



Building Confidence Early Years Designated Safeguarding Lead Booklet 2024

SUMMARY

This booklet aims to provide useful information and guidance to help leads and others to fulfil their responsibility to effectively safeguard children.

OWNER

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Introduction

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) booklet aims to provide useful information and guidance to help leads and others to fulfil their responsibility to effectively safeguard children. The booklet is designed to strengthen practice and is not a replacement for training or other safeguarding guidance.

Responsibility for all

Staff, students and volunteers

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, and this includes all staff, volunteers and students in your setting.

Responsibilities include:

- To prioritise the needs of the child
- Develop relationships with children and families
- Provide an inclusive environment where all children feel safe with a sense of belonging
- Contribute to a culture of wellbeing for children and adults
- Disclose any convictions, cautions, court orders, reprimands and warnings which may affect suitability to work with children (before and during appointment)
- Recognise and be alert to the signs of abuse and neglect
- Take action to ensure prompt and accurate reporting of any safeguarding concerns to a DSL
- Notice families who may benefit from early help support and discuss with a DSL
- Complete mandatory safeguarding training
- Demonstrate an ongoing commitment to professional development
- Understand the impact of abuse and neglect on children's wellbeing and development
- Recognise that children with SEND can face additional safeguarding challenges
- Record child absences and report any concerns to a DSL
- Read, understand and implement the setting safeguarding policy and take part in the review process
- Keep up to date with safeguarding legislation and guidance provided by the DSL.

Tip

Include these key points within your safeguarding policy and induction processes to ensure that everyone understands their responsibilities.

Parents and caregivers

It is important to also remember other adults such as parents, carers and family members who should also safeguard children. They must have access to the settings approach to safeguarding including how they can self-refer and report any concerns to keep children safe.

Tip

Ensure the settings commitment to safeguarding is shared during registration. Make easily available:

- *DSL lead(s) names with contact details and photographs*
- *safeguarding policy and procedure*
- *CSPoA poster - [CSPoA-poster-2023.pdf \(brighterfuturesforchildren.org\)](#)*
- *Ofsted poster - [Parents poster Ofsted 2023 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)*

Leadership responsibility

Leaders should create a culture where safeguarding is prioritised and ensure that all adults working or volunteering in the setting recognise their responsibility to keep children safe.

In addition to general responsibilities, managers must also:

- ensure all staff, students and volunteers have the training, knowledge and skills required to recognise and report safeguarding concerns and keep the children safe
- maintain policies, procedures and risk assessments which respond to all aspects of safeguarding children, which are reviewed at least annually
- promote a culture of safeguarding confidence, including opportunities to challenge decisions and report allegations against those in a position of trust
- respond to allegations involving staff, students and volunteers with a clear procedure in place if involved directly
- appoint a DSL and at least one other Designated Safeguarding Deputy (DSD) and provide an induction process and appropriate training in preparation for the role
- ensure that either the DSL or DSD is always available during setting opening hours
- provide staff, volunteers, and students with an opportunity to discuss safeguarding concerns immediately when urgent and also during supervisions
- ensure all staff, volunteers and students understand their ongoing responsibility to report any personal changes which may impact on their suitability to work with children
- lead on robust recruitment processes including the requirement for at least one person to have completed safer recruitment training
- maintain a central record of staff, students and volunteers who work at the setting to include pre-employment checks and training
- promote and contribute to interagency working to effectively safeguard children
- provide a setting layout which combines high visibility and privacy for intimate care
- adhere to the statutory staff:child ratio requirements as set out by Ofsted
- ensure that UK general data protection rules (GDPR) for the setting are clear and followed.

The designated safeguarding lead and deputies

All early years settings should have a suitable practitioner designated to take lead responsibility for safeguarding children who is always available.

In addition to general and leadership responsibilities DSLs and DSDs must also:

- Attend designated safeguarding lead training and refresh at least once every two years
- Commit to ongoing safeguarding professional development and disseminate new learning to the team
- Make the role known to the team, ensure availability and feedback on action taken as a consequence of concerns
- Understand local reporting processes and services available
- Provide support and guidance to staff, volunteers, students, and parents within the setting
- Prepare and share reports appropriately ahead of external child protection meetings
- Prioritise attendance at child protection meetings
- Work collaboratively with the parents and key person in the best interest of the child
- Maintain communication between the setting, home and relevant professionals
- Maintain accurate safeguarding records in line with the settings UK GDPR policy
- Be alert to child absences within the setting and monitor and encourage regular attendance

- Have an overview of child accident and incident events within the setting and the home environment and provide advice or take action as appropriate
- Attend DSL and DSD networks to keep up to date with current and local practice.

Tip

Include these key points within the Designated Safeguarding Lead/Deputy job description.

Trauma Informed

The [One Reading Children and Young People's Partnership](#) is a multiagency partnership driven by the voluntary and community sector, health, education, Reading Borough Council, police, business, children's services, schools and colleges. The core aims are to improve outcomes for children, young people and families in Reading and to reduce demand for specialist services, nurturing resilient communities and a thriving voluntary sector. A key role of the One Reading Children and Young People's Board is to lead and drive the One Reading Early Help Strategy. Early Help can be provided by a range of staff in different organisations including childcare, early years, and childminding settings.

The One Reading Partnership vision is for Reading to become a trauma informed town where the workforce recognises when people are affected by trauma and adversity, the barriers this can create and to respond in a way that prevents further harm, supports recovery, improves life chances, and resists re-traumatisation. It is recognised that emerging needs within families are often best supported by practitioners known to the family who can apply the principles of safety, choice, collaboration, empowerment, and trust. With that BFFC have adopted two levels of training to move Reading forward in this journey:

Trauma Informed – Level 1

Describes the baseline knowledge and skills required by everyone in the organisations partnered by the Reading children, young people and family strategic partnership. This level is comprised of two videos (9 and 11 minutes long) and both can be accessed [via the NES](#).

