



Autumn Term 2025



Housekeeping



Confidentiality

Anonymised discussion: Identifiable details are removed to allow for a confidential discussion of the issues and strategies involved.

Peer supervision and support: An expectation of confidentiality among members.

Agenda

- What is Safeguarding
- The role of the Safeguarding Lead
- EYFS Safeguarding reforms
 - Attendance/inclusion/belonging
 - Safer Recruitment – Lisa Guy
- Professional curiosity SCP
- LADO
- Operation Encompass
- Sharing Strengths and Challenges
- Networking



What is safeguarding?

The legislation hasn't changed, and all documents align to tell us that safeguarding is;

Preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development

Protecting children from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the home, including online

Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of **safe and effective care**

Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

Providing help and support to meet the needs of children as **soon as problems emerge**

The role of the Safeguarding Lead

In every setting, a practitioner must be designated to take lead responsibility for safeguarding children.

Specific training for the designated safeguarding lead (DSL)

- Build a safe organisational culture.
- Ensure safe recruitment.
- Develop and implement safeguarding policies and procedures.
- Support and work with other practitioners to safeguard children.
- Local child protection procedures, liaison with local statutory children's services agencies
- Manage and monitor allegations of abuse against other staff.
- Ensure internet safety.

Safeguarding policies and procedures

3.4 In every setting, a practitioner must be designated to take lead responsibility for safeguarding children. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) is responsible for liaison with local statutory children's services agencies, and with the Local Safeguarding Partners (LSPs). All practitioners must be alert to any issues of concern in the child's life at home or elsewhere.

Annex C: Criteria for effective safeguarding training

Training for the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) should take account of any advice from the local safeguarding partners or local authority on appropriate training courses.

[Taking the lead: the role of a designated lead for safeguarding in the early years | early years alliance](#)

Example role description on here [Named child protection or safeguarding lead | NSPCC Learning](#)

Changes to the EYFS safeguarding requirements from September 2025

- Safer recruitment
- Attendance
- Safer eating.
- Safeguarding training criteria annex, Safeguarding training for everyone every 2 years.
- Students and trainees are required to have paediatric first aid (PFA) training
- New requirements to support whistleblowing.
- Balancing children's privacy with safeguarding considerations.

Updates to other relevant documents:

[Working together to safeguard children 2023: statutory guidance](#) – Update June 25

[Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK](#) – Update September 25

[Early years inspection toolkit](#)

Attendance/Inclusion/Belonging



[Attendance matters \(England\) – PACEY](#)

[Attendance guidance for early years foundation stage](#)

[Early years attendance | School attendance | Swindon Borough Council](#)

- Absence may be a vital warning sign for a range of safeguarding issues.
- Serious harm to a child may have been prevented if an absence from their early years setting had been reported.
- Adding requirements into the EYFS aligns with what is expected in schools and helps keep children and their families safe.
- This helps parents to understand the expectations on them to report absences and the procedure the provider would need to follow if a child is absent.

Children being absent from early years settings repeatedly, or for prolonged periods of time, may be a vital warning sign for a range of safeguarding issues. There have been incidents where serious harm to a child may have been prevented if an absence from their early years setting had been reported to social services and/or the police. Adding requirements into the EYFS for following up on unexplained or prolonged absences and for providers to have an attendance policy, aligns with what is expected in schools and helps keep children and their families safe. It would also help parents to understand the expectations on them to report absences and the procedure the provider would need to follow if a child is absent.

EYFS

3.11 Providers 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 the child's 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 local children's social care services and/or a police welfare check requested.

3.12 Providers must have an attendance policy that they share with parents and/or carers. This must include expectations for reporting child absences and the actions providers will take 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.

Safer Recruitment

Information for childcare providers website

12 step safer recruitment process outlined on [staff recruitment page](#)



Information about references can be found on [Staff suitability page](#)



Safer Recruitment

EYFS Statutory Framework September 2025

References should be provided ... 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. References **should not** include information about concerns/allegations which are unsubstantiated, unfounded, false, or malicious.

