

Briefing Paper: Children's Social Care National Framework

Newcastle Safeguarding Children Partnership (NSCP)

Date: April 2026

Audience: Partners across education, local authority services, health, police, voluntary and community sector

Purpose of this Briefing

This briefing introduces the Children's Social Care National Framework and the accompanying guidance Improving practice with children, young people and families. It explains why the framework matters and what it means for all safeguarding partners, including education settings, health services, police and voluntary, community and faith organisations.

Context and Rationale

The Children's Social Care National Framework is statutory guidance that sets out a shared vision for improving outcomes for children and families across England. It is not just about children's social care; it is intended to shape how the whole system works together to support children and keep them safe.

The Improving practice with children, young people and families guidance supports local areas and safeguarding partners to embed:

- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026)
- A more consistent, relationship-based and evidence-informed approach
- Stronger multi-agency working around children and families

This guidance sits alongside wider national reforms, including:

- Strengthened Family Help and early support arrangements
- Increased emphasis on multi-agency child protection
- Greater focus on babies, adolescents and children facing multiple harms
- National expectations on family networks, stability and permanency
- Improved use of evidence, learning and data to drive practice improvement

Together, these reforms reinforce that **no single agency can improve outcomes alone**.

What This Means in Practice

For all partners, the framework is about how agencies contribute together, within their existing roles and responsibilities.

In practice, this means:

- Schools and education settings play a vital role in early identification, day-to-day support for children and understanding children's lived experience.
- Health services contribute clinical insight, early identification of vulnerability, and continuity of support for children and parents, including babies.
- VCSE organisations provide trusted relationships, community-based support and culturally informed help that often enables families to engage earlier and more effectively.

Across all agencies:

- Children and families should experience joined-up support, not fragmented or duplicated responses.
- Information should be shared appropriately to support timely, proportionate decision-making.
- Practice should be relationship-based, child-centred and responsive to family circumstances.
- Partners should align their contribution to shared outcomes, rather than working in isolation.

Key Messages for Partners

- This is a shared framework - Improving outcomes for children is a collective responsibility across education, health, policing, VCSE and local authority services.
- Early help and protection are connected - Supporting families early and well reduces escalation and improves safeguarding outcomes.
- Relationships drive impact - Trusted, consistent relationships with children and families are central to effective safeguarding and support.
- Evidence and learning matter - Partners are expected to use learning from practice, reviews and national evidence to improve how support is delivered.
- Children's voices must inform decisions - Children's wishes, feelings and experiences should shape plans and responses across all agencies.

Safeguarding / Quality Impact

The framework and guidance strengthen safeguarding by:

- Promoting a shared understanding of good practice across agencies
- Supporting clearer, more consistent multi-agency decision-making
- Reducing gaps and duplication between services
- Reinforcing accountability for collective safeguarding impact

They also support inspection readiness and assurance by providing a common reference point for evaluating how well agencies are working together to improve outcomes for children.

How This Links to Families First and Working Together (2026)

The Families First Partnership reforms sit alongside the Children's Social Care National Framework and Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026). Together, they set clear expectations for how safeguarding partners work collectively to help, support and protect children.

Families First reinforces key Working Together (2026) principles, including:

- A shared responsibility across education, health, police, VCSE and local authorities for improving outcomes for children.
- A child-centred, whole-family focus, ensuring children's experiences, safety and wellbeing remain central to decision-making.
- Early, coordinated help for children and families, with support that adapts as needs change.
- Strong multi-agency arrangements, where partners contribute their expertise and work together to reduce risk and harm.
- Appropriate information sharing, enabling timely, proportionate responses and consistent support.

For schools, health services and VCSE organisations, this means:

- Contributing to **early identification and support** for children and families.
- Playing an active role in **multi-agency planning, review and safeguarding arrangements**.
- Working collaboratively to deliver **help, support and protection**, rather than operating in isolation.

Taken together, the National Framework, Improving practice with children, young people and families, Working Together (2026) and Families First reforms underline a shared expectation: **effective safeguarding depends on strong, joined up multi agency working that is focused on outcomes for children, not organisational boundaries.**