Trauma Skilled - Level 2

After completing the Informed Level, the NES Transforming Psychological Trauma Programme is a skilled level interactive e-learning module. The level takes around 2 hours to complete, and practitioners will be required to set up a learning account with Turas. There are three modules; module one must be completed and the other levels are optional. First create an [account here](#) and select "international" from drop down box. Next access the [workshop here](#).

The processes and practice in early years already has at its core the principles of working both in a trauma informed way and restoratively. This training will help strengthen practitioner understanding of adverse childhood experiences, positive childhood experiences and applying the principles of safety, choice, collaboration, empowerment, and trust. The trauma informed and restorative approaches across Reading will promote a shared language, awareness and collaborative response which will deliver the best possible early opportunities for children.

Email early.years@brighterfuturesforchildren.org when you/your team have completed both level 1 and 2 of the training. This will help us to understand the take up of training and we can signpost to other opportunities to further develop your knowledge.

Tip

Include the training within staff induction support and share within your practitioner networks.

Access the Early Years Training programme and check out the trauma informed training offer [Under 5s and early years services](#) | [Brighter Futures for Children](#)

Childhood experiences

The experiences we have early in our lives and particularly in our early childhoods have a huge impact on how we grow and develop, our physical and mental health, and our thoughts, feelings and behaviour. Two important factors to think about when considering our mental wellbeing, are the quality of our attachment relationships and our experience of adverse childhood experiences (ACES).

Attachment

Attachment refers to the pattern of the relationships we have had with our parents or carers early in our lives. It is the emotional bond that forms between a parent and child from birth and has a huge impact on our development. If children have experienced a relationship with a parent or carer which has been positive, they will likely develop good feelings about themselves and develop relationships more easily. If children are not cared for in a way that is positive, they may find it harder to manage their feelings and behaviour and maintain good relationships.

Tip

The [Anna Freud National Centre for Families and Children](#) has developed a booklet for early years practitioners which explains:

- *What an 'attachment informed' approach to childcare is*
- *Ideas to support positive relationships with the children you care for*
- *How to support parents and carers to develop healthy and strong attachments*

Find here and share with your team: [What is attachment? | understanding attachment with young children](#) | [Anna Freud Centre](#)

Adverse childhood experiences

Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) are “highly stressful, and potentially traumatic, events or situations that occur during childhood and/or adolescence. They can be a single event, or prolonged threats to, and breaches of, the young person’s safety, security, trust or bodily integrity.” (Young Minds, 2018).

The term adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) incorporates a wide range of stressful events that children can be exposed to whilst growing up. These include harms that affect the child directly and also the environment in which the child lives.

Examples of ACEs include:

- physical abuse
- sexual abuse
- emotional abuse
- living with someone who abused drugs
- living with someone who abused alcohol
- exposure to domestic violence
- living with someone who has gone to prison

- living with someone with serious mental illness
- losing a parent through divorce, death or abandonment

This short, animated film has been developed to raise awareness of ACEs, their potential to damage health across the life course and the roles that different agencies can play in preventing ACEs and supporting those affected by them: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XHgLYI9KZ-A>.

Just like attachment, experiencing ACEs can have an impact on our future physical and mental health, and often ACEs can be barriers to healthy attachment relationships forming for children.

Some of the effects of ACEs on our physical and mental health are an increased risk of poor health and mental health problems in adulthood. The ability to recognise and manage different emotions and behaviour can be adversely impacted and the capacity to maintain relationships and friendships. The longer an individual experiences an ACE and the more ACEs someone experiences, the bigger the impact it will have on their development and their health.

Tip

Reflect with your team on the importance of your role in early years and how children can benefit from a network of attachment relationships.

Safer recruitment

Settings should develop and implement a safer recruitment policy and procedure, that sets out responsibilities for ensuring suitability of staff, students, and volunteers to work with children.

It is important that you consider the following responsibilities as part of the safer recruitment policy:

- Safeguarding and protecting all children and young people by implementing robust safer recruitment practices
- Identifying and rejecting applicants who are unsuitable to work with children and young people
- Responding to concerns about the suitability of applicants during the recruitment process
- Responding to concerns about the suitability of employees and volunteers once appointed
- Ensuring all new staff and volunteers participate in an induction programme which includes child protection
- Provision of a list of supporting procedures that accompany the policy
- The date the policy comes into force and when you will review it.

Planning

- Decide a recruitment timetable
- Review and update the job specification, description and other documents being provided to applicants as necessary
- Ensure the application form seeks all essential personal information including job history and references.

Vacancy advertised

- Include reference to the setting safeguarding policy and a statement of commitment to safeguard and promote welfare of children
- Detail that an enhanced DBS check is essential for all successful applicants.

Applications on receipt

- Ensure these are scrutinised with any discrepancies / anomalies / gaps in employment noted to explore if the candidate is considered for shortlisting.

Interview Panel

- The panel should have time to read all applications in full and ask any questions
- It is important that at least one panel member is suitability trained in safer recruitment. Training is available via Berkshire West Safeguarding Children Partnership.

References

- Ensure to go directly to the referee and ask about suitability to work with children
- On receipt of a reference cross check information with the application and interview
- Scrutinise any discrepancies and follow up any issues or concern with the referee and/or applicant.

Invitation to interview

- Include detail of the interview panel, location with details of the structure
- Make clear the requirement to bring identification and certificates.

Interview arrangements

- Conduct the interview with a panel of at least two panel members with the authority to appoint and who recognise the assessment criteria and standards expected.

Interview

- This is an opportunity to explore the applicant's suitability for work with children as well as their knowledge, skills and experience.

Verification

- The identity and qualifications of a successful applicant must be verified on the day of interview by scrutiny of appropriate original documents, with copies retained as appropriate.