Safeguarding policies **must include** procedures to follow to check the suitability of new recruits.

We recommend lone childminders include a safer recruitment section in their safeguarding policy. It demonstrates robust understanding of safeguarding process and ensures they will be prepared should they employ assistants in the future.

Safer Recruitment: references

The purpose of seeking references is to allow employers to obtain factual information to support appointment decisions.

From September 2025 the Early years foundation stage statutory framework **must** obtain references for any member of staff, including students and volunteers, **before they are recruited**.

Best practice

Contact the person or persons providing the reference in writing, using their official business email and providing a standardised reference request form for consistency. Only accept emails that are returned from the official business email and check any signature logos to ensure the email is authentic.

Standards & Effectiveness | Children, Young People and Learning, Education & Skills |
[West Sussex County Council](#) – Northleigh, County Hall, West Street, Chichester, West Sussex, PO19 1RG
| Mobile: 00000000000 | E-mail: reference@westsussex.gov.uk |
Website: www.westsussex.gov.uk



You can request a follow up phone call on the business number provided to verify what is said in the written reference. This is important if there are any discrepancies between information provided on the candidate's application and information supplied on the reference.

Safer Recruitment: references

EYFS 2025 requires

Providers should not:

- accept open references - for example, to whom it may concern
- rely on applicants to obtain their reference
- accept references from a family member.

Providers should:

- ensure any references are from the applicant's current employer, training provider or education setting and have been completed by a senior person with appropriate authority
- obtain verification of the individual's most recent relevant period of employment where the applicant is not currently employed
- get a reference from the last employer where the applicant worked with children and, if they haven't worked with children before, get a reference from their current employer, training provider, or education setting
- ensure electronic references originate from a legitimate source
- contact referees to clarify content where information is vague or insufficient information is provided
- compare the information on the application form with that in the reference and take up any discrepancies with the applicant
- establish the reason for the applicant leaving their current or most recent post and ensure any concerns are resolved satisfactorily before appointment is confirmed
- Before you approach the referee, good practice is to have made a conditional job offer to the
- You can find this on our Staff suitability page on the Information for childcare providers website
- applicant / have permission from the applicant to contact referee.

Safer Recruitment: references

The DfE have provided a template for early years providers to use when requesting references ... [Early years employment reference template - GOV.UK](#)



Early years employment reference template

[Early years settings can choose to use this template when providing or obtaining an employment reference or they can create their own.]

Section 1 – Candidate employment details

Candidate full name	
Organisation employed by	
Organisation address	
Job title	
Main duties	
Dates employed	From [DD/MM/YYYY] to [DD/MM/YYYY]

Section 2 – Safeguarding information

The information in this section should provide facts (not opinions) of any substantiated safeguarding concerns/allegations that meet the harm threshold.¹ They should not include information about concerns/allegations which are unsubstantiated, unfounded, false, or malicious.

¹ The harm test is explained in the Disclosure and Barring service [Guidance: Making barring referrals to the DBS](#) and [Section 35\(4\) of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006](#).

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Please confirm the candidate's reason for leaving your employment

- ☐ Resignation
☐ Dismissal
☐ Other

Would you re-employ the candidate at your organisation?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

If no, please explain why

--

Are you aware of any allegations or concerns that have been raised (whether formal or informal) about the candidate that relate to any safeguarding issues?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

If yes, please give details

[The information in this section should provide 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.]

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Are you aware of any safeguarding conduct or concerns regarding the candidate that have led to any referrals to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

If yes, please give details

--

Please provide any further information that may help in assessing the candidate's suitability to work with children

--

Section 3 – Referee details and signature

Referee full name	
Referee job title	
Referee organisation name	
Referee contact details	
Reference completed by	<input type="checkbox"/> Current employer <input type="checkbox"/> Training provider <input type="checkbox"/> Education setting <input type="checkbox"/> Other – please specify:

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Signature	By signing on this page I confirm the information provided is a true and honest representation of the candidate named above.
Date	[DD/MM/YYYY]

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check
references



West Sussex
SCP
Safeguarding
Children Partners



Professional Curiosity

What does Professional Curiosity look like in practice?



