

# 7 MINUTE GUIDE for social workers

## Working Together to Safeguard Children 2020 updates



Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) is a Department for Education (DfE) statutory guidance that sets out what agencies and organisations who carry out functions relating to children **must** and **should** do to promote the welfare of and safeguard **all** children and young people under the age of 18 in **England**.



On the 9<sup>th</sup> December 2020 The Government updated this guidance with factual changes in relation to information sharing, homelessness duty and references to domestic abuse and child mental health. There are also changes to key terminology. Summaries of these changes, and all other local policies and procedures can be found on our Halton Borough Council Tri-x portal at <https://www.proceduresonline.com/halton/cs/index.html>



### Information sharing

The Data Protection Act (2018) and General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) do not prevent information sharing for the purposes of keeping children safe. Fears and worry about information sharing must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to protect the safety of children and promote their welfare.



### Homelessness duty

The guidance includes an update which requires public authorities including Early Help, Leaving Care and Child Protection services to refer any service users they consider to be homeless or who are threatened with homelessness to a Housing Authority.



### Domestic Abuse

There are changes to the term domestic abuse in a number of places in the document to include **controlling and coercive behaviour**, with an emphasis on practitioners being able to recognise it especially in the context of children who are being exploited. Updated definitions are included in the guidance

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>



### Child Mental Health

It is important that staff in schools are aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation. Only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem, however school staff are well placed to observe children and identify those whose behaviour suggests that they may be experiencing a mental health problem or at risk of developing one.



### Updated terminology

- In the definition of safeguarding, impairment of children's health has been changed to **children's mental and physical health**.
- Contextual Safeguarding to **Assessment of risk outside the home** and also the addition of **teenage relationship abuse** as a factor