Conditional offer of appointment

An offer of appointment is made on conditional satisfactory completion of the following pre-appointment checks:

- **References** - receive and ensure (If not obtained and scrutinised previously) any issues are clarified with referee and/or candidate
- **Identity and qualifications** - If not verified at interview
- **Evidence of right to work in the UK** - refer to <https://www.gov.uk/legal-right-work-uk> for guidance. These individuals must undergo the same checks as any other candidate, as well as further checks so that relevant events that occurred outside the UK can be considered
- **DBS** - apply for the relevant level, which will be sent to the applicant. The applicant should then present the original certificate to the recruiting manager. The recruiting manager should make a note of the certificate number and the date it was seen by them. It isn't compulsory but if they wanted to make a note of the date of issue too, that is fine. Also record any relevant information disclosed on the certificate and who obtained this information. For applicants who are signed up to the DBS update service, permission must be sought from the candidate to view the certificate by the recruiting manager. If it isn't at the appropriate level or the disclosure details have changed, a new DBS must be obtained

- **Barred list check** – ensure the candidate is not barred from taking up the post (this check should only be undertaken for those working in regulated activity). Further guidance: [Regulated activity in relation to children.pdf](#)
- **Health** - ensure the candidate is medically fit to take up the post. This requirement can be satisfied by using a self-declaration medical form.

Probationary Period

- Explain the probationary period to ensure suitability for the position.

Induction

Include the following:

- Appropriate level of safeguarding and child protection training
- Health and safety in the workplace
- Setting emergency evacuation procedures
- Safe working practice
- Whistleblowing
- Code of conduct
- Any other relevant CPD
- Regular supervision sessions

Refer to the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework for comprehensive guidance on induction.

Further guidance

- [Criminal records check](#) for overseas applicants
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023](#)
- [Early Years Statutory Framework](#) for group providers and childminders 2024
- [NSPCC](#)
- [The Equality Act 2010](#) - What Do I Need to Know? [A Quick Start Guide](#) to the ban on questions about health and disability during recruitment
- [Berkshire West Safeguarding Children Partnership](#).

Deployment and ratios

In settings on the early years register, the manager must hold an approved level 3 qualification or above and at least half of all other staff must hold at least an approved level 2 qualification. The manager should have at least two years' experience of working in an early years setting, or have at least two years' other suitable experience. The provider must ensure there is a named deputy who, in their judgement, is capable and qualified to take charge in the manager's absence.

Staffing arrangements must meet the needs of all children and ensure their safety. Providers must ensure that children are adequately supervised, including whilst eating, and decide how to deploy staff to ensure children's needs are met. Providers must inform parents and/or carers about staff deployment, and, when relevant and practical, aim to involve them in these decisions. Children must usually be within sight and hearing of staff. Whilst eating, children must be within sight and hearing of a member of staff.

Tip

See guidance in the Early Years Statutory Framework for qualification and ratios that relate to your setting type.

Intimate care

Intimate care can be defined as care tasks of an intimate nature, associated with bodily functions, bodily products and personal hygiene, which demand direct or indirect contact with, or exposure of, the sexual parts of the body. Help may also be required with changing colostomy or ileostomy bags, managing catheters, stomas or other appliances. In some cases, it may be necessary to administer rectal medication on an emergency basis.

Intimate care tasks include:

- dressing and undressing (underwear)
- helping someone use the toilet
- changing nappies
- bathing / showering
- washing intimate parts of the body
- inserting suppositories
- giving enemas
- inserting and monitoring pessaries
- applying topical creams and ointment

Children's Rights

Every child has the right to:

- be safe
- personal privacy
- be valued as an individual
- be treated with dignity and respect
- be involved and consulted in their own intimate care to the best of their abilities
- express their views on their own intimate care and to have such views taken into account
- to have levels of intimate care that are as consistent as possible.

Procedures

If it is not possible to provide a purpose-built changing area, then it is possible to purchase a changing mat and change the child on a suitable surface. Ideally, the changing should be carried out on a raised surface. Older children may be changed standing up.

- The 'key person' should be encouraged to change their key children where possible. This supports continuity for the child and enables their changing preferences to be followed.
- Staff should meet with parents/carers to discuss the child's needs and their approach to intimate care. Wherever possible, to avoid distress or confusion to the child, practice should be the same at home and in the setting.
- Staff should be mindful of the need to preserve the dignity of the child.

- It is important that parents are aware that all staff have been through the enhanced DBS vetting and recruitment process which ensures that children are safeguarded
- Each child should have their own named bag or container for nappies and spare clothes
- When changing children, staff should wash their hands with hot water and an appropriate soap/hand cleaner both before and after nappy changing. Gloves (and aprons where necessary) should be worn while carrying out intimate care. The changing table should be cleaned after each use and the nappy should be disposed of hygienically in an appropriate container. Any spillages must be cleaned up immediately
- Where needed staff should record times/frequencies of nappy changing and note any concerns (for example unusual bowel movement), which should be reported to parents/carers when the child is collected
- An adequate supply of nappies should be kept on the premises at all times. Where parents/carers provide the nappies, staff should notify them well in advance when the stock is depleting
- If barrier creams are used, this should be discussed with the key person, the cream labelled with child's name, logged on their records and kept in a safe place
- Settings should consider strategies for supporting children in developing independence through toilet training in partnership with parents when this is developmentally appropriate for the child.

Lost or missing child

All settings should have their own procedures for dealing with incidents, including those where a child is accidentally left behind for a few minutes. The local authority designated officer (LADO) must be informed of all cases irrespective of how soon the child is found.

Ofsted must be informed of a report to LADO, as soon as possible and within the 14-day requirement for significant events. Ofsted definition of significant events and reporting form can be found here - [Report a serious childcare incident - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/612223/Report_a_serious_childcare_incident_-_GOV.UK.pdf)

All children who go missing must be reported to the police. The police will determine the level of risk (low/medium/high) based on the information shared.