- ✓ Engaging children and families
- ✓ Professional Courage
- ✓ Being transparent
- ✓ Non judgemental
- ✓ Non-critical
- ✓ Listening to siblings and other adults
- ✓ Creating a safe space / trusting relationship
- ✓ Challenging own theories/assumptions

- ✓ Respectful uncertainty to spot disguised compliance
- ✓ Professional Challenge
- ✓ Being open to the unexpected
- ✓ It needs effective multi agency working
- ✓ It's capturing the voice of the child
- ✓ Challenging answers
- ✓ Seeking Clarity
- ✓ Observing and understanding interactions

Potential Barriers to Professional Curiosity

- Time
- Lack of knowledge
- Worries around confrontation
- Being wrong
- Concern about “opening a can of worms”
- Thinking against the crowd
- Damaging professional relationships

Think about how you can overcome these barriers

Sharing your concerns....



It is important to know the next steps to take in sharing your concerns. You may be concerned about...

- The information you obtain following discussions with family, children or another source
- A decision made by colleague or other organisation
- Information you are unable to find out or is being kept from you that you feel is important to include

Where to share your concerns..

- ✓ Case discussion in supervision or team meeting
- ✓ Conversation with colleague and/or Manager
- ✓ Integrated Front door (IFD)
- ✓ Escalation Process (WSSCP or Internal)

Professional Curiosity - find out more....



Share these slides at
your team meetings
and during
supervision

Read the WSSCP
Practice Point

Attend the WSSCP
Professional Curiosity
Webinar

Consider and discuss:

A child who attends your setting arrives with a mark on their arm. Their clothes are regularly grubby and they also smell "dirty". They tell you that they are tired because Mummy and Daddy argue all the time and she can hear Mummy crying at night which is why she can't sleep. You are aware that the Father has recently lost his job and they have previously accessed the Food Bank. There is also a younger sibling at the address who is approximately 1 year

How would you assess the risk?

What is your role in the situation?

What specific questions would you ask and who would you ask them to?

Do you require any further information from other agencies? How would you obtain this?

What further information would you like from the family or child?

Would you advise the family of your concerns?

The role of the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)



The Richard Inquiry 2004



Following the murder of Jessica Chapman and Holly Wells in 2002 the Home Secretary at the time David Blunkett ordered an inquiry which highlighted a number of failings across a number of statutory services. The inquiry found that a number of allegations of sexual abuse were made regarding **Ian Huntley**; he had no convictions. The information and intelligence pertaining to a number of allegations were not shared amongst agencies or across area boundaries . The role of LADO was introduced in 2006 .

[Why is there a LADO?](#)

Role of the LADO

Manage allegations against people in a position of trust (age 16 and over) who work or volunteer with children.

An allegation may relate to a person who works with children who 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*
- *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*

Provide support and advice through consultations for matters of conduct that do not reach threshold for an allegation.



www.westsussex.gov.uk

LADO - Working Together 2023

- ✓ Manages and oversees individual cases
- ✓ Monitor progress of cases
- ✓ Ensure that they are dealt with as quickly as possible, consistent with a thorough and fair process
- ✓ Provide advice and guidance
- ✓ Liaise with police/Social Care and other agencies as when necessary



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Who is a professional?

Anyone who works with or is involved in any capacity volunteering with children, which includes, but not exhaustive:



Education staff, foster carers, residential staff, child minders, early years staff, health and social care professionals, police, school bus drivers and escorts, faith groups, leisure and youth services.

Sexual Offences Act

The new section 22A to the Sexual Offences Act will extend the definition of “position of trust” to include any adult that regularly coaches, teaches, trains, supervises, or instructs a 16 or 17-year-old in a sport. (Effective from 3.9.22)

22A Further positions of trust

(1) For the purposes of sections 16 to 19, a person (A) is in a position of trust in relation to another person (B) if—

- (a) A coaches, teaches, trains, supervises or instructs B, on a regular basis, in a sport or a religion, and
- (b) A knows that they coach, teach, train, supervise or instruct B, on a regular basis, in that sport or religion.

