



Buckinghamshire Early Years Service

Safeguarding and Child Protection Guidance for Childcare Providers

September 2025

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Introduction

This document provides important information and guidance that can support **all** providers of early education, childcare and home-based childcare in meeting their responsibilities for safeguarding children, including.

- Early Years practitioners including childminders and assistants
- Out of school providers including those that offer Holiday Activities and Food programme (HAF)
- Volunteers
- Apprentices
- Work experience / students
- Agency workers
- Bank staff including lunch cover
- Registered persons including voluntary management organisations

As a provider you have a critical role to play in safeguarding children and young people, serving some of the most vulnerable and impressionable members of society.

It is essential that all staff/volunteers working directly with children are aware of and understand the content of the following documents:

Working Together to Safeguard Children December 2023 (WTtSC23)

This has been developed to help professionals understand what they need to do, and what they can expect of one another, to safeguard children. It focuses on core legal requirements, making it clear what should be done in partnership and by individuals to keep children safe. To access the document go to [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023](#)

What to do if you're Worried a child is being Abused? 2015

This offers non statutory guidance and advice to help practitioners identify child abuse and neglect and take appropriate action in their response. To access the document go to [What to do if you're Worried a child is being Abused? 2015](#)

Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage & Childcare Register

Early years providers have a duty under section 40 of the Childcare Act 2006 to comply with the safeguarding and welfare requirements as well as the learning and development and assessment arrangement of this document. To access the document go to [Early years foundation stage \(EYFS\) statutory framework - GOV.UK](#). It is essential that all providers refer to the requirements of the [Childcare Register](#), and the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, to ensure they meet the appropriate minimum registration requirements.

Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025)

Schools must comply with [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025](#). Other childcare providers will find it useful to refer to.

Education Inspection Framework 2023

Ofsted's education inspection framework (EIF) applies to maintained schools and academies, non-association independent schools, early years settings, further education and skills providers, prisons and young offender institutions and early years settings. [Education inspection framework \(EIF\) - GOV.UK](#)

Prevent Duty 2023

Providers must have a named officer for Prevent Duty and must have regard for [The Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales](#).

Early Years Providers

Working Together to Safeguard Children December 2023 (WTtSC23)

Early years providers must ensure that:

- they are alert to any issues of concern in the child's life.
- they have, and implement, a policy and procedures to safeguard children. This must include an explanation of the action to be taken when there are safeguarding concerns about a child and in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff. The policy must also cover:
 - the use of mobile phones and cameras in the setting,
 - that staff complete safeguarding training that enables them to understand their safeguarding policy and procedures,
 - that staff have up-to-date knowledge of safeguarding issues and recognise signs of potential abuse and neglect.
- they have a practitioner who is designated to take lead responsibility for safeguarding children within each early years setting and who must liaise with local statutory children's services as appropriate. This lead must also complete child protection training.
- the EYFS reform explicitly replaces "lead practitioner" with clearer DSL responsibilities, with KCSIE emphasising these duties. Wording should be changed to this effect with "lead practitioner" replaced with designated safeguarding lead (DSL).

NB A childminder will be the named DSL.

NB: All providers must ensure that their safeguarding policy is specific to the procedures in Buckinghamshire, in line with the Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership. To ensure your policy meets relevant requirements please see [Writing a Child Protection Policy - Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership \(buckssafeguarding.org.uk\)](http://buckssafeguarding.org.uk)

The Role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The DSL should take lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection.

- The DSL must always be contactable during operational hours. It is best practice for providers to have a deputy DSL who can take on this responsibility in their absence and has also completed the DSL training to provide them with the knowledge and skills required to carry out the role.
- The DSL must be up to date with Buckinghamshire policies, procedures and protocols.
- The DSL must be able to identify and understand the different levels of need and how these need to be responded to.
- The DSL must understand the importance of information sharing and develop multi-agency working.
- The DSL must ensure each member of staff has access to, and understands, the child protection policy and procedures.
- The DSL 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. Records should include:
 - a clear and comprehensive summary of the concern

- details of how the concern was followed up and resolved
- a note of any action taken, decisions reached and the outcome

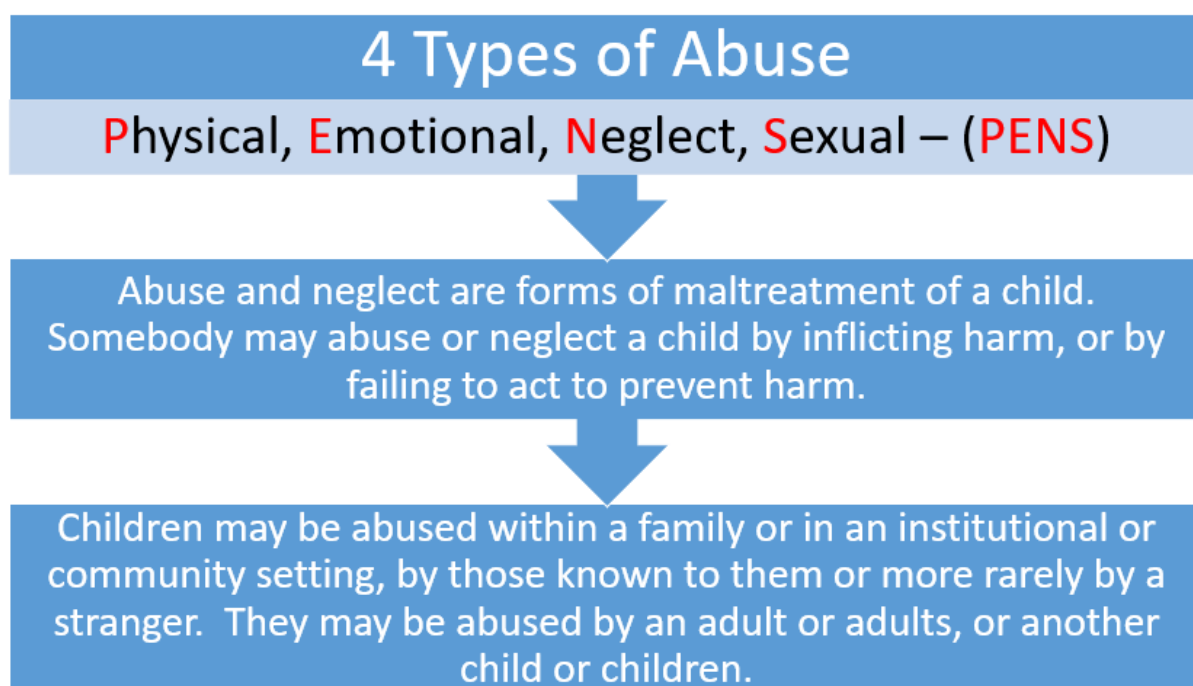
Committee Safeguarding Responsibilities

The committee/trustees of voluntary managed provision are responsible for ensuring that the setting has effective safeguarding policies and procedures and meet the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the [EYFS statutory framework for group and school-based providers](#). It is highly recommended that the Committee have an individual committee member to champion safeguarding/child protection issues within the setting and complete the DSL training.

A Child Centred Approach to Safeguarding

What is Abuse and Neglect?