Local authority designated officer (LADO)

All settings should have their own procedures for dealing with concerns and/or allegations against those working in, or on behalf of, settings. The whistleblowing policy and the LADO contact details should be freely available to staff. The LADO role sits within the Conference, Review, LADO and Participation service.

Adults who work or volunteer with children in the community are in a position of trust.

If an adult who is in a position of trust has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child or
- behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children (includes behaviour that may have happened outside of the setting that might make an individual unsuitable to work with children, this is known as transferrable risk)
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children, then allegations procedures must be followed and reported to the LADO.

In any possibility of the harm threshold being met, the LADO must be contacted. If unsure, contact the LADO and discuss whether you need to refer. The LADO will offer advice and guidance.

The LADO will oversee the allegations management procedure to ensure that the allegation is investigated thoroughly. The LADO will inform the police and/or children's social care if required. On conclusion of the case, the LADO will advise on whether there is a need for the employer to refer to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

If you need to report an allegation you can contact the LADO on:

- [0118 937 2684](tel:01189372684)
- LADO@brighterfuturesforchildren.org
- Via the [Children's Single Point of Access](#)

Threshold guidance

The threshold document is designed to ensure practitioners have access to guidance that is clear, gives key information about how, when and why to consider the risks within a family, the level of need for the child, when single organisations should be able to provide the most appropriate support and when a multi-agency approach should be considered. Every child and family are unique, and their needs must be carefully considered with them so that the help they receive is right for them. The guidance supports practitioners to make a professional judgement about the best way to respond appropriately to individual children and their family contexts where there are needs or risk of harm.

The threshold document is intended to support the wider service partnership to work together, to share information and put the child and their family at the centre, providing effective support to help them solve problems and find solutions at an early stage to prevent problems escalating. It is not an assessment tool and does not replace any professional judgement, rather it should be treated as a guide to assist in decision making.

As the DSL (or DSD) you need to understand social care thresholds:

<https://www.berkshirerwestsafeguardingchildrenpartnership.org.uk/scp/reading/reading-threshold-guidance>

To request threshold training please contact one.reading@brighterfuturesforchildren.org

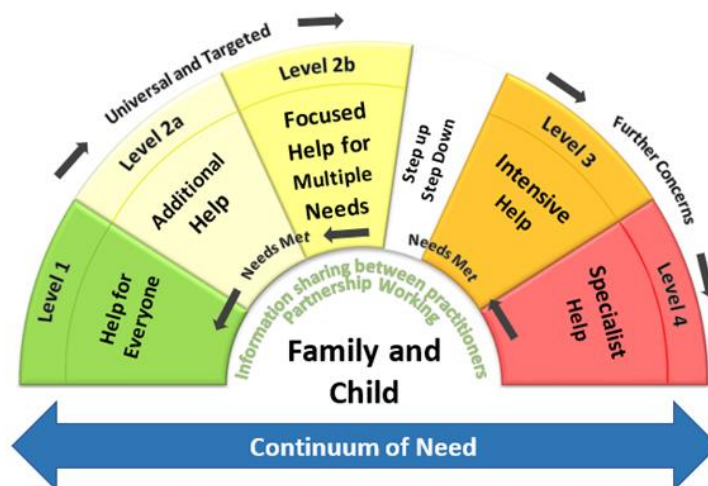


Image courtesy of Berkshire West Safeguarding Children Partnership

The terms 'step up' and 'step down' are commonly used to describe children moving between levels of need and are used within the guidance to describe the process by which children's needs can change.

Children and young people's situations and needs can change unexpectedly which means practitioners should be familiar with the continuum of need, so that when a child's needs change due to a reduced or increased level of concern, they do not fall between the services. Instead, children are held safely in the transition from one service/step to another. Well managed 'step up' and 'step down' processes between levels are a critical element of effective practice and decision making. Wherever possible, a successful intervention should result in a safe step down to universal services.

Services within early help (stage 1&2)

The Family Information Service

The Family Information Service (FIS) is a statutory service providing free individually tailored, impartial information, advice and guidance on any family matter. The service is available to any family member taking care of children or young people aged 0-19 years of age inclusive (up to 25 years for children and young people with SEND) as well as professionals working with families in Reading. The service is delivered by staff who are qualified in information, advice and guidance.

Signpost families here: [Reading Directory](#) | [Reading Family Information Service](#)

Reading children's centres

There are four children's centre hubs and three satellite children's centres in Reading which deliver services to the community. Reading children's centres welcome all families and provide a wide range of services to give children the best start in life, including:

- free activities for babies and toddlers 0-5 years
- whole family support and health services
- volunteering and journey to employment

Signpost families to register and access timetables here: [Children's centres - Brighter Futures For Children](#)

Health visitor

Health visitors are registered nurses and midwives with an additional community public health qualification. They offer support and practical advice on many aspects of child development as well as family health. Parents with a child aged 0-5 can get in touch with the Health Visiting team using the [ChatHealth](#) service to get confidential advice and information by sending a text message to **07312 263283**.

ONE Reading Partnership

The partnership team works with Brighter Futures for Children and external partners including police, health and education to promote and embed early help arrangements that form the basis to deliver ambitious shared outcomes for the children, young people and families of Reading.

Find out more: [One Reading Children and Young People's Partnership - Brighter Futures For Children](#)

Partnership outreach workers

The partnership outreach worker role is to assist partner agencies to coordinate early help arrangements to support children and their families. This is usually working with families whose needs meet threshold 2b – focused help for multiple needs. These families do not need help from a key worker such as family worker or social worker, but still need help with these needs. A partnership outreach worker will:

- Provide practical support, consultation, training and development to professionals from all agencies
- identify needs as outlined in the Reading Threshold Guidance
- provide support to complete an Early Help Assessment
- promote and support multi-agency team around the family meetings.