(2) In subsection (1)

“sport” includes -

- (a) any game in which physical skill is the predominant factor, and
- (b) any form of physical recreation which is also engaged in for purposes of competition or display;

“religion” includes -

- (a) a religion which involves belief in more than one god, and
- (b) a religion which does not involve belief in a god.



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What is your responsibility?

Please talk to us! Don't assume concerns have been shared by someone else. This could be concerns within someone's professional or private life.



Professional curiosity regarding any positions of trust parents may hold e.g. as a volunteer with Scouts, childminder.



What to do?



- ✓ Take the matter seriously but do not investigate
- ✓ As with all allegations there is a need to ensure the matter is treated seriously, even if it is believed the allegation may be false – as it is important that all allegations are evaluated objectively by the LADO
- ✓ Keep an open mind and do not ask leading questions
- ✓ Inform Senior Manager immediately

Contact Details

LADO Service

All new contact with the LADO team should be made using the new online portal.

You can make a [LADO Referral](#) or [Request for information](#)

For further information on allegations management, please visit the [West Sussex Safeguarding Children Partnership website](#)



www.westsussex.gov.uk

Operation Encompass

Legislative background

Domestic Abuse Act 2021 Section 3, recognises children as victims of domestic abuse when they see, hear or experience domestic abuse perpetrated by a parent, those with parental responsibility, or a relative.

On the 24th of May 2024, Royal Assent was granted to the Victims and Prisoners Act. The new act placed Operation Encompass into law, and puts a statutory obligation upon police forces to share Op Encompass notifications with schools, when the police have attended domestic abuse incidents, concerning children.



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What is Op Encompass?

Operation Encompass is a charitable organisation created in 2010, which has since enabled effective interventions to many thousands of children who have experienced domestic abuse.

It is a police and education early information sharing partnership, enabling schools and colleges to recognise and where necessary offer immediate support to children experiencing domestic abuse.

Op Encompass Principles



DA Incidents are shared even when the child isn't present.

The aim is for Sussex Police to send the referral before the start of the next day, so that the setting can be aware and support where necessary.

Op Encompass is currently aimed at primary and secondary aged children up to 18yrs. Early years are not currently specified in statute

Sussex Police has decided to introduce it into Commercial nursery settings for children aged 2 and above.

Sussex Police Response

The introduction of a new IT system SIGNS will mean the referrals will be automated and therefore the Nursery will automatically receive the notification.

I have been working with early years leads in the Local Authorities to ensure that nurseries are ready to receive the referrals, and this communication will be coming out very soon, with instructions and a sample referral.

If we don't know where the child goes to nursery, we will contact the Early years lead for that local authority for their help in getting this information.

There is a wealth of knowledge on the Op Encompass website and also some key adult training that I recommend the DSLs undertake. It's very important that you understand the dos and don'ts when you receive a referral.





Operation Encompass

What do settings need to do?

- Key Adult/DSL accesses the training - [Online Key Adult Training : Operation Encompass](#)
- Identify/set up an appropriate email address and **download 7zip**, or similar, to enable you to open documents when they arrive
- Complete a [Staff Update form](#) for the individual staff member. The email for Operation Encompass will need to be added to the DSL section of the form.
- FIS will then process this form and add the DSL details to their secure database. They will then share the DSL details with the police to enable you to receive notifications.
- Respond to notifications in line with the purpose of Operation Encompass

[Guide to open encrypted documents.docx](#)

[Nursery info.docx](#)

Sharing Strengths and Challenges



The background is a dark blue field filled with a complex network of glowing nodes and connecting lines. The nodes are small spheres in white, red, and yellow, while the lines are thin and translucent in blue and yellow. The overall effect is a sense of dynamic connectivity and data flow.

Time to Network

