

## SECTION 1

### STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

Birmingham Safeguarding Children Board is committed to the principles set out in Paragraph 5.5 of *Working Together to Safeguard Children* [2010] which state that all work to safeguard and promote the welfare of children should be:

- **Child centred**  
Practitioners should keep the child's welfare in focus at all times. The child should be seen, alone where appropriate, and their wishes and feelings should be recorded and taken into account when making decisions about the provision of services.
- **Rooted in child development**  
Plans should be based on a clear assessment of the child's developmental progress and on the effect of any difficulties the child may be experiencing. Action should be timely and appropriate for the child's age and stage of development.
- **Focused on outcomes for children**  
The purpose of intervention should be to achieve the best possible outcomes for each child. All plans should set out the intended outcomes for the child; progress against these should be regularly reviewed and the actual outcomes should be recorded.
- **Holistic in approach**  
Having a holistic approach means having an understanding of the child within the context of their family (parents or caregivers and the wider family), and of the educational setting, community and culture in which the child is growing up. The ultimate aim is to understand the child's developmental needs and the capacity of the parents or caregivers to meet them and to provide services that respond to these needs. The child's context will be even more complex if they are living away from home and looked after by adults who do not have parental responsibility for them.
- **Ensuring equality of opportunity**  
All children should have the opportunity to achieve the best possible developmental outcomes regardless of their gender, race, ethnicity, circumstances or age. When a child has been disadvantaged in their access to important opportunities, intervention may be needed to optimise both their current welfare and their long-term outcomes.

## Working Together

- **Involving of children and their families**

Decisions should be made with the agreement of children and families whenever possible, unless this would place the child at risk of significant harm. Before sharing information, the consent of the person concerned should be obtained unless this would place the child at risk of significant harm.
- **Building on strengths as well as identifying difficulties**

Identifying both strengths and difficulties within the child, their family and the context in which they are living is important. Working with a child or family's strengths is a significant part of planning to resolve difficulties.
- **Integrated in approach**

Multi- and inter-agency work to safeguard and promote a child's welfare should start as soon as it has been identified that the child or the family members have additional needs requiring support or services beyond universal services, not just when there are questions about possible harm.
- **A continuing process, not an event**

Assessment should continue throughout a period of intervention, and intervention may start at any stage during an assessment.
- **Providing and reviewing services**

It is not necessary to await the completion of assessment before providing services; services should be provided in parallel with assessment when necessary. The impact of service provision on the child's developmental progress should be reviewed at regular intervals.
- **Informed by evidence**

Effective practice with children and families requires sound professional judgements which are underpinned by a rigorous evidence base and which draw on the practitioner's knowledge and experience. Decisions based on these judgements should be kept under review and take full account of any new information obtained during the course of work with the child and family.