

The common core of skills and knowledge for the children and young people's workforce

What is the common core?

The common core describes the basic skills and knowledge that everyone working with children or young people is expected to have. It sets out six key areas of expertise and the skills needed in each of them. There is more detail about them on page two of this factsheet.

Why do we need a common core?

Millions of people with different backgrounds and specialist skills work with children in this country. The common core gives all of us a common set of basic skills and knowledge. This will help us all to work together better, speak a common language and support children and young people more effectively.

Why did the common core need to be refreshed?

The common core needed to be refreshed to make sure it was up to date and still relevant to the work we are doing.



“Having the common core ensures there's a consistent quality, so whoever a young person chooses to approach will know how to talk to them, how to recognise if things are wrong and how to bring in other services if they're needed.”

Joanna Nichols, Teenage Pregnancy Strategy
Co-ordinator

How has it been refreshed?

The Children's Workforce Development Council worked with many different people to refresh the common core. We consulted people who work and volunteer with children, as well as children and young people, their families and carers. They told us that the subject areas covered by the common core are still relevant and important, they liked it and there is still a need for it.

Who is the common core for?

The common core is for everyone whose job or voluntary work involves contact with children and young people. That includes people whose jobs only involve working with children some of the time.

How should you use it?

You should practise all six skills described in the common core in a way that is relevant to your work. It can also be used to inform the way training and development is structured, and how job descriptions are written.

Where can you find out more?

For more information visit:
www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/common-core

[www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/
strategy/deliveringservices1/commoncore/
commoncoreofskillsandknowledge/](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/strategy/deliveringservices1/commoncore/commoncoreofskillsandknowledge/)

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The six areas we all need to know about

There are six key areas where everyone working with children and young people need to be aware of. These areas have been identified by the people who work with children and young people. They are:



Effective communication and engagement with children, young people and families

Good communication is central to establishing trust, and making sure information is shared and received in the way you intend. This key area highlights the importance of knowing how to listen, empathise, explain, consult, and seek support.

Child and young person development

Understanding the developmental changes children and young people go through can be key to interpreting their behaviour. This area of expertise helps us to understand what makes children and young people think and act in the way they do, and to encourage us to respond to and support their needs as they emerge.



“The team have come down to Sinead’s level but still treated her like an adult... I don’t know what we would have done without them.”

Mrs Hughes, mother and grandmother

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people

This set of skills centres on keeping children and young people safe, and knowing how to identify if they are suffering harm or neglect. They also help us to see when children and young people are not achieving their potential and help us to ensure their well-being and quality of life.

Supporting transitions

When children and young people go through change, it can have a profound effect on their behaviour and well-being. These skills help us to identify transitions, understand their likely impact and support children, young people and their families through them.

Multi-agency and integrated working

This key area describes the skills we need to work together effectively with people from different professional backgrounds. It highlights the importance of valuing individual expertise and of understanding the tools and processes that support multi-agency and integrated working.

Information sharing

Knowing how and when to share information is an essential part of delivering better services for children and young people. The skills and knowledge outlined in this area include understanding and respecting the legislation and ethics surrounding confidentiality and security of information.

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IW140/0310