

This is the final report by Professor Eileen Munro. The document captures the essential elements and recommendations in the report, using the original language wherever possible. This is a guide to the report (which is 172 pages), not a replacement for it.

## Four key driving forces (Executive Summary page 5)

- The importance of the safety and welfare of children and young people and the understandable strong reaction when a child is killed or seriously harmed;
- A belief that the complexity and uncertainty of child protection work can be eradicated;
- A readiness, in public inquiries, to focus on professional error rather than its causes;
- The undue importance given to performance indicators and targets.

## Eight key principles that underpin reform (Chapter 2 page 23)

1. The system should be child-centred: everyone involved in child protection should recognise children and young people as individuals with rights.
2. The family is usually the best place for bringing up children and young people, but balancing the right to be with their birth family with the right to protection is difficult.
3. Helping children and families involves working with them: the relationship between the child and family and professionals directly impacts on the effectiveness of help.
4. Early help is better for children: minimising the adverse experiences and improving outcomes.
5. Children's needs and circumstances are varied so the system needs to offer equal variety in its response.
6. Good professional practice is informed by the latest theory and research.
7. Uncertainty and risk are features of child protection work: risk management can reduce risks, not eliminate them.
8. The measure of the success of the systems, both local and national, is whether children are receiving effective help.

## Recommendations

### Chapter 3: A system that values professional expertise

- 1: The Government should revise, *Working Together to Safeguard Children and The Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families* to:
  - distinguish the **rules** for effective working together from **guidance** that informs professional judgment;
  - set out the key principles;
  - remove the distinction between initial and core assessments replacing them with the decisions that are required to be made by qualified SW's
  - require local attention is given to:
    - timeliness in the identification of children's needs
    - the quality of the assessment to inform next steps
    - the effectiveness of the help provided;
  - give local areas the responsibility to draw on research and theoretical models to inform local practice.
  - remove constraints to local innovation and professional judgment created by: prescribing or endorsing particular approaches; national performance indicators; nationally prescribed IT systems. (p. 45)
- 2: Inspection framework should examine the effectiveness of the contributions of **all** local services. (p.47)
- 3: Inspection framework should examine the child's journey, explore how their rights, wishes, feelings and experiences inform and shape services, and look at the effectiveness of the help provided. (p. 49)
- 4: LA's and their partners should use nationally collected and locally published performance information to: benchmark performance; facilitate improvement and promote accountability. Performance information should not be treated as an unambiguous measure of performance. (p. 51)

### Chapter four: Clarifying accountabilities and improving learning

- 5: Each LSCB should produce an annual report for the Chief Executive and Leader of the Council, the local Police and Crime Commissioner and the Chair of the health and wellbeing board. (p. 56)

- 6: *Working Together to Safeguard Children*, should be amended so that LSCBs include an assessment of the effectiveness of the help being provided (including early years provision), and the effectiveness of multi-agency training. (p. 57)
- 7: LA's should protect the discrete roles and responsibilities of the DCS and Lead Member, not allocating any additional functions to these individuals. The importance of appointing individuals to positions where they have specific responsibilities for children's services should not be undermined. The Government should amend the statutory guidance accordingly. (p.58)
- 8: The Government should work collaboratively with the RCPCH, the RCGP, LA's and others on the impact of health reorganisation on the ability to provide effective help. (p.59)
- 9: The Government should require LSCBs to use systems methodology when undertaking SCRs and:
  - provide accredited, skilled and independent reviewers to jointly work with LSCBs on each SCR;
  - promote the development of a variety of systems-based methodologies
  - initiate the development of a typology of the problems that contribute to adverse outcomes.
  - disseminate learning nationally to improve practice and inform the work of the Chief Social Worker (see chapter seven). Ofsted's evaluation of SCRs should end. (p. 68)

### Chapter 5: Sharing responsibility for the provision of early help

- 10: LA's and statutory partners should secure the sufficient provision of local early help and should:
  - specify the full range of professional help available against the local Joint Strategic Needs Analysis (JSNA);
  - specify how they will identify at-risk children, including the availability of social work expertise to all professionals working with children **not** being supported by children's social care services, and specify the training available locally to all frontline professionals.
  - set out the resourcing of the early help services;
  - lead to the identification of the early help needed by a particular child and their family, and an "early help offer" where their needs do not meet the criteria for receiving children's social care services. (p. 78)

### Chapter 6: Developing social work expertise

- 11: The Social Work Reform Board's Professional Capabilities Framework should incorporate capabilities necessary for child and family social work, explicitly informing qualification training, postgraduate professional development and performance appraisal. (p. 97)
- 12: Employers and HEIs should work together so that students are prepared for the challenges of child protection work. They should ensure that:
  - **practice** placements are of the highest quality.
  - employers can apply for special 'teaching organisation' status, awarded by the College of Social Work;
  - the merits of 'student units', are considered;
  - placements are of sufficiently high quality. (p.98)

### Chapter 7: The organisational context: supporting effective social work practice

- 13: LA's and their partners should review and redesign the ways in which social work is delivered, drawing on evidence. (p.108)
- 14: LA's should designate a Principal Child and Family Social Worker, who is still actively involved in frontline practice. (p.112)
- 15: A Chief Social Worker should be created in Government. (p.121)

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