

7. Find Out More

- [1] [The voice of the child: learning lessons from serious case reviews](#)
- [2] [RSCP Procedures: Supporting the Voice of the Child](#)
- [3] [The Children Act 1989](#)
- [4] [NSPCC: Safeguarding d/Deaf and disabled children and young people](#)
- [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](#)
- [British Journal of Social Work 2022](#) (Covid-19)

5. Thinking Covid

As restrictions continue to ease, children are seen more often, but many processes have changed forever. We still need to do pre-visit risk assessments, and many meetings are held online. We need to do even more to interpret children's communications, and some children and families remain very anxious, so be aware that they might want to keep their distance. You can maintain contact with children you work with via telephone calls and texts between visits

5. How?

Listening to the words children say is obvious, but children who do not easily communicate verbally may have different ways:

- Be open to interpreting children's behaviour as communication, and look for discrepancies with what carers say
- Listen to siblings and other adults in the child's life
- Interpret the context and content of unusual and disruptive behaviours
- Give credence to the things children say, and to your interpretation of their behaviour
- Be adaptable when working with d/Deaf and disabled children [4]
- Get to know the language and expressions that individual children use

1. The Importance of the Voice of the Child

Professionals are required to consider the wishes and feeling of children when undertaking assessments and when making decisions that affect them. Serious Case Reviews have highlighted the need to capture the voice of the child [1]

'Effective safeguarding systems must be child centred. Problems can arise when practitioners in agencies lose sight of the needs and views of the children within them or place the interests of adults ahead of the needs of children. Everyone working with children and families must seek and understand "the voice of the child" and reflect and respond to it in all aspects of work'. [2]

2. Legal

The Children Act 1989 [3] requires local authorities to give due regard to a child's wishes when determining what services to provide, before making decisions about action to be taken to protect children, and in relation to Looked After Children, including those who are accommodated, and children taken into police protection

3. Children have said that they need:

Vigilance: So that we notice their needs
Understanding and action: hearing and acting

Stability: Staying for as long as we're needed

Respect: Treating children as Competent

Information and engagement: Involving children in planning for their care and protection

Explanation: Giving the reasons for decisions made, especially if they don't meet their expectations

Support: In their own Right

Advocacy: Help to put forward their views. [1]

4. What we need to do

See the child

Focus on the child

Listen to what they say

Observe interactions

Ask about abuse and neglect

Listen to siblings and other children

Record what you hear and what you see

Interpret what the child says, and what they do, referencing indicators of abuse and exploitation

Establish the child's wishes and feelings