

South Gloucestershire Children's Partnership

Local Protocol for Assessment and Support

Context for this protocol

Working Together 2023 requires that 'Local authorities, with their safeguarding partners and any relevant agencies, should develop, agree and publish local protocols for assessments and support'¹

This protocol sets out who can act as a lead practitioner in supporting children and their families under section 17 and sets out the governance arrangements to support effective decision making.

It includes how organisations, agencies and practitioners undertaking assessments and providing services can work together in partnership to reach the best outcomes for the child and their family.

A multi-agency group met in June 2024 to consider the protocol and have agreed the following:

South Gloucestershire Protocol

1. Organisations working across South Gloucestershire agree that the principle of working closely together with partners leads to improved outcomes for children.
2. In South Gloucestershire, all assessments of children and families under Section 17 of the Children Act will be undertaken by a social worker.
3. Once the assessment is completed by a social worker, where appropriate alongside other partner organisations, a plan will be developed to meet the needs identified.
4. Child in Need plans will be led by social care, and social workers will work closely with relevant partners who are working with the child or family.
5. Where an organisation has an existing relationship with a child and an assessment under Section 17 and subsequent plan is needed, the professionals who know the child and/or family will commit to work with the social worker leading the work to ensure the assessment and plan are informed by existing knowledge and provide continuous support to the child.
6. When an assessment is underway, organisations already working with the child will continue their involvement with the child and will not close their work prior to understanding the impact of the assessment and any subsequent plan and will work collaboratively to support the child and their family.

This protocol has been adopted by the Children's Partnership Executive on 13th November 2024 and will be reviewed annually or sooner should there be any relevant changes to legislation or statutory guidance.

¹ Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 paragraph 141 [page 53]