

QUESTION time



NDNA's **Jo Baranek** discusses the revised statutory guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' and what it means for your setting...

Q What is the new guidance?

A The Department for Education published revised statutory guidance for professionals working with children in England, 'Working Together to Safeguard Children', in March, 2013, and the changes came into force on 15th April. The guidance includes new procedures for referrals and subsequent assessments, including new timescales. The changes are in response to the recommendations from Professor Eileen Munro in her report, 'A child-centred system'.

'Working Together to Safeguard Children' is a more streamlined document than previous guidance and aims to clarify the responsibilities of professionals towards safeguarding children, moving the focus away from processes and onto the needs of the child. Most of the responsibilities and procedures of the 2010 guidance remain, but the document is presented in a more succinct and less detailed way. All guidance for early years refers to the EYFS.

There has been a key change in the response to referrals. Referrals are requests for action in the case of a child or young person. Within one working day of a referral being received, a local authority social worker should make a decision about the type of response that is required and acknowledge receipt to the referrer. There will no longer be a requirement to conduct separate initial and core assessments, and the time frame for the assessment of the child's needs is now up to 45 working days from the point of referral. Under the new guidance, the assessment can be done in less than 45 working days, depending on the needs of the individual child, and the nature and level of any risk of harm faced by the child. Support may be put into place before the end of the 45 working days window if it is needed.



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■ NDNA Advanced Safeguarding training course - a 'train the trainer programme' that enables nurseries to bring safeguarding training in-house with a dedicated and knowledgeable safeguarding lead, who can deliver training for all nursery staff. Visit www.ndna.org.uk/advanced-safeguarding

■ A free public factsheet, 'Child protection: Supporting understanding, skills and knowledge in our teams', is available at www.ndna.org.uk/factsheets

■ 'Your essential guide to safeguarding and child protection' - visit www.ndna.org.uk/publications

Q What does it mean for my nursery?

A What's important is that the guidance does not change safeguarding procedures in the nursery. The major changes apply to procedures after the referral of a safeguarding case to the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) or social care department in your local authority area. Staff should continue to follow their setting's policies and procedures and, if they spot signs of a safeguarding issue, refer it to their setting's designated lead on safeguarding, who will refer the concerns following their local authority procedures, which can normally be found on the LSCB or local

authority website.

When you or a member of your team have referred a child because you have concerns about them, it's important to understand what should happen next, because if you feel this isn't occurring you may need to take further action. These procedures can be seen clearly in the flow charts in 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' 2013.

The LSCB should have published a threshold document that includes the process for the early help assessment and the type and level of early help services to be provided; and the criteria, including the level of need, for when a case should be referred to local authority children's social care for assessment and for statutory services under section 17 (child in need), section 47 (risk of significant harm), section 31 (care orders), section 20 (duty to accommodate) of the Children Act 1989.

Q What does this mean if an allegation is made against a member of my staff?

A In the streamlined document the existing staff allegation procedure has been removed (previously this was appendix 5). It is now the responsibility of the local authority to publish its own procedures on its website, as previously

mentioned. You should refer to this before doing any internal investigations and seek advice when you require it from your Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).