In partnership with the lead professional and family, they will ensure:

- appropriate thresholds are met
- there is a lead/key worker recognised by the family and partner agencies
- there is a whole family assessment
- the voice and views of the child are actively sought, heard and represented throughout their participation
- there is a plan that takes account of all relevant family members which is regularly reviewed.

The partnership outreach worker is allocated to the lead professional and will be available to help with any barriers they may face, that could prevent successful outcomes.

Email OneReading@brighterfuturesforchildren.org for further information.

Children's Single Point of Access (CSPoA)

The Children's Single Point of Access (CSPoA) is a multi-agency safeguarding team which operates as the 'front door service' for Brighter Futures for Children (BFFC). All contacts received in respect of concerns about a child who resides in Reading (from pre-birth to 18 years old) come in through CSPoA. This includes requests for early help and prevention, support for children with disabilities, safeguarding and child protection.

- If you suspect there is immediate danger, call 999 first, then 0118 937 3641, Option 1, Mon-Fri 9am-5pm and complete the CSPoA form within 24 hours of doing so
- Out of hours emergency telephone: 01344 351 999, 5pm to 9am, Monday to Friday and 5pm Friday to 9am Monday.

CSPoA co-ordinates incoming contacts and ensures that they follow the appropriate pathway according to the child or young person's needs, applying the agreed thresholds for access to services in line with the BFFC threshold criteria.

CSPoA also makes sure that information is gathered and shared effectively between different agencies and with service users, so the most appropriate decisions are made regarding the level of need and the response required.

Having a single point of access allows for timely, informed and evidence-based decisions to ensure a child or young person's safety. CSPoA has been developed in partnership with services across Reading and Berkshire, including police, health and education, and are all represented within the CSPoA team. Further information can be found here [CSPoA](#).

Escalation guidance

Caring for, and ensuring the safety of, children and adults can be complex or challenging. It can involve several different professionals who may all have different views and contributions to make. Sometimes situations arise when workers within one organisation may believe or consider that the actions, inactions or decisions of another do not adequately safeguard a child or adult. Learning from local and national safeguarding case reviews has highlighted the need for a clear escalation policy that all practitioners feel confident to use. When a professional disagrees with the practice of another professional on the grounds of the child's welfare, they should work with the colleague to first seek to understand the rationale for the decision. However, if concern still exists for the child's safety and wellbeing the professionals concerned should work collaboratively and proactively to find a solution for the child.

The Berkshire West Safeguarding Partnership (BWSCP) [escalation guidance](#) provides workers, Designated Safeguarding Leads and managers with the means to raise concerns they have by:

- avoiding professional disputes that put children at risk or obscure the focus on the child
- resolving the disagreements between agencies quickly and openly
- identifying problem areas in working together where there is a lack of clarity and promote resolution via amendments to multi-agency protocols and procedures.

Child in need (CHIN)

A child in need is defined under the Children Act 1989 as a child who is unlikely to achieve or maintain a reasonable level of health or development, or whose health and development is likely to be significantly or further impaired, without the provision of services; or a child who is disabled. In these circumstances, Brighter Futures for Children (BFFC) will complete a single assessment of the child's needs, and if the outcome of this assessment recommends the child could be supported by a child in need plan and requires support through statutory services, a social worker will work with the family to develop a child in need support plan. A CHIN plan is consent based and will directly address any unmet need raised through the single assessment. The CHIN plan can also start as part of a step down from child protection or alongside a supervision order. Child in need meetings can take place

in a variety of locations, and you will be invited to contribute. You will receive the notes of the child in need meeting within 10 working days and may be allocated agreed actions to help develop the plan.

Guidance for practitioners

This webpage (and downloadable document) is intended to support practitioners to understand the child in need process, the expectations of them when asked to participate in a child in need meeting, and what they can expect while participating in the process.

<https://www.berkshirewestsafeguardingchildrenpartnership.org.uk/scp/professionals/child-in-need-meeting-and-plan>

There are also useful links to related procedures and guidance, including threshold information. Please share with any colleagues who are involved in the child in need process.

Information for parents and carers

This webpage explains what a child in need meeting is, why is the meeting happening and some useful tips for parents and carers.

<https://www.berkshirewestsafeguardingchildrenpartnership.org.uk/scp/parents-and-carers/child-in-need-meetings-information-for-parents-and-carers>

There are also links through to other helpful websites. The attached leaflet provides a summary and an easy link to the webpage. Please share this with families or display this in an appropriate space.

Child protection (CP)

What is a child protection conference?

A child protection conference is a meeting between parents/carers, the child or young person (where appropriate), supporters or advocates and those practitioners most involved with the child, young person, family that is held when there is a concern about the safety of a child or young person within a family.

There is an initial conference (ICPC) which is followed by review conferences (RCPC) if a child protection plan is made. The first RCPC takes place within three months of the ICPC, to review progress of the child protection plan; then again, at least every six months while the child protection plan remains in place.

The purpose of the child protection conference is to:

- share information about a child's health, safety and wellbeing
- assess whether a child is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm
- identify the strengths within the family
- identify any support needed by the family and the professionals / agencies who might be able to provide this
- identify changes needed (if any) in order to ensure the safety of the child
- decide if the child needs to have a child protection plan or child in need plan.

Before a child protection conference takes place, an investigation (sometimes called Section 47 enquiries) will have been carried out to decide if it is necessary to hold an ICPC. The investigation

requires the allocated social worker to talk to the parents/carers, the child/young person, and other practitioners.

An ICPC is held when agencies believe that a child or young person may be at risk of significant harm.

The aim of the conference is to discuss, then decide, what will ensure the safety and wellbeing of the child or young person where such concerns have been identified.

A child protection conference does not make decisions about legal or court action, or about where children should live.

Attending the child protection conference

When invited to attend the conference about a child, you will be encouraged to take an active part, participate in the discussion and contribute towards the development of a plan to keep the child(ren) safe. You will need to prepare and send a written report in advance.

Who else will be at the conference?

