



# Practitioners' Forum

## Birmingham Safeguarding Children Partnership



**Penny Thompson CBE welcomed Practitioners to the forum and provided the safeguarding update:**

**Working Together Guidance** - The updated guidance was published in December 2023. A [summary of the changes](#) is available along with the full guidance. One of the most significant changes is that there should be designated safeguarding leads identified from all partner organisations. The purpose of this is to reinforce that accountability lies with the most senior officers of our partner organisations. The role of the Independent Chair will be removed and replaced by an Independent Scrutineer with the purpose being to reinforce leadership responsibilities with partners. These arrangements must be put in place by the end of the financial year.

**Safeguarding Children with Disabilities and Complex Needs in Residential Settings, National Panel Phase 2 Report** - The National Review was published in December 2023. This took place because of a tragic incident at an independent residential provision in Doncaster. Penny assured practitioners that the review will be scrutinised in Birmingham to look for any learning that we can audit ourselves on to assess how effectively we are meeting the needs of disabled children in Birmingham. [Read the full report.](#)

**Kinship carers** - Funding has been secured to provide remuneration for families and extended networks who are looking after children where birth parents are not able to. The research is very positive around kinship carers and the positive outcomes for children.

**Budget update letter, December 2023** - You should all now be aware of the S114 Notice in Birmingham City Council. The government has appointed commissioners to work with the council to address the significant budget shortfall, this is due to several reasons including inadequate provision for equal pay claims and the introduction of the Oracle finance system. This will have implications for services and the budget for next year is not yet published. The commitment from the Council is to protect statutory services and the most vulnerable children. Penny has written to the commissioners on behalf of BSCP to seek assurance that our most vulnerable children will continue to be supported.

**Education Safeguarding Forum** - Penny attended the forum and heard about children out of sight and in elective home education. The current figures for Birmingham are 2,726, an enormous number. Penny stated that addressing this is one of the core focuses of BSCP this year.

### Accessing Support for Children – Pauline Austin, CASS Operations Team Manager, Children's Advice and Support Service

There are new pages on the [BSCP website](#) along with the new online [Request for Support Form](#) which is also on the [Birmingham Children's Trust website](#). It is important to note that CASS no longer take referrals through the CASS mailbox. More information can be found in the [step-by-step video tutorial](#), which assists with completing how to complete the online Request for Support Form.

Pauline reminded practitioners that CASS are always available to take calls on **0121 303 1888** if they are unsure about anything and need advice.

### Training opportunities

Check out the multi-agency training courses we currently have availability on - don't delay, book today!

**BOOK YOUR PLACE NOW**



**Thank you to those who attended this Practitioners' Forum and for your continued hard work!**

The next Practitioners' Forum will be held on Wednesday 20th March.