Children may be vulnerable to neglect and abuse or exploitation from within their family and from individuals they come across in their day-to-day lives. These threats can take a variety of different forms, including **sexual, physical, emotional, neglect**, exploitation by criminal gangs and organised crime groups, trafficking, online abuse, sexual exploitation and the influences of extremism leading to radicalisation. Whatever the form of abuse or neglect, practitioners should put the needs of children first when determining what action to take.



A helpful explanation of the different kinds of abuse is available on page 154 of the [WTtSC23 Glossary](#).

Specific Safeguarding Issues

Below are some safeguarding issues all staff should be aware of. Additional information on these safeguarding issues and information on other safeguarding issues is included in the [Annex of KCSIE 2025](#).

Radicalisation

Radicalisation is the process by which an individual comes to support or justify terrorist violence. It often involves adopting a terrorist ideology—a set of beliefs and goals that promote violence and seek to influence others to do the same.

Terrorist and extremist ideologies frequently use tools such as:

- **Narratives:** Stories that frame violence as justified or heroic.
- **Propaganda:** Media designed to manipulate beliefs and emotions.
- **Grievances:** Real or perceived injustices used to fuel anger.
- **Conspiracy theories:** False claims that foster mistrust and division.

Terrorism refers to actions that:

- Cause serious harm to people or property.
- Disrupt electronic systems.
- Are intended to intimidate the public or influence government. These acts are carried out to advance political, religious, or ideological causes.

Extremism, as defined in the UK's Prevent strategy, is vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including:

- Democracy
- The rule of law
- Individual liberty
- Mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. It also includes calls for violence against members of the armed forces.

Providers must have a named person responsible for Prevent and have regard to the [Prevent Duty guidance for England and Wales 2023](#). In order to fulfil this duty clear procedures must be in place for protecting children at risk of radicalisation. It isn't necessary to have separate Prevent Duty policies; however, these procedures must be included within existing safeguarding policies.

To assist implementation of the duty in section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, a free [Prevent e-learning training package](#) is available. This is introductory training. It provides a foundation on which to develop further knowledge around the risks of radicalisation and the roles involved in supporting those at risk.

The Department for Education has also published supporting advice for schools and further education settings on [managing the risk of radicalisation](#) in their education setting.

Martyn's Law and Protective Security

Martyn's Law – formally the Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025 – is named in memory of Martyn Hett, one of the 22 people killed in the 2017 Manchester Arena bombing. The law introduces new duties to help reduce harm from terrorist attacks. All UK schools, including early years, primary, secondary and further education, are classed as 'standard tier' premises and have two years to prepare before enforcement begins in 2027.

Many of these steps already feature in the Department for Education's Protective Security and Preparedness for Education Settings guidance. This non statutory guidance offers practical templates, SEND considerations and low-cost strategies that align closely with Martyn's Law.

Premises and events do not need to hire consultants or third-party companies to comply with Martyn's Law. Government guidance will help you understand how to meet the relevant duties to make informed decisions without external support. (Note that the Home Office and NaCTSO do not endorse any third-party products or

providers.)

Protective Security and Preparedness for Education Settings can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/protective-security-and-preparedness-for-education-settings>

A fact sheet about Martyn's Law can be found here:

<https://homeofficemedia.blog.gov.uk/2025/04/03/martyns-law-factsheet>

Further guidance is also available at:

<https://safeblog.lgfl.net/martyns-law-how-can-schools-prepare>

<https://www.protectuk.police.uk/martyns-law>

ACT for Education e-learning module:

<https://www.protectuk.police.uk/group/99>

Child Sexual Exploitation

This is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology. Go to [Child Sexual Exploitation DfE](#).

County Lines

County Lines is a form of criminal exploitation in which gangs groom and manipulate children and vulnerable adults recruiting them as runners to store and transport drugs, weapons and cash into smaller towns and rural areas across the country, using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of "deal line". This crime is often associated with other serious crimes such as sexual exploitation, violence, money laundering, modern slavery and human trafficking. They will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (inc. sexual violence) and weapons to control the victims. For further information go to: [Criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: county lines \(accessible version\) - GOV.UK](#)

Domestic Abuse

Domestic Abuse is any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to:

- psychological
- physical
- sexual
- financial
- emotional

All children can experience and be adversely affected by domestic abuse in the context of their home life where domestic abuse occurs between family members, including where those being abusive do not live with the child. Experiencing domestic abuse can have a significant impact on children. Section 3 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 recognises the impact of domestic abuse on children (0 to 18), as victims in their own right, if they see, hear or experience the effects of abuse. As with any child under 18, where there are concerns about safety or welfare, child safeguarding procedures should be followed and both young victims and young perpetrators

should be offered support.

The [Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme \(DVDS\) Guidance](#) (also known as 'Clare's Law') sets out how members of the public a formal mechanism to make enquires about an individual who they are in a relationship with, or who is in a relationship with someone they know, where there is a concern that the individual may be violent towards their partner. This scheme adds a further dimension to the information sharing about children where there are concerns that domestic abuse is impacting on the care and welfare of the children in the family. Go to [Domestic Abuse](#) website for further information.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

A collective term for a range of procedures which involve partial or total removal of the external female genitalia for non-medical reasons. It is sometimes referred to as female circumcision, or female genital cutting. The practice is medically unnecessary, is extremely painful and has serious health consequences, both at the time when the mutilation is carried out, and in later life.

FGM is against the law in the UK and an FGM duty came into force on 31 October 2015 which gives relevant professionals and the police information on the mandatory reporting duty. Go to [Mandatory reporting of female genital mutilation: procedural information - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) for further information. To access free training go to [FGM E-Learning](#).

Further Safeguarding Issues

Safeguarding action may also be needed to protect children and learners from:

- bullying, including online bullying and prejudice-based bullying
- learner to learner
- racist, disability and homophobic or transphobic abuse
- gender-based violence/violence against women and girls
- serious youth violence, particularly affecting children and young adults who have been excluded, have experienced trauma and have been involved in offending
- so-called honour-based violence
- sexual harassment and online sexual abuse between children and learners. Online abuse can include sending abusive, harassing and misogynistic messages; sharing nude and semi-nude images and videos; and coercing others to make and share sexual imagery
- sexual violence between children and learners
- upskirting (taking a picture of someone's genitals or buttocks under their clothing without them knowing, either for sexual gratification or in order to humiliate or distress the individual. It is a criminal offence)
- child sexual exploitation and trafficking
- child criminal exploitation, including county lines
- risks linked to using technology and social media, including online bullying; the risks of being groomed online for exploitation or radicalisation; and risks of accessing and generating inappropriate content, for example youth produced sexual imagery
- teenage relationship abuse
- substance misuse
- witchcraft
- forced marriage
- fabricated or induced illness
- homelessness
- poor parenting, particularly in relation to babies and young children

- parental mental health
- online safety now explicitly includes misinformation, disinformation (including fake news) and conspiracy theories alongside existing risks
- generative AI risks such as deepfakes and AI-based manipulation see [Generative artificial intelligence \(AI\) in education - GOV.UK](#) and [Generative AI: product safety expectations - GOV.UK](#) for further information

Plus, other issues not listed here but that pose a risk to children, learners and vulnerable adults.

