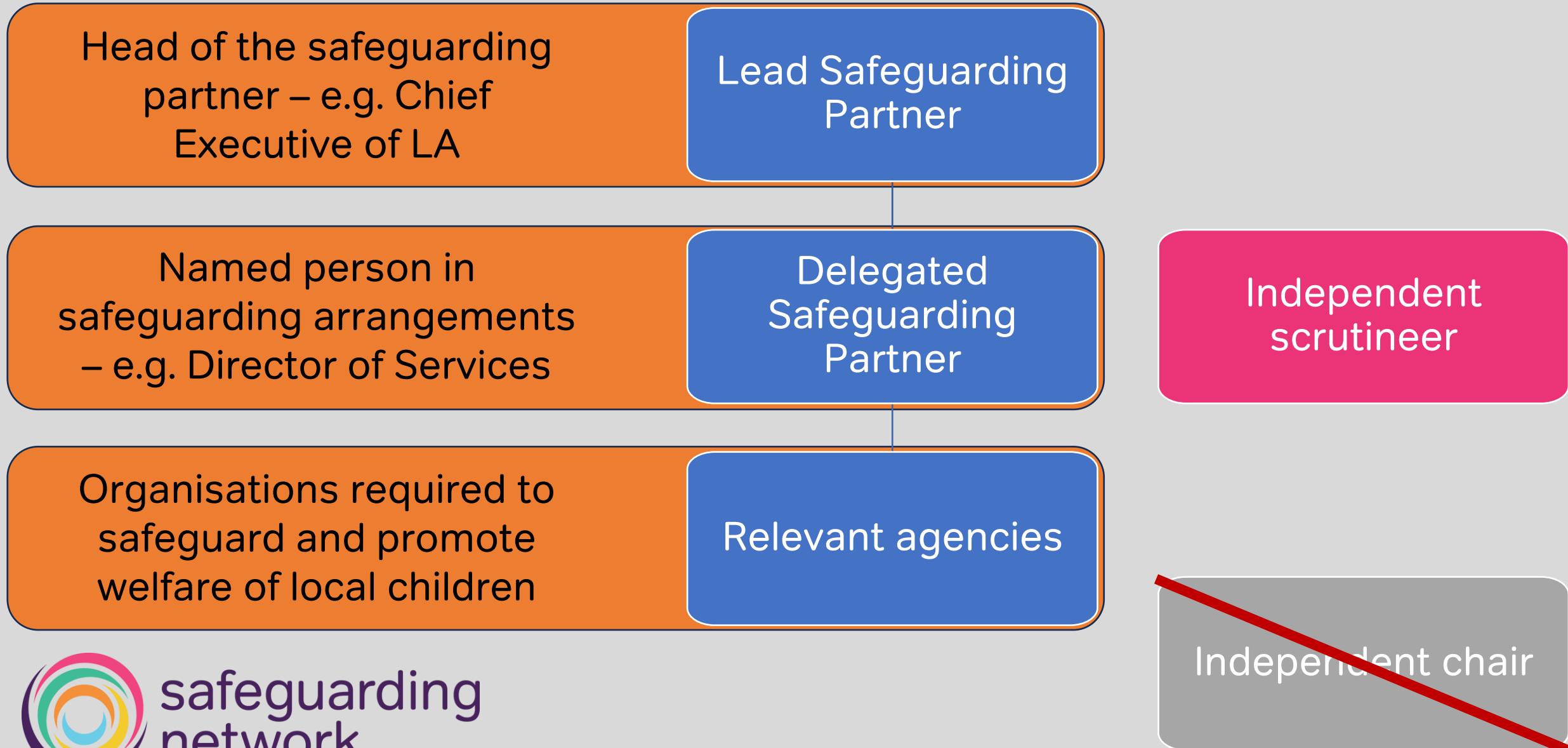
Direct Practice

- Includes front line professionals in both statutory and voluntary sectors

- Collaborate
- Learn
- Resource
- Include
- Mutual challenge



Chapter 2: Multi-agency safeguarding arrangements



Chapter 2: Multi-agency safeguarding arrangements

70. When identified by the LSPs as a relevant agency, an organisation must act in accordance with local safeguarding arrangements. As part of this, the organisation should:
- have a **clear understanding of its responsibilities** in relation to safeguarding children locally, **and how it will discharge them**
 - **co-operate with safeguarding partners** to improve, implement, and monitor effectiveness of the local safeguarding arrangements
 - **share information and data about safeguarding** issues and concerns affecting the children involved in their organisation to contribute to local priorities
 - ensure local multi-agency safeguarding **arrangements are fully understood, and rigorously applied** within their organisation