An independent person will chair the conference. There will also be someone to take notes of the meeting and the meeting may be recorded so there is an accurate record.

A number of professionals will also be invited to the meeting and prepare a report to be shared in advance. Examples are:

- Social workers
- Health visitors
- Doctors
- Teachers
- Attendance officers
- Police

All professionals who have had involvement with the family will be invited, but there may also be some individuals and some agencies represented who you have not met before. These people are invited because of their expertise or because they might be able to provide help.

What happens at the initial conference?

Before the child protection conference, the social worker prepares a report for the conference setting out the identified concerns and, what is going well for the child. The report will also include the child/young person's views.

If any of the attendees have confidential contact information which they think needs to be kept from another attendee at the conference, this needs to be raised with the Chair before the conference begins.

At the start of the conference, all of the participants will introduce themselves. The Chairperson will ask everyone to say what they are worried about, what is working well and what, if anything they think needs to change to keep the child or young person safe, after which a decision will be made about whether a **child protection plan** is needed. A child protection plan is a list of actions with details of who is to do them and by when.

You should come out of the conference clear about what needs to happen.

How can you prepare?

During the conference you will be given the chance to comment about what others are saying and to give your own information and views. You will also be asked what you think should happen in the future, including any help that you feel is necessary.

What happens after the conference?

After the conference you will be sent a copy of the notes, a summary of the key discussion and decisions.

If a child protection plan is made, you will be asked to attend regular meetings called core group meetings. At these meetings you will look at the plan and discuss what progress has been made.

A review conference, which may be referred to as an RCPC, will be held after three months and then at six monthly intervals for, as long your child is the subject of a child protection plan.

It may be that the child does not need a child protection plan, but that the discussion has identified support that may benefit your child/young person and family. If this is the case, then a Child in Need (CHIN) plan will be developed instead.

Contact information

You can call the social worker or the child protection conference chair.

Children looked after (CLA)

Reading Virtual School: EYFS guidance

Reading Virtual School is responsible for ensuring that arrangements are in place to promote the education of children looked after and improve their educational experiences and outcomes. The Virtual School is notified by children's social care when a child becomes looked after and will contact the child's early years setting. If it is the first time a setting is supporting a child looked after, training will be delivered by the Virtual School to ensure that the designated teacher is aware of their statutory responsibilities and knows how to complete a personal education plan (PEP).

Children with a social worker

In September 2021, the Virtual School became the strategic lead in championing the educational attendance, attainment, and progress of children with a social worker. Children with a social worker refers to all children and young people, from 0 to 18, who are currently or have previously been subject to a Child in Need plan or a Child Protection plan in the past 6 years.

The personal education plan (PEP) meeting

The PEP is a statutory document for children looked after and forms a key part of their care plan. It is a record of the child's educational progress and includes the child's views about their education, information about their development, progress, and SMART targets for the child's next steps. For children who are looked after by Reading, termly PEP meetings commence when a child starts at an early years setting. Children who become looked after when they already attend an early years setting (aged two or over), must have a PEP meeting within ten days of becoming looked after, so that the PEP is available for the child's first looked after review.

For children looked after by Reading, the PEP meeting is organised by the child's social worker and may take place virtually or in-person. The child, child's carer, social worker, designated teacher, early years setting staff, Virtual School, and any other relevant professionals (e.g., SENDCo) are invited to attend. The PEP document is prepared in advance by the designated teacher and social worker. The

designated teacher chairs the PEP meeting, guiding the discussion through the various sections on the PEP document. All PEPs will be quality-assured and signed off by the Virtual School. PEPs will then be sent by the Virtual School to children's social care business support officers for upload to Mosaic and should then be distributed to relevant professionals by the social worker.

Children looked after are entitled to Early Years Pupil Premium funding which can be accessed via the local authority. Additional Early Years Pupil Premium funding can be agreed and allocated via SMART targets in the PEP to ensure that effective interventions are in place to support child's learning, wellbeing, and development.

Children previously looked after

The Virtual School has a statutory duty to promote the education of children previously looked after in their area, through offering advice, guidance and signposting to parents, education settings and multi-agency professionals.

The Virtual School aims to:

- Develop and sustain productive relationships with education settings to impact the achievement of children previously looked after
- Deliver cross service training for education staff, families and multi-agency professionals to raise their awareness of the diverse educational needs of children previously looked after
- Promote good practice with education settings on identifying and meeting the educational needs of children previously looked after, through effective use of Early Years Pupil Premium funding.

Where a child has been adopted from care, has a special guardianship order or a child arrangement order then it will be up to those who have parental responsibility to decide if they wish to let the setting know. Evidence, such as a photocopy of the adoption order would need to be provided and settings must confirm they have seen this evidence before payments can be made.

Statutory guidance can be found here: [Promoting the education of looked-after children and previously looked-after children \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/101422/promoting-the-education-of-looked-after-children-and-previously-looked-after-children.pdf)

Designated teacher (DT)

Early years settings should have a nominated designated teacher (DT) who is responsible for children looked after or children previously looked after in their setting. Usually, the DT is the setting manager or deputy manager. Here is the statutory guidance to support this role: [The designated teacher for looked after and previously looked-after children - Statutory guidance on their roles and responsibilities](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/101422/promoting-the-education-of-looked-after-children-and-previously-looked-after-children.pdf).

The Virtual School extended duties include:

- enhancing partnerships between education settings and the local authority so agencies can work together in a child focused manner
- identifying the needs of the cohort and addressing barriers to poor educational outcomes to ensure pupils make educational progress
- offering advice and support to key professionals such as social workers, designated safeguarding leads, designated teachers, and school leaders to help children make progress, including through increasing their confidence in using evidence-based interventions.

What is not in the scope for Virtual School:

- Working directly with individual children and their families - including tracking and monitoring of individual educational progress, providing academic or other interventions
- Responding to requests from parents or carers to offer advice, intervention, and support in relation to individual children with a social worker
- Taking responsibility for children with SEND who do not require or need a social worker, as defined above.