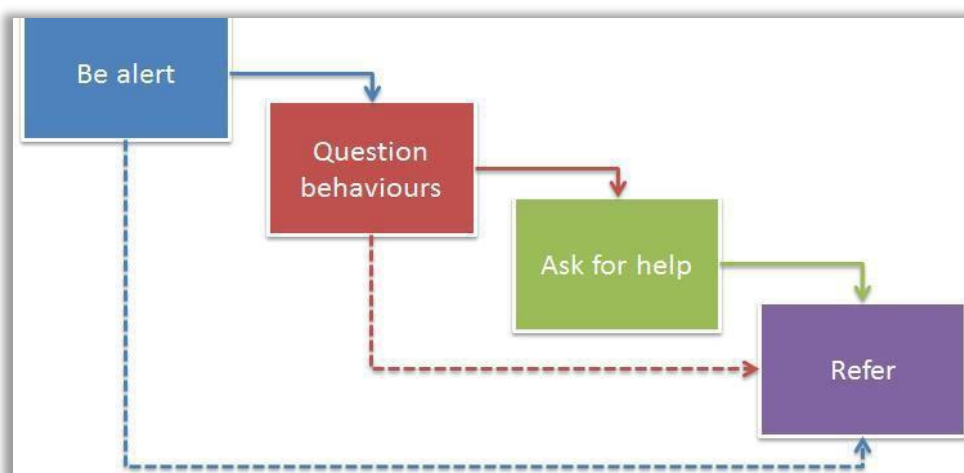
Safeguarding Principles and Procedures

Everyone who works with children has a responsibility to keep them safe. All staff working in a childcare environment should:

- have up to date knowledge, through relevant training, of signs of abuse and neglect
- should understand the settings Safeguarding policy and procedures in place to protect children in their care
- should know what to do when they have concerns about a child's welfare

Go to What to do if you're worried a child is being abused - advice for practitioners March which identifies four key steps to follow to help you to identify and respond appropriately to possible abuse and/or neglect as shown below: which identifies four key steps to follow to help you to identify and respond appropriately to possible abuse and/or neglect as shown below:

It may not always be appropriate to go through all the stages sequentially.



What to do if you have concerns about a child

All adults caring for children have a responsibility to identify and respond to any concerns regarding their safety and welfare. If a child reports that they are being abused or neglected following a conversation you have initiated or otherwise, you should:

- listen carefully to what they are saying
- take their allegation seriously and let them know they have done the right thing in telling you
- do not make promises but reassure them that you will take action to keep them safe
- do not ask leading questions. If it is necessary to seek further clarification, staff can ask open questions such as, What? When? Who? How? Where? Consider using the TED model:



- record the disclosure in the child's words using internal processes i.e. safeguarding concerns log
- you should inform and discuss your concerns/disclosure with the DSL

You will need to decide the most appropriate action to take, depending on the circumstances of the case and the seriousness of the child's allegation or concern.

5 Rs

Do staff:

- **Recognise** know the signs.
- **Respond** take action, don't delay.
- **Record** accurate, factual, signed and dated.
- **Report** share the concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).
- **Review** safeguarding practices regularly to ensure they are effective.

Early Help

Early Help is an approach that supports the identification of and response to emerging problems that children, young people and their families face at any point in their lives. It is a way of working that supports families to overcome these challenges and avoids things becoming worse and having long-lasting, negative consequences that are harder to resolve. Timely and flexible support is evidentially better for children and families, it prevents escalation and is as a result, more cost effective.

Early Help is provided through a range of different services: universal (which are open to all), targeted provision, and specialist services. It is also embedded in communities where provision is available to families through

informal support, local networks and voluntary activity which add real capacity and value to our collective Early Help offer.

Effective Early Help relies on a partnership approach with local organisations and agencies working together to:

- reflect the Government guidance in Working Together to Safeguard Children document
- identify children and families who would benefit from Early Help
- undertake an assessment of the family or child's needs for Early Help
- provide appropriate targeted Early Help services to address the assessed needs of a child and their family, which focuses on activity to significantly improve the outcomes for the child.

Early Help in Buckinghamshire consists of all the support available to children and families at Levels 1, 2 and 3 of the [Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership's Continuum of Need](#) document. It also enables children and young people moving away from statutory support (Level 4), to sustain the progress they have achieved and promote their increasing independence.

The partnership approach enables support to be provided at all levels of this continuum, from universal and preventative services to more targeted work with families with identified need or who are already known to services. The different organisations making up the Early Help Partnership enable a varied offer to be provided to children and families in Buckinghamshire. These organisations include voluntary and community sector partners as well as Council, Health, Police and other community services.

Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub

The Buckinghamshire Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) co-locates key partners to improve the initial response to safeguarding concerns in relation to children and vulnerable adults. Partners include representatives from Buckinghamshire Council, Social Workers, Thames Valley Police, Health and other professionals.

In Buckinghamshire any concerns or referrals relating to a child or young person are managed by Buckinghamshire Council's First Response Team which sits within MASH. Referrals are triaged to determine the urgency of action required and which professionals need to be involved, and information shared securely between agencies to enable informed decision making.

Whether it is a Level 2 or 3 requiring Early Help or statutory interventions from social care, all referrals go through a single front door which is First Response this is where your referrals will be triaged to determine which professionals need to be involved

Please be aware that any concern coming through to MASH involving an early year's child or their family, will be sent to the Bucks Early Years Safeguarding Team to determine if they attend an early years setting, if they do, one of the safeguarding managers will contact your DSL to obtain information about that child and submit the information back to MASH. So, if these information requests come through, please respond in a timely manner.

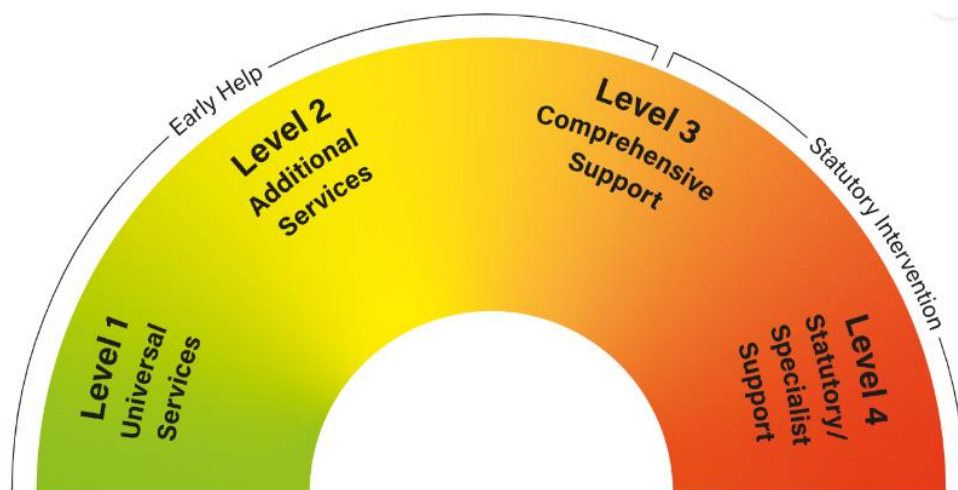
Assessing Need and Providing Help

The Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (BSCP) have published the [Continuum of Need Guidance](#) which helps identify when a child may be in need of additional support, and this is described through 4 levels:

Level 1 – children whose needs are met within universal services

Level 2 – children with additional needs showing early signs of vulnerability requiring Early

Help Level 3 – children in need who require statutory or specialist services and targeted Early Help
Help Level 4 – children who are suffering or likely to suffer significant harm



Go to [Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership website](#) for more information and to download a copy of this guidance to share with staff/assistants/volunteers and display within your provision.