Chapter 3: Providing help, support and protection

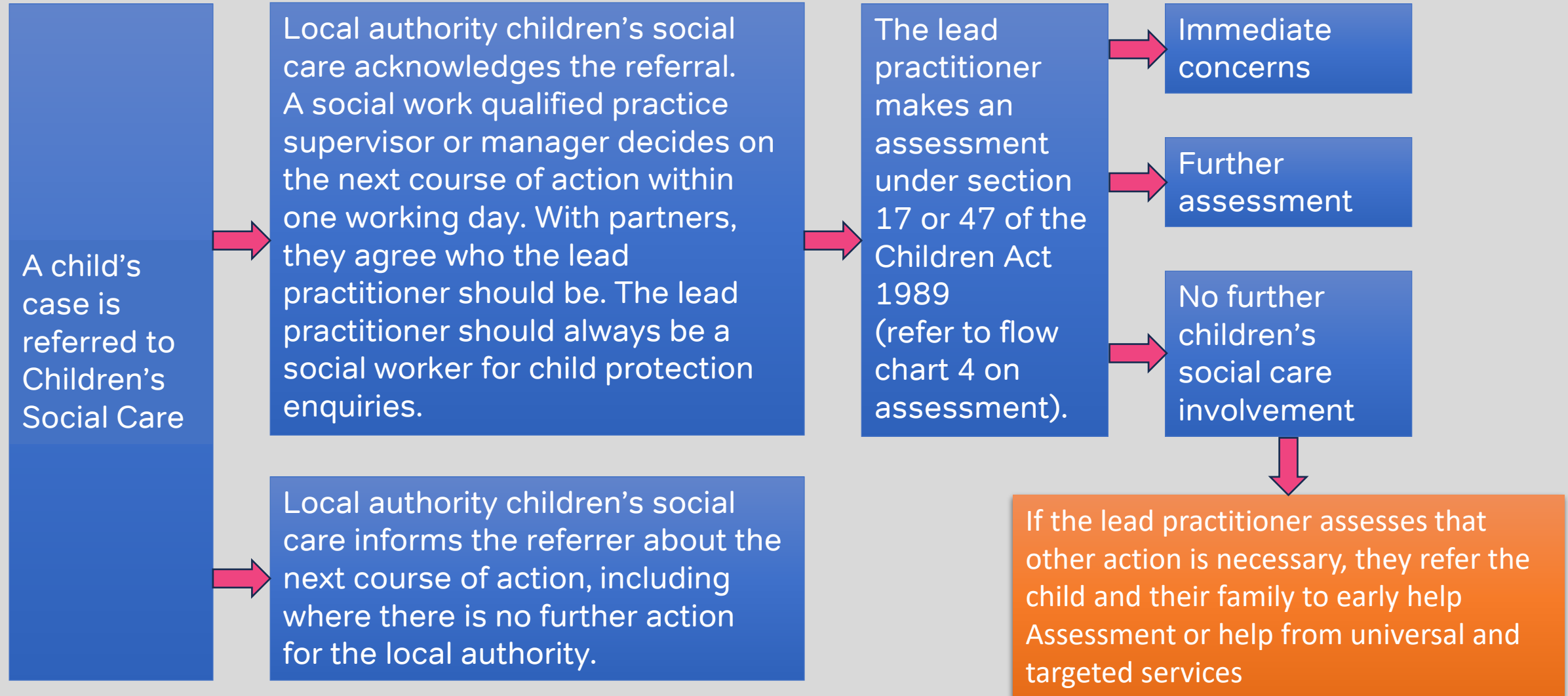
Early Help

- Strengthening of language around Early Help.
- Emphasis on outcomes with plans being designed together with the children and family.
- Emphasis on engagement with the family and family networks.
- Expectation that those who are NEET are paid particular attention to.