Virtual School contact details:

- Virtual School Headteacher: Clare Houlton, clare.houlton@brighterfuturesforchildren.org
- Assistant Headteacher for Early Years and Primary: Matt Bevan, matt.bevan@brighterfuturesforchildren.org
- Assistant Headteacher for Children with a Social Worker: Bianca James, bianca.james@brighterfuturesforchildren.org

Private fostering

Private fostering is an arrangement when a parent asks someone who is not a close relative to look after their child under 16, or under 18 if the child is disabled, for 28 days or more. Although this is done by a private arrangement, legally the parent and the carer must notify the relevant Local Authority Children's Services so that they can ensure that the child is being properly looked after.

Close relatives are defined as the child's grandparents, brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles or step-parents.

Private fostering is very different from foster care provided by children's services - a privately fostered child is not classified as a child looked after under the Children Act 1989. Private foster carers do not have parental responsibility for the child.

Anyone working with children has an important role in keeping children safe. This includes helping parents and private foster carers to meet their legal responsibilities to notify the local authority of private fostering arrangements. If you come across what you think may be a private fostering arrangement in Reading, you should:

- Ask the parent(s) and/or private foster carer(s) if they have notified BFFC children's services of the private fostering arrangements.
- Inform the private foster carer(s) and the child's parent(s) of their legal responsibilities (you could ask them to visit www.brighterfuturesforchildren.org/private-fostering and encourage them to contact CSPoA.
- Notification should come from the child's parents and carers. However, to ensure all private fostering arrangements are brought to Brighter Futures for Children's attention please also contact children's services yourself.

If you have concerns that a child may be at risk of harm, you should follow child protection procedures.

Attendance

Acceptance of early education for children under five years is not compulsory, however it is important to ask questions when children do not return to the setting, particularly when they are

considered vulnerable. Settings should use their discretion to decide who vulnerable children are and include those with:

- a child in need plan, a child protection plan or who are a looked-after child
- an education, health, and care (EHC) plan
- family circumstance presenting challenges for them, such as drug and alcohol misuse, parental offending, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse.

Contact the parent to establish why and if support can be provided to resume attendance.

Signpost families to [FIS](#) when circumstances change and highlight the wide range of childcare options available in Reading.

Consider what other professionals are working with the child for e.g., health visitor, social worker, family worker, portage and notify that the child is no longer accessing EY provision. Can they support the parent to resume the child's attendance at your setting or another?

If you need to report concerns about the child contact [Children's Single Point of Access](#).

Record keeping

The designated safeguarding lead is responsible for ensuring that child protection files are kept up to date. Information should be kept confidential and stored securely. It is good practice to keep concerns and referrals in a separate child protection file for each child. A timeline should be used as a summary of any/all incidents.

Records should include:

- a clear and comprehensive summary of the concern, including dates and the name of the person completing the record
- details of how the concern was followed up
- a note of any action taken, decisions reached and the outcome.

DSLs should ensure the file is only accessed by those who need to see it and where the file or content within it is shared, this happens in line with information sharing best practice as set out in part one and part two of KCSIE. When children leave, the DSL should ensure their child protection file is transferred to the new school as soon as possible. This should be transferred separately from the main pupil file, ensuring secure transit, and confirmation of receipt should be obtained. Lack of information about their circumstances can impact on the child's safety, welfare, and educational outcomes.

In addition to the child protection file, the designated safeguarding lead should also consider if it would be appropriate to share any additional information with the new school in advance of a child leaving to help them put in place the right support to safeguard this child and to help the child thrive in the school. For example, information that would allow the new school or college to continue supporting children who have had a social worker and been victims of abuse and have that support in place for when the child arrives.

DSLs must be confident that staff can identify concerns and report them in a timely manner. Staff also need to be trained to report concerns with clarity - no use of initials, using the child's words where possible, factual not judgemental.

The safeguarding file must be stored securely and confidentially until the child's 25th birthday and is then destroyed securely. If you use online systems, records must be archived by the DSL within the on-line system to delete on the child's 25th birthday.

All records can be passed on (without a copy being kept) to the child's next school. If the child leaves your setting to be electively home educated, you retain the safeguarding file until the child's 25th birthday or until the child re-enters an education setting, at which point the file should be requested by the new setting and it should be transferred within the statutory timescale of 5 days.

DSLs do get requests to share safeguarding concerns and records with other professionals e.g., the police. Deciding not to share can result in harm. Each case must be considered individually.

It is illegal to destroy records relating to child sexual abuse and these must be retained indefinitely.

Appendix

1. Useful website links

2. Useful guidance

3. Useful training links

4. Templates

With special thanks to Chiltern Day Nursery, The Lodge Day Nursery & Sure Start Whitley Day Nursery for contributions:

- Meeting report form
- Recording form for safeguarding concerns
- Body Maps
- Individual Safeguarding log
- Long term absence form

5. Poster links

6. Story books

Useful website links

BWSCP	https://www.berkshirerwestsafeguardingchildrenpartnership.org.uk/scp
Gov.uk	https://www.gov.uk/topic/schools-colleges-childrens-services/safeguarding-children https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-children-and-protecting-professionals-in-early-years-settings-online-safety-considerations
BfFC	https://brighterfuturesforchildren.org/ https://brighterfuturesforchildren.org/professionals/under-5s-services/ https://brighterfuturesforchildren.org/professionals/under-5s-services/early-years-useful-docs-and-links/
BWA	https://www.berkshirerwomensaid.org.uk/
NSPCC	NSPCC Learning homepage - safeguarding training and resources https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/#pros
BfFC Privacy notice and retention records	https://brighterfuturesforchildren.org/privacy-notice/
Rose Centre	https://acrereading.org/rose-centre/
One Reading	https://brighterfuturesforchildren.org/professionals/early-help-and-prevention-services/one-reading-children-and-young-peoples-partnership/ https://rva.org.uk/one-reading/
Think U Know	https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/articles/keeping-your-under-five-safe-online/
Vodafone	https://www.vodafone.co.uk/newscentre/media/digital-parenting-8