Making a Referral

A referral to the First Response Team must be completed immediately if:

You believe that a child may be in need; that a child is being harmed or is likely to be harmed, or Level 3 or Level 4 of the threshold is met. This referral can be made by any practitioner by:

Telephone: 01296 383962 (**option 5**)

Email: secure-cypfirstresponse@buckinghamshire.gov.uk

Out of hours number: 0800 999 7677

Any referral should be confirmed in writing within 24 hours using the on-line [Multi-Agency Referral Form \(MARF\)](#).

When referring a child to First Response, you must make the parents/carers aware and gain consent for Level 3 referrals. Where possible you should seek consent for all referrals except where to do so is likely to put the child at risk of further harm. If you are unsure about whether consent is required, you can call First Response who will advise you.

You should consider and include any information you have on the child's development needs and their parent's/carer's ability to respond to these needs. A record of the referral should be retained. Once you have made a referral, a social worker should respond to you within one working day telling you what further action they have decided to take.

A record of referrals should be retained which should provide evidence that any agreed action following the referral has been taken promptly to protect the child from further harm. If you see further signs of potential abuse and neglect, report and refer again. All providers must have agreed procedures for when and how to contact the First Response Team and/or other relevant agencies about an individual child.

If a child is in immediate danger or is at risk of harm you should phone First Response and/or the police to make a referral.

Escalation

It is important that professionals should feel that their concerns have been considered. If a professional is unhappy with a decision that has been made regarding a referral, they should be confident in challenging the referral decision. Use the BSCP's [Escalation, Challenge and Conflict Resolution procedure](#) for guidance.

Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (BSCP)

To comply with the Statutory Working Together guidance, the Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (BSCP) replaced the Local Safeguarding Children Boards in September 2019. The Partnership has joint responsibility for safeguarding children and young people and is led by three safeguarding partners:

- Buckinghamshire Council
- Thames Valley Police
- Clinical Commissioning Group

All childcare providers in Buckinghamshire must comply with the BSCP guidance in order to meet the statutory duty. **However, please note the BSCP is a strategic body, it is not operational and must not be contacted if you have concerns regarding children in your care.**

For more detailed information and guidance for professionals please go to the Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (BSCP) website: [Home - Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership \(buckssafeguarding.org.uk\)](http://buckssafeguarding.org.uk)

Managing Allegations

The role of the LADO

The Buckinghamshire **Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)** is responsible for overseeing the management of all allegations against people in a position of trust working with children in Buckinghamshire, directly or indirectly, in a paid or voluntary position when that person has or may have:

- 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
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children
- behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children

The role of the LADO is to decide if it is an allegation of harm or a concern. An Allegations against Staff and Volunteers (ASV) meeting/discussion will normally only be convened when it has been decided that the threshold of harm/risk of harm has been met. Many cases can be managed through a discussion between the designated safeguarding lead, the police, any other relevant agency and the [LADO](#)

The LADO does not complete investigations but is involved in the management and oversight of individual cases; providing advice and guidance to employers and voluntary organisations, and monitoring cases to ensure that they are dealt with as quickly as possible, consistent with a thorough and fair process.

If the allegation does not meet the threshold for risk of harm, and there is no evidence of harm, but there is concern about inappropriate behaviour etc., the LADO should inform the employer/HR provider of this who will then take responsibility for addressing the issue.

For further information on Managing Allegations against Staff and Volunteers working with children go to the [Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership \(BSCP\)](#).

Possible outcomes following an investigation

Substantiated	There is sufficient evidence to prove the allegation that a child or young person has been harmed or there is a risk of harm. <i>If the facts of the incident are found to be true but it is not found that a child or young person has been harmed or there is a risk of harm, then consideration should be given to deciding that the outcome is 'unsubstantiated' or 'unfounded'.</i>
Malicious	There is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation and there has been a deliberate act to deceive. The police should be asked to consider what action may be appropriate in these circumstances.
False	There is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation, however, there is no evidence to suggest that there was a deliberate intention to deceive. <i>False allegations may be an indicator of abuse elsewhere which requires further exploration. If an allegation is demonstrably false, the employer, in consultation with the LADO, should consider referring the matter to LA Children's Social Care to determine whether the child is in need of services, or might have been abused by someone else.</i>
Unsubstantiated	There is insufficient evidence to either prove or disprove the allegation. The term, therefore, does not imply guilt or innocence.
Unfounded	The additional definition of 'unfounded' can be used to reflect cases where there is no evidence or proper basis which supports the allegation being made. It might also indicate that the person making the allegation misinterpreted the incident or was mistaken about what they saw. Alternatively, they may not have been aware of all the circumstances.

Cases in which an allegation was proven to be false, unfounded, unsubstantiated or malicious should not be included in employer references. A history of repeated concerns or allegations which have all been found to be false, unsubstantiated or malicious should also not be included in any reference. Details of allegations that are found to have been malicious should be removed from personnel records.

Contacting the LADO

If an allegation or a concern is raised about an adult working with children, this must be reported to LADO within 24 hours and Ofsted as soon as possible but within 14 days. Advice will be given by LADO on the action required and it is important that providers do not investigate until told otherwise.

Telephone: 01296 382 070

Secure email: secure-lado@buckinghamshire.gov.uk

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) Walton Street Offices. Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire

The LADO office is open from 9am – 5.30pm Monday to Thursday, and from 9am – 5pm on Friday

LADO's online referral form - [Report a concern about an adult working or volunteering with children](#)

If you are unsure whether to report your concerns, you can [request a consultation with the LADO](#) who will advise on the correct course of action.

OFSTED

Telephone: 0300 123 4666

Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

Registered childminders

If you are a registered childminder and employ someone else in a position of trust with children (such as another childminder or an assistant) and you have concerns or an allegation is made about him or her, you must (in your capacity as an employer) contact the LADO via the details above.

If you are a registered childminder working as a sole trader and an allegation is made about you, you should inform Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and liaise directly with the LADO as appropriate.

Previously sole traders were asked to speak to the Early Years Designated Safeguarding Manager who would support you and consider if the allegation met LADO threshold. We ask you continue to make the early years safeguarding team aware of allegations or concerns about the safety of a child alongside your other reporting responsibilities.

Low Level Concerns

It is important for all providers to have an ongoing culture of vigilance and that there are clear procedures in place for reporting low level concerns, including:

- concerns that are inconsistent with the staff code of conduct
- inappropriate conduct outside of work
- concerns that do not meet the allegations threshold or are otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO

These low-level concerns must be taken seriously, responded to promptly and should be recorded and kept on file, even if they do not meet the threshold. Advice can be sought from the LADO service or Early Years Safeguarding team.

Whistleblowing

Anyone working with children has a responsibility to protect them from harm.

All childcare and early years professionals have a responsibility to report abuse and malpractice when it is suspected or should they have concerns regarding the way in which children are being cared for, regardless of whom they will be reporting. All providers should promote an atmosphere and ethos which enables children, staff, and volunteers to express any concerns they have openly without the fear of any repercussions.

A detailed whistleblowing policy should be in place. This must include when and how to report concerns and the process that will be followed after staff report concerns.