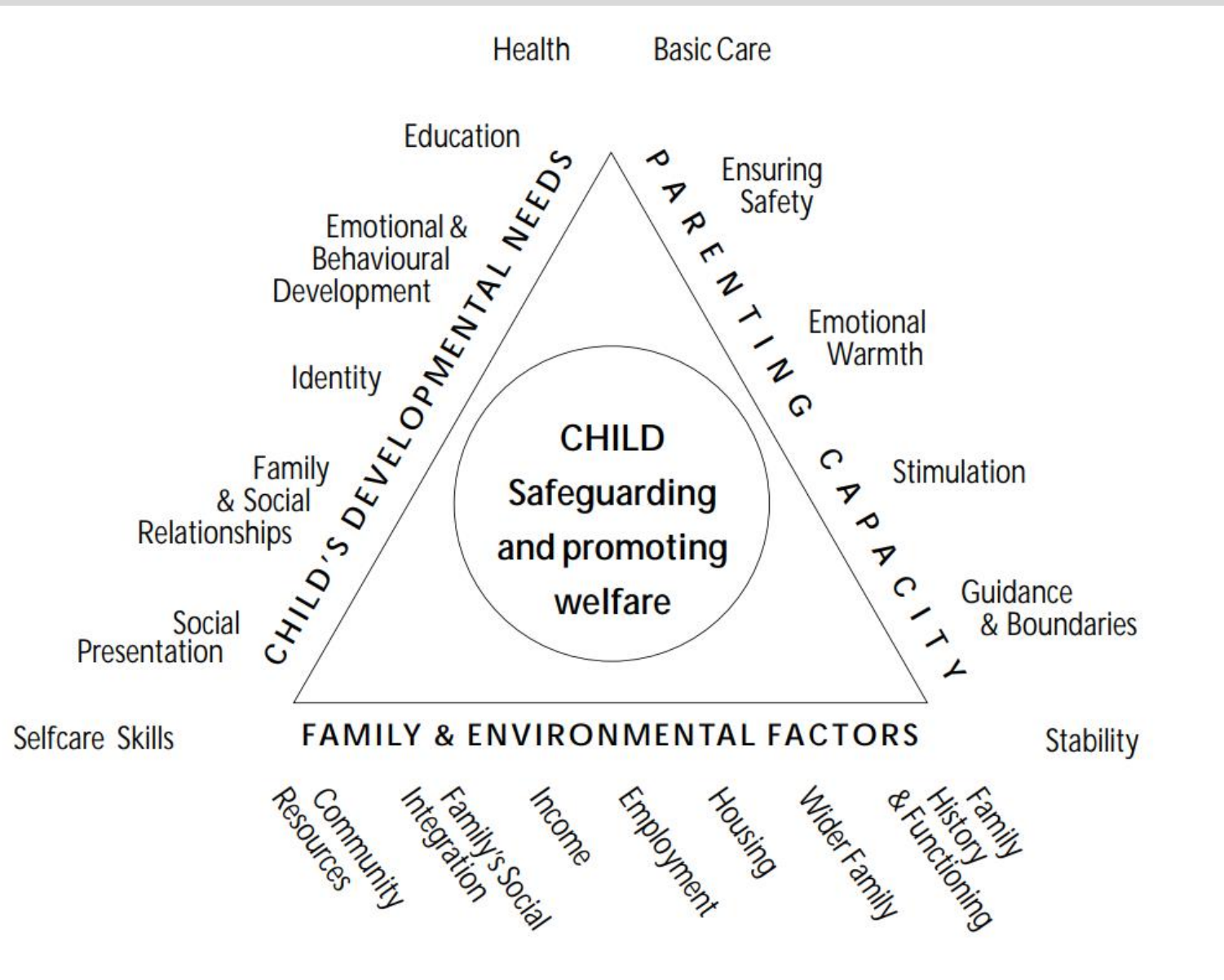
Chapter 3: Providing help, support and protection

139. Where requested to do so by local authority children's social care, health organisations, other local authorities and other parts of the local authority, such as housing, have a **duty to co-operate** under section 27 of the Children Act 1989 by **assisting the local authority in carrying out its children's social care functions**, provided that this is compatible with their own duties and obligations and **does not interfere with the performance of their own functions**. Any cooperation from health bodies should be in line with their professional regulations and standards on competence. Local authorities can also ask other agencies to assist in the delivery of support and services under section 17 of the Children Act 1989, but **those agencies are under no obligation to do so**.

Chapter 3: Providing help, support and protection



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Chapter 3: Providing help, support and protection

Support for Disabled Children

- Government state they recognise the difficulties families face when trying to access social support for their disabled child's needs.
- Commitment in Stable Homes, Built on Love that support provided by Children's Social Care would be strengthened.
- Recognise comments from parents that often support only provided through a safeguarding lens.

Chapter 3: Providing help, support and protection

Child Protection

- Introduction of national multi-agency practice standards for child protection.
- LSPs need to ensure all practitioners are supported to be able to achieve these standards.
- Standards include having knowledge and understanding of abuse and harm, an understanding of what may constitute a disclosure (verbal or non-verbal) and a knowledge of the limits and strengths of their personal expertise.

Chapter 4: Organisational responsibilities

- Update guidance around people in positions of trust.
- Update to sections about specific organisations.
- Strengthening of guidance in relation to prison and probation services

Chapter 5: Learning from serious child safeguarding incidents

- Notification of the death of a care leaver when aged up to and including 24.