Useful guidance

Ofsted- inspecting Safeguarding in the early years	Inspecting safeguarding in early years, education and skills - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
Report concerns about a child	Report concerns about a child - Brighter Futures For Children
Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)	Allegations against people in a position of trust - Brighter Futures For Children
Prevent Duty Guidance: for England and Wales	Revised Prevent duty guidance: for England and Wales - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
Working Together to Safeguard Children	Working together to safeguard children - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
Keeping Children Safe in Education	Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
Child abuse concerns: guide for practitioners	Child abuse concerns: guide for practitioners - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
Female genital mutilation	Female genital mutilation - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
County Lines	Protecting children from county lines NSPCC Learning County Lines exploitation: applying All Our Health - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) https://www.berkshirewestsafeguardingchildrenpartnership.org.uk/scp/professionals/county-lines-1
Child abuse linked to belief or faith	Child abuse linked to faith or belief – Safeguarding Network Abuse linked to Belief or Faith – The Indicators - Safeguarding Hub Child abuse linked to faith or belief: national action plan - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) Videos on the National FGM Centre site https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EY2JioSV_RQ and youtu.be/38bKOfS1z6s
Online safety considerations	Safeguarding children and protecting professionals in early years settings: online safety considerations - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
Prevent and Channel	Helping 'Prevent' terrorism and extremism - Reading Borough Council
Food safety	Food safety - Help for early years providers - GOV.UK (education.gov.uk) PowerPoint Presentation (foundationyears.org.uk) Food allergies in babies and young children - NHS (www.nhs.uk)
Threshold documents	https://www.berkshirewestsafeguardingchildrenpartnership.org.uk/scp/reading/reading-threshold-guidance
Escalation guidance	https://www.berkshirewestsafeguardingchildrenpartnership.org.uk/scp/professionals/escalation-policy-and-guidance

Useful training links

Early Years Training Programme	Under 5s and early years services Brighter Futures for Children
Bespoke Training Booking Form	https://forms.office.com/r/YeLOUt8P3P
Universal Safeguarding	Email to book: Learning@brighterfuturesforchildren.org
Designated Safeguarding Lead - new to the role and refresher training	Email to book Learning@brighterfuturesforchildren.org
E-Learning -Universal Safeguarding -Female Genital Mutilation -Safer Recruitment -Prevent -Channel Awareness	Access: Berkshire West Safeguarding Children Partnership - Training
Threshold of Need Briefing	Email to register: OneReading@brighterfuturesforchildren.org
Extended Duties Training for Designated Safeguarding Leads EYFS (Children with a Social Worker)	Email to book bianca.james@brighterfuturesforchildren.org
Attending Child Protection Conferences	Email to book business.support@brighterfuturesforchildren.org
Allegations Against Staff and Volunteers Management Training	Email to book business.support@brighterfuturesforchildren.org

Setting name

CP/CHIN/TAC/Core group - written report form

Name, address and contact number of setting:					
Type of meeting (Please highlight):	CP	CHIN	TAC	Core group	Other (Please specify):
Meeting contribution (Please highlight):	Designated safeguarding officer to attend			Unable to attend. Report will be sent	
Date and time of meeting:					
Date of writing report:					

Name of child:		Date of birth:	
Name of key person:		Name of DSL:	
Attendance details:			
What is working well:			
Areas of concern / what are we worried about:			
Report written by (Staff member print and sign):		Date:	
Report shared with parent (Please highlight):	Yes / No Verbally shared	Date:	



Updated information
and/or actions following
meeting:

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Setting name

Recording Form for Safeguarding Concerns

Name of child:		Date of birth:	
Date of incident:	Time of incident:	Location:	
Date of writing report:	Time of writing report:	Name and position of person making report:	
<p>Nature of concern/disclosure <i>Please include where you were when the child made a disclosure, what you saw, who else was there, what did the child say or do and what you said.</i> <i>[Ensure that if there is an injury this is recorded (size and shape) and a body map is completed]</i> <i>[Make it clear if you have a raised a concern about a similar issue previously]</i></p>			
Signature of person making the report:		Date:	Time:
DSL that incident is reported to:		Date:	Time:
<p>Summary of intended action and/or treatment given/referral made by DSL. Please circle: Hospital, medication, CSPoA, LADO, police, other agency.</p>			
Further actions agreed:			



Parent informed (any comments) Yes/No	Date:	Time:
Feedback given to Room Leader Yes/No	Date:	Time:
Feedback given to person who recorded disclosure Yes/No	Date:	Time:
Signature of senior manager:	Date:	Time:
Signature of DSL:	Date:	Time:
Signature of parent/carer:	Date:	Time:



Long term absence notification

Name of child:	Date:
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Room (Please circle):	
Date of first absence:	
Expected date of return:	
Where are you going?	
Reason for absence: Please provide as much detail as possible	
Parent/Carer (Print and sign):	
Senior staff member (Print and sign):	
Any intended action:	



Poster Links

[BfC private fostering guide for parents](#)

[BfC private fostering A4 poster](#)

[BfC private fostering A5 flyer](#)

[BWSCP private fostering poster](#)

Ofsted, CSPOA, food safety and other useful posters can be found here

<https://brighterfuturesforchildren.org/professionals/under-5s-services/early-years-useful-docs-and-links/>

Story books

Title	Author
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Troll Stinks! • Chicken Clicking • Goldilocks (A Hashtag Cautionary tale) • Old McDonald had a phone 	Jeanne Willis
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private parts are private • Secrets and Suprises • My safety network 	Jayneen Saunders
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strangers and dangers • Body boundaries make me stronger 	Yael Feder