Where a staff member feels unable to raise an issue with their employer, or feels that their genuine concerns are not being addressed, other channels are open to them:

- NSPCC whistleblowing advice line is available. Staff can call 0800 0280285 – 08:00 to 20:00, Monday to Friday and 09:00 to 18:00 at weekends. The email address is: help@nspcc.org.uk
- Ofsted provides guidance on how to make complaints about a childcare provider: [Complaints procedure - Ofsted - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
- General guidance on whistleblowing can be found via [Whistleblowing for employees](#)

If you fail to report a concern, then you could be subject to disciplinary action.

Support to the accused member of staff

As soon as possible after an allegation has been received, Human Resources should be consulted at the earliest opportunity in order that appropriate support can be provided via the organisation's occupational health, employee welfare provision or equivalent. For those organisations or childminders who do not have a dedicated HR department, you should consult your membership organisation e.g. Early Years Alliance or PACEY. Further wellbeing support can also be found here [Wellbeing | Early Years](#).

Whilst the Early Years Service are here to support providers, when there is an investigation taking place following an allegation, the team are unable to comment on individual circumstances as this may affect the outcome of the investigation.

The staff behaviour policy (sometimes called a code of conduct) should amongst other things, include low-level concerns, allegations against staff and whistleblowing.

Early Years Service Safeguarding Team

The Early Years Safeguarding Team within Buckinghamshire Council's Early Years Service plays a vital role in safeguarding and welfare within early years settings such as nurseries, pre-schools, childminders, and out of school provision.

The Early Years Safeguarding Team offers support, advice and guidance to all early year's providers in relation to allegations against members of the childcare workforce or where there is a concern about a child in an early year's setting.

If a concern has been raised with LADO, please also make the early years safeguarding team aware so relevant support can be provided. See contact details below.

Early Years Designated Manager for allegations against the childcare workforce:

Vanessa Mills

Deputy Early Years Designated Managers for allegations against the childcare workforce:

Tanya Page

Louise Merridan

For advice or to raise a concern please contact a member of the team:

Designated email account: eyesafeguarding@buckinghamshire.gov.uk

Telephone: 01296 387111

Safer Recruitment and Suitable People

"Providers must ensure that people looking after children are suitable; they must have the relevant qualifications, training and have passed any required checks to fulfil their roles. Providers must take appropriate steps to verify qualifications, including in cases where physical evidence cannot be produced. Providers must also ensure that any person who may have regular contact with children (for example, someone living or working on the same premises the early years provision is provided), is suitable." [EYFS 3.13](#)

All organisations working with children and young people should be proactive in reducing the risk of child abuse

taking place within the services they provide by complying with the Safeguarding and Welfare requirements of the EYFS Framework 2025 which include:

- developing a clear safeguarding ethos within the setting
- having robust safer recruitment procedures in place to check the suitability of all new recruits which are explicitly documented in the safeguarding policy. This must include information about staff qualifications and the identity checks, vetting processes and references that have been completed (including the criminal records check reference number, the date a check was obtained and details of who obtained it)
- ensuring all staff understand safe practice and receive appropriate training in child protection and how this training is delivered and how practitioners are supported to put this into practice
- ensuring all concerns and vulnerabilities expressed by staff are taken seriously and responded to
- undertaking thorough risk assessments following allegations to reduce the likelihood of repetition.

Trainees, volunteers, students and agency staff must meet the same requirements.

KCSIE state whoever is involved in the recruitment process must complete safer recruitment training. To maintain consistency with robust recruitment procedures it is strongly advised that early year's providers follow the advice in this guidance to ensure a safe environment for children.

For further information and detailed guidance on safer recruitment please go to [NSPCC Safer Recruitment](#)

References should be provided for previous employees upon request in a timely manner. When asked to provide references, providers should ensure the information confirms whether they are satisfied with the applicant's suitability to work with children and provide the facts (not opinions) of any substantiated safeguarding concerns/allegations that meet the harm threshold. They should not include information about concerns/allegations which are unsubstantiated, unfounded, false, or malicious. [Early years employment reference template - GOV.UK](#)

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Checks

All providers must obtain an enhanced DBS check in respect of every person aged 16 and over (including for unsupervised volunteers, and supervised volunteers who provide personal care) who:

- works directly with children
- lives on the premises on which the childcare is provided (unless there is no access to the part of the premises when and where children are cared for).

Ideally all new recruits should have a DBS before they start work. However, if a provider allows an individual to start work in a regulated activity before their DBS certificate is available, they should:

- ensure that the person is never left in unsupervised contact with children
- that they are in the process of obtaining a DBS certificate for that individual
- ensure a risk assessment is in place
- ensure all remaining staff are aware so statutory requirements are met.

A DBS check has no official expiry date. It is up to an employer/organisation to decide if and when a new check is needed. Repeat DBS checks should follow the organisation's policy. It is best practice to recheck an employee or volunteer's DBS every 3 years. Individuals should be encouraged to use the DBS update service [DBS Update Service - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Agency staff should come with a DBS check already on the update service which should be checked by the employer and logged.

External providers who visit your provision to offer specific activities should have a DBS check already on the update service. It is the responsibility of the employer to ensure their suitability is checked prior to sessions starting and a record is kept on site.

Depending on the organisation structure the registered person or Voluntary Management Committee must complete a DBS check via Ofsted, followed by an EY2 form where Ofsted will check their full suitability. These checks must be completed before registering the organisation or joining the committee as a standing member. DBS and suitability records must be kept on site.

The DBS check will not cover any time you lived or worked outside of the UK. An additional criminal records check (or checks if more than one country) should also be made. The person requesting the check may ask you:

- to get a check in the country you lived in: [Criminal records checks for overseas applicants - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/criminal-records-checks-for-overseas-applicants)
- for your permission to get a check on your behalf through an embassy

It is best practice for employers to monitor the ongoing suitability of their workforce and must consider effective processes to do so. This does not replace the requirement for a DBS check to be completed.

Disqualification Under the Childcare Act 2006

Updates regarding Disqualification by Association can be accessed from the following website address; [Disqualification Under the Childcare Act 2006](#). Annex A (page 30) includes a summary of changes to the arrangements, including removal of disqualification by association for individuals working in childcare in non-domestic settings e.g. schools and nurseries, but will continue to apply for individuals providing and working in childcare in domestic settings e.g. where childcare is provided in a childminder's home.

Recording and Monitoring Child Absences

In line with the strengthening of the recording and monitoring of child absences within the EYFS safeguarding reforms providers, including childminders, must follow up on absences in a timely manner. If a child is absent for a prolonged period of time, or if a child is absent without notification from the parent or carer, attempts must be made to contact the child's parents and/or carers and alternative emergency contacts.

Providers must consider patterns and trends in a child's absences and their personal circumstances and use their professional judgement when deciding if their absence should be considered as prolonged.

Consideration must be given to the child's vulnerability, parent's and/or carer's vulnerability and their home life. Any concerns must be referred to First Response and/or a police welfare check requested.

Providers, including childminders, must have an attendance policy that they share with parents and/or carers. This must include expectations for parents to report child absences and the actions that will be taken if a child is absent without notification or for a prolonged period of time, for example: implementing the setting's safeguarding procedures, following up with the parents and/or carers and contacting emergency contacts if parents and/or carers are not contactable.

Where possible providers must hold more than two emergency contacts for each child.

Safer Eating

The updated EYFS Framework brings a more detailed and practical focus on safer eating. The changes include:

- Whilst children are eating there should always be a member of staff in the room with a valid paediatric first aid certificate.
- Before a child is admitted to the setting the provider must obtain information about any special dietary requirements, preferences, food allergies and intolerances that the child has, and any special health requirements. This information must be shared by the [provider/childminder] with all staff involved in the preparing and handling of food.
- At each mealtime and snack time providers must be clear about who is responsible for checking that the food being provided meets all the requirements for each child.
- Providers must have ongoing discussions with parents and/or carers and, where appropriate, health professionals to develop allergy action plans for managing any known allergies and intolerances. This information must be kept up to date by the provider and shared with all staff.
- Providers must have ongoing discussions with parents and/or carers about the stage their child is at in regard to introducing solid foods, including to understand the textures the child is familiar with. Assumptions must not be made based on age.
- Children must always be within sight and hearing of a member of staff whilst eating.
- When a child experiences a choking incident that requires intervention, providers should record details of where and how the child choked and parents and/or carers made aware. The records should be reviewed periodically to identify if there are trends or common features of incidents that could be addressed to reduce the risk of choking. Appropriate action should be taken to address any identified concerns.

Toileting and Intimate Care

The updated Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Framework introduces a new emphasis on the importance of privacy and dignity during intimate care routines, including nappy changing and toileting. These practices must be carried out in a manner that protects children's wellbeing while maintaining appropriate safeguarding measures. Section 3.86 *"Children's privacy is considered and balanced with safeguarding and support needs when changing nappies and toileting."*

Managers and designated safeguarding leads must:

- audit current practices and environments to ensure compliance with the updated EYFS guidance
- provide training and supervision to support staff in delivering intimate care that upholds children's dignity and safety.
- promote a culture of respect, sensitivity, and safeguarding awareness in all aspects of care
- ensure that staff understand the balance between privacy and protection and are confident in applying professional judgement in everyday routines.

Information Sharing

Information sharing is essential for effective safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. It is a key factor identified in many Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (formerly known as Serious Case Reviews), where poor information sharing has resulted in missed opportunities to take action that keeps children and young people safe.

For the most current guidance to sharing information go to: [DfE non statutory information sharing advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services for children, young people, parents and carers](#)

Transfer of child protection and safeguarding files

Everyone must take responsibility for sharing information in order to keep children safe from harm, they must not assume someone else will pass on information. Where children transition onto their next provider, the designated safeguarding lead should ensure their child protection file is transferred as soon as possible. This should be transferred separately from the main child file, ensuring secure transit, and confirmation of receipt should be obtained.

Receiving providers should ensure key staff such as designated safeguarding leads are aware as required. Lack of information about the child's 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 provider 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. For example, information that would allow the new provider to continue supporting children and have that support in place for when the child arrives.

It is therefore essential that all providers/staff in early years settings understand how data protection laws operate.

Further guidance can be found on the website of the Information Commissioner's Office at: [UK GDPR guidance and resources | ICO](#)

Useful Contacts

Organisation	Contact number	Email
First Response (Children and Families)	Mon-Fri 01296 383962 (option 5) 0800 999 7677 (out of hours)	cypfirstresponse@buckinghamshire.gov.uk secure-cypfirstresponse2@buckinghamshire.gov.uk
Local Area Designated Officer (LADO)	01296 382070	secure-lado@buckinghamshire.gov.uk
Early Years Service Safeguarding Team for managing allegations in the workforce	01296 387111 Vanessa Mills Tanya Page Louise Merridan	eyesafeguarding@buckinghamshire.gov.uk
Buckinghamshire Family Information Service (BFIS)	01296 383065 Text 07786202920	familyinfo@buckinghamshire.gov.uk
Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (BSCP)		www.buckssafeguarding.org.uk/childrenpartnership/
Adult Social Care	0800 137 915	safeguardingadults@buckscs.gov.uk
Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP)	0870 000 3344	www.ceop.police.uk
Child Protection and Sexual Crime Unit (Police)	01628 816935	How to report possible child abuse Thames Valley Police
Department for Education	0370 000 2288	Department for Education - GOV.UK
Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)	01325 953 795	www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service
National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC)	0808 800 5000	help@nspcc.org.uk
Ofsted	0300 123 4666	enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

Safeguarding Training

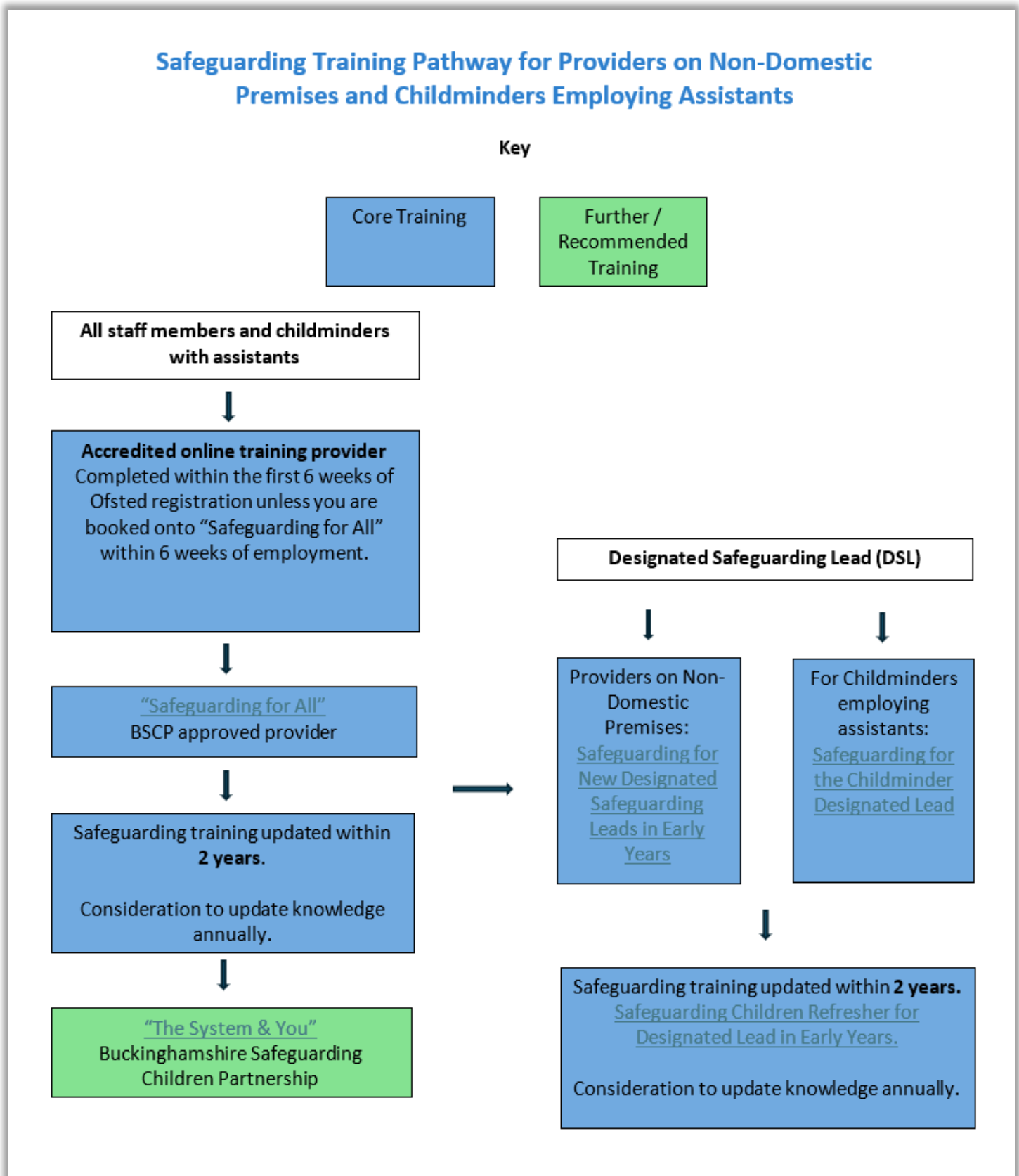
The Early Years Service (EYS) in partnership with Buckinghamshire's Safeguarding Children Partnership (BSCP) sets out the following advice on local training options available. The pathways and guidance will assist providers in identifying the most appropriate training for their staff that is specific to their roles and responsibilities.

Guidance for all Early Years Providers

- **Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility** and must be included within induction procedures. The Early Years Service (EYS) strongly recommend that e-learning training should be accessed within 6 weeks of employment and suggest the completion of an online accredited training course which is compliant with EYFS Annex C criteria.
- All practitioners must complete accredited safeguarding training every **two years** and should have safeguarding and child protection refreshers annually, which could be in the form of; training, workshops, in-house meetings, newsletters etc. EYS recommend staff complete [Safeguarding for all training](#) through Bucks Early Years.
- Providers must ensure that all practitioners are trained in line with the criteria set out in Annex C as a minimum. Providers must ensure that practitioners are supported and confident to implement the setting's safeguarding policy and procedures on an ongoing basis. Providers should read ['What to do if you're worried a child is being abused: Advice for practitioners'](#).
- Providers may consider whether any staff need to undertake annual refresher training during any two-year period to help maintain basic skills and keep up to date with any changes to safeguarding procedures or as a result of any safeguarding concerns that occur in the setting.
- Safeguarding policies must include detail of how safeguarding training is delivered and how practitioners are supported to put this into practice.
- Every Early Years and Childcare Provider must have a designated safeguarding lead (DSL) who takes responsibility in dealing with any safeguarding matters or concerns. Childminders must take the lead responsibility themselves be the named DSL. Once initial safeguarding training has been attended, all DSLs must then complete the Designated Safeguarding Lead course through Buckinghamshire Early Years training to ensure providers are clear of the terminology and procedures in the county. This training must be repeated every two years to ensure their knowledge and skills are up to date.
- The DSL must provide support, advice and guidance to all practitioners on an ongoing basis, and on any specific safeguarding issue as required. The DSL must attend a training course consistent with the criteria set out in Annex C.
- The designated safeguarding lead must always be contactable during operational hours. It is best practice for providers to have a deputy who can take on this responsibility in their absence and has also completed the DSL training. Through this training delegates will:
 - ❖ be aware of the expected role of the designated person
 - ❖ be up to date with Buckinghamshire policies, procedures and protocols.
 - ❖ have developed skills and knowledge to put the role of the designated person into practice.
 - ❖ have considered skills to better share information and develop multi-agency working
- Arrangements should be in place for management, including trustees of voluntary organisations to complete DSL training so that they can challenge and support leaders in order to assure themselves that safeguarding is effective.
- Childminders who work with assistants can consider which pathway best meets their needs but must be aware of their additional responsibilities as an employer of staff. In addition, providers

should refer to 3.30 of the EYFS statutory Framework which states the legal requirements for Safeguarding Training.

Please refer to the training pathways below to identify next steps.



Safeguarding Training Pathway for Childminders Working Alone and/or Childminding Assistants

Key

Core Training

Further/Recommended
Training

Childminder working alone

Childminding Assistants



Safeguarding for the Childminder
Designated Lead
BSCP Approved Provider **or**
"Safeguarding for All"



"Safeguarding for All"
BSCP approved provider



Safeguarding training updated within
2 years.
Safeguarding Children Refresher for
Designated Lead in Early Years.
Consideration to update knowledge
annually.



Safeguarding training updated within
2 years.
Consideration to update knowledge
annually.



"The System & You"
Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children
Partnership

First Aid and Staff-to-Child Ratios

A key update in the EYFS Framework relates to who can be included in staff-to-child ratios and the importance of paediatric first aid (PFA) in determining suitability.

As outlined in Section 3.56 of the EYFS Framework, the following individuals may be included in ratios at the level below their qualification, provided they meet specific criteria:

- students aged 17 or over
- long-term volunteers
- apprentices aged 16 or over

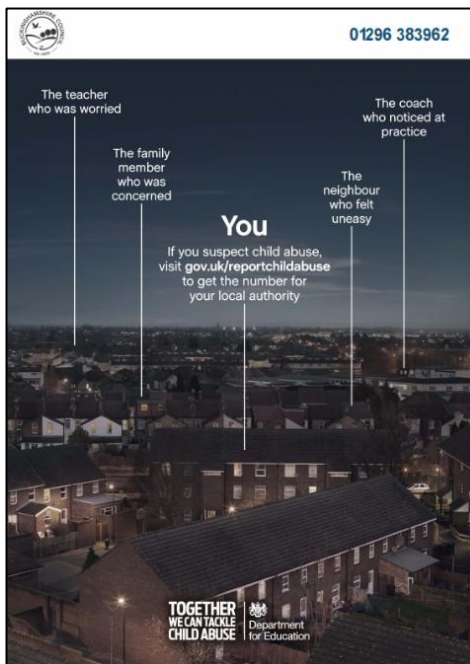
To be counted, they must:

- be suitable, as defined in Sections 3.13 to 3.16 of the framework
- be competent and responsible
- hold a valid and current paediatric first aid qualification.

Safeguarding requires thoughtful planning to ensure that:

- staff deployment supports constant supervision, especially during higher-risk activities such as mealtimes, outdoor play, and outings
- a team includes a balanced mix of qualified, confident, and first-aid trained individuals at all times
- dynamic risk assessments are regularly reviewed and updated to reflect the needs of children and the environment
- there is a culture of confidence and preparedness in responding to emergencies.

Resources



The First Response poster should be displayed within your setting.
Download here [Report a Concern Resources - BSCP](#)



A pocket-sized Safeguarding Contact Card for use by all professionals within the childcare workforce. Download here [Early Years Safeguarding Card](#)

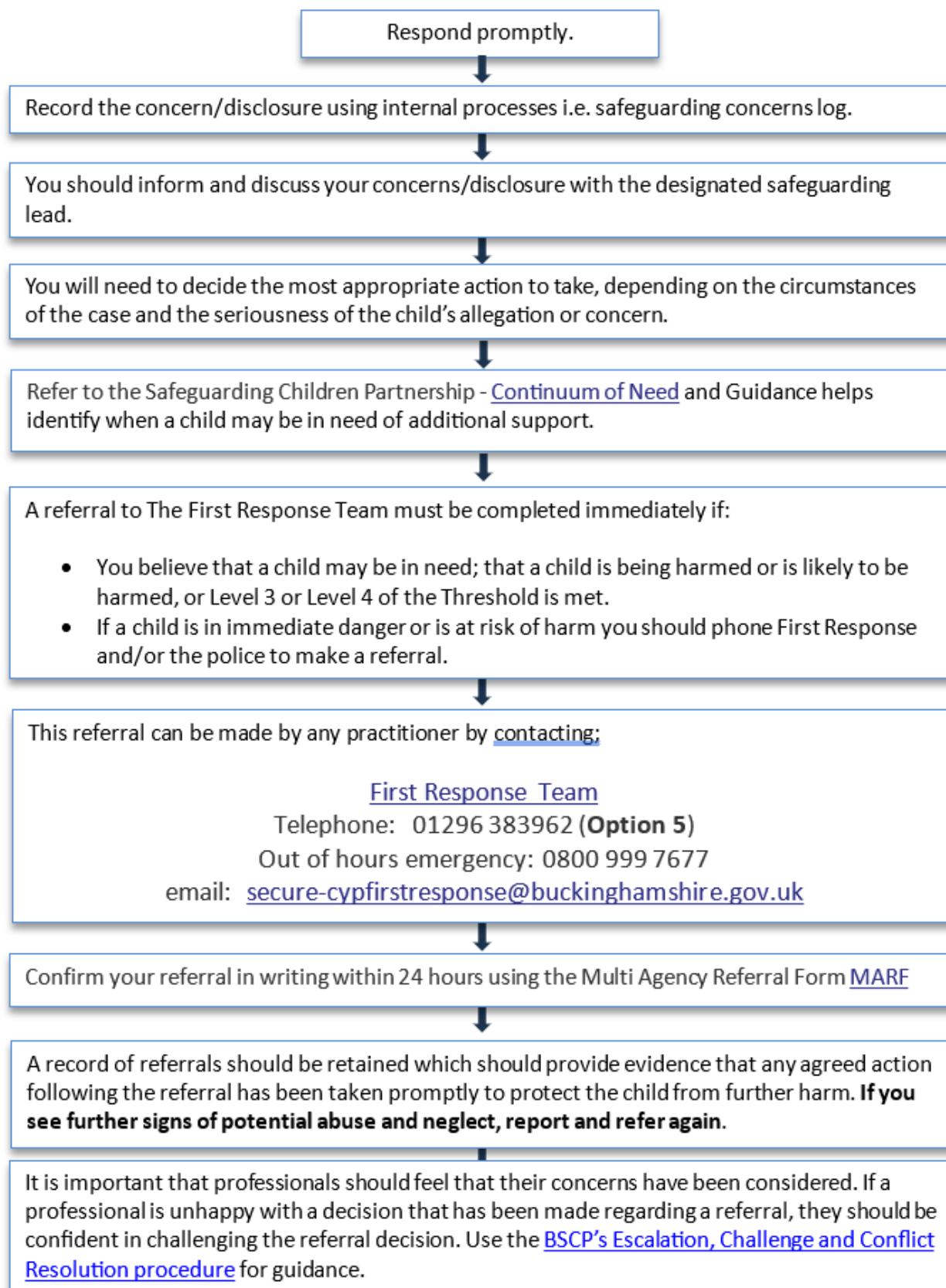


The Ofsted parent poster should be displayed on your parent notice board.

Download here [Ofsted poster for parents childcare 2024](#)

What to do if you have concerns about a child.

All adults caring for children have a responsibility to identify and respond to any concerns regarding their safety and welfare. If you have concerns or a child discloses a concern, you need to:



Managing Allegations

**For all early years and childcare providers on non-domestic and domestic premises
– including voluntary staff**

If an allegation or a concern is raised about people in a position of trust working in Buckinghamshire with children, directly or indirectly, in a paid or voluntary position when that person has or may have:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child
 - Committed an offence against or related to a child
 - Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children
 - Behaved in a way that indicates they may be unsuitable to work with children
- Then this must be:

Reported to LADO within 24 hours.

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

Telephone: 01296 382 070

Secure email: secure-lado@buckinghamshire.gov.uk

The LADO office is open from 9am – 5.30pm Monday to Thursday, and from 9am – 5pm on Friday.

Advice will be given by LADO on the action required.

Reported to Ofsted as soon as possible but within 14 days.

OFSTED

Telephone: 0300 123 4666

Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

Advised to inform the Early Years Service Designated Safeguarding Managers

Early Years Designated Safeguarding Managers

Telephone: 01296 387111

Designated email: eyesafeguarding@buckinghamshire.gov.uk

Providers must not investigate until told otherwise, to ensure it is handled appropriately.

Appendix

Document	URL Link
Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023	Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023
What to do if you are worried a child is being abused	What to do if you are worried a child is being abused
Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2025	Early years foundation stage (EYFS) statutory framework - GOV.UK
Childminders and Childcare providers: register with Ofsted. Registration requirements	https://www.gov.uk/guidance/childminders-and-childcare-providers-register-with-ofsted/registration-requirements
Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025	Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025
Prevent duty guidance: England and Wales (2023)	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-duty-guidance
BSCP – writing a child protection policy	https://www.buckssafeguarding.org.uk/childrenpartnership/resources/writing-a-child-protection-policy/
Information Sharing – Advice for practitioners	Information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners
Child sexual exploitation DfE	https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/591903/CSE_Guidance_Core_Document_13.02.2017.pdf
Domestic Abuse: How to get help	https://www.gov.uk/guidance/domestic-abuse-how-to-get-help
Mandatory reporting for FGM	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mandatory-reporting-of-female-genital-mutilation-procedural-information
Criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: County lines	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/criminal-exploitation-of-children-and-vulnerable-adults-county-lines/criminal-exploitation-of-children-and-vulnerable-adults-county-lines#what-is-county-lines-exploitation
BSCP - Continuum of Need	https://www.buckssafeguarding.org.uk/childrenpartnership/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2020/10/Thresholds-doc-Sept-2018-new-1st-Response-number.pdf
Report a concern about a child - MARF	https://www.buckssafeguarding.org.uk/childrenpartnership/reporting-a-concern/report-a-concern-professional/
Report a concern poster	https://www.buckssafeguarding.org.uk/childrenpartnership/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2020/08/Report-a-concern-poster.pdf
Escalation, challenge and conflict resolution process	2.5 Escalation, Challenge and Conflict Resolution Procedure – Buckinghamshire SCP Children’s Policies, Procedures and Practice Resource

BSCP - Home page	https://www.buckssafeguarding.org.uk/childrenpartnership/
Criminal record checks for overseas applicants	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/criminal-records-checks-for-overseas-applicants
DBS Update Service	https://www.gov.uk/dbs-update-service
Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006	https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/741597/APPENDICES-Disqualification under the childcare act statguidance 4 .pdf
Managing Allegations against staff and volunteers	LADO - Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership
ICO	UK GDPR guidance and resources ICO
Artificial Intelligence	Generative AI in education Generative AI: product safety expectations
Protect UK	https://www.protectuk.police.uk/guidance

Training Appendix	
Document	URL Link
Early Years safeguarding training	https://eycpd.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/home/safeguarding/
e-learning prevent training	https://www.support-people-vulnerable-to-radicalisation.service.gov.uk/
“The System & You”	https://lms.buckssafeguarding.org.uk/events-list?e=xQTO