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## Welcome to our February 2025 Newsletter

In this newsletter, the first one for 2025, we bring together information which we hope you will find useful and we highlight how the Partnership continues to communicate and keep in touch with all our agencies and provide guidance to support you in your role working with children and adults. In this edition, we bring you information in the spotlight about the recent Child Safeguarding Practice Review, updates and also information about Partnership work, important safeguarding updates and new training dates.

### Me Learning

**Don't forget to log in to your Me Learning account and see our new e-learning courses on a range of safeguarding topics**



# In the Spotlight..... Keeping Children Safe, Helping Families Thrive

In November 2024 the UK Government published a policy paper called *“Keeping Children Safe, Helping Families Thrive.”* The paper includes plans for comprehensive reform of children’s social care in the UK and the government’s commitment to keeping families together and children safe. The DfE emphasises that these reforms are evidence-based, and that the changes they propose are informed by peer reviewed studies and expert research.

## Legislating to keep families together

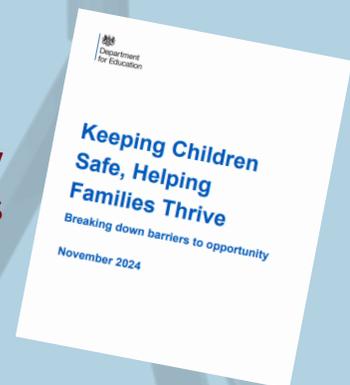
The “Keeping Children Safe, Helping Families Thrive” paper has four main objectives:

- The first is to prioritise support so that children can remain with their families when it is safe for them to do so.
- The second is to ensure a focus on placing children who cannot remain with their parents with their wider family (known as kinship carers) or with foster carers, instead of resorting to residential care homes.
- Thirdly the government intend to address concerns about profiteering in children’s social care and aim to regulate the market by introducing measures that will require private providers to disclose their finances.
- The fourth objective is to invest in the workforce and in data systems by improving the skills of social care professionals and improving their data sharing practices to inform evidence-based interventions for better outcomes.

## Changes to safeguarding in schools and home education

To strengthen safeguarding, there are proposals to establish multi-agency child protection units in every local authority area in England. These units will facilitate collaboration among professionals from various sectors, including health and social services, making sure there is comprehensive support for vulnerable children. The paper emphasises that these teams will also include schools and teachers. Education will be named as a relevant agency under the new plans so that they are automatically included in safeguarding arrangements.

Access the whole document [here](#)



## CHILD J – LOCAL CHILD SAFEGUARDING PRACTICE REVIEW

Darlington Safeguarding Partnership has published a Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review (LCSPR) for Child J.

Child J died from a head trauma consistent with a non-accidental injury whilst in the care of his mother's partner. This review explored what happened leading up to the significant incident and reflected on key themes that helped the Partnership understand what happened and what that meant for Child J and other children in the family home, to help improve multi-agency responses in the future.

The review identified important learning for the multi-agency safeguarding partnership to consider and reflect upon regards current systems and practice. Child J was an infant with increased vulnerability due to his premature birth, his mother's long-standing mental health difficulties and adversity, and unexplored male associations with the household. The learning review has reflected on the broader family circumstances and the vulnerabilities and needs of the children and how services worked together to support the family and help the children thrive.

The LCSPR found examples of good practice with practitioners working hard to engage and support the family, however there were important improvements that will need to be considered to support change in systems and make a difference in practice in how multi-agency services work together.

The following themes were identified:

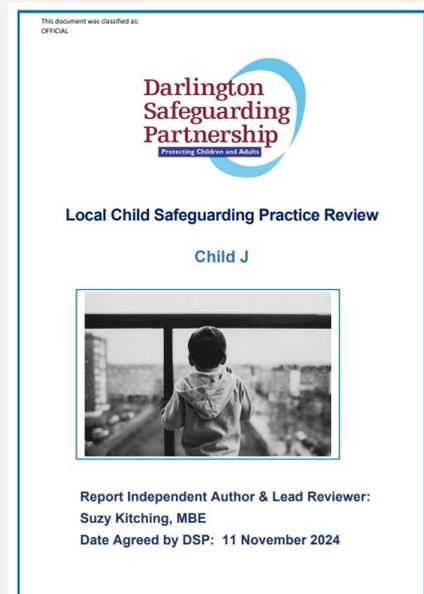
- The child's lived experience and what it was like to be an infant and child in this family - vulnerability, adversity and risk
  - Parental mental health - impact on parenting and family functioning
- Unseen or unconsidered adults and caregivers within the household and their role with regards the children
  - Effectiveness of multi-agency working in identifying and meeting the children's needs

All organisations are encouraged to review the LCSPR Report and consider and apply the learning to their own practice. The Partnership are finalising how it will be sharing the learning from the review which will include the development of short briefing documents based on the themes identified.

The full report and an Executive Summary Report are available on DSP website:

<https://www.darlington-safeguarding-partnership.co.uk/media/w5ihpnax/child-j-lcspr-v42-final.pdf>

Please share appropriately with colleagues within your organisations and wider networks.



# The Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill 2024-25

The Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill 2024-25 was introduced on 17 December 2024. It is bill 151 of the 2024-25 parliamentary session. The bill is listed for second reading on 8 January 2025.

The government intends the bill to improve the safeguarding of children (such as in care institutions and schools) and to raise educational standards. The Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill aims to change the law to better protect children and raise standards in education.

What is the purpose of the Bill?

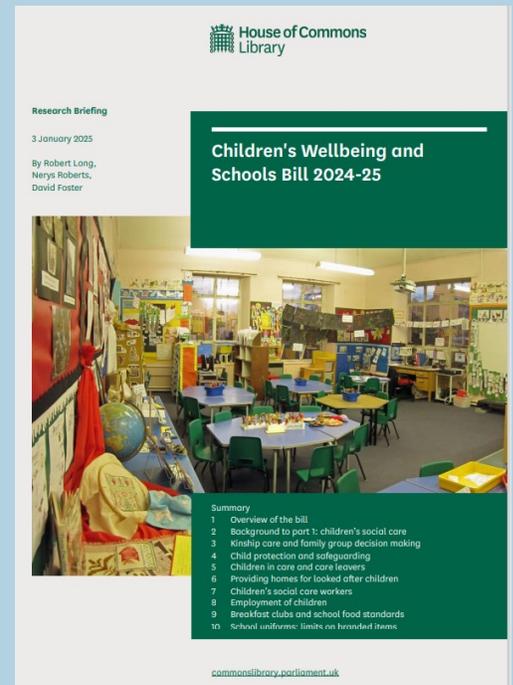
The Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill is a key step towards delivering the government's Opportunity Mission to break the link between young people's background and their future success. It will put in place a package of support to drive high and rising standards throughout our education and care systems so that every child can achieve and thrive. It will protect children at risk of abuse, stopping vulnerable children falling through cracks in services, and deliver a core guarantee of high standards with space for innovation in every child's education.

What are the main benefits of the Bill?

The ambitions of the Bill are set out in seven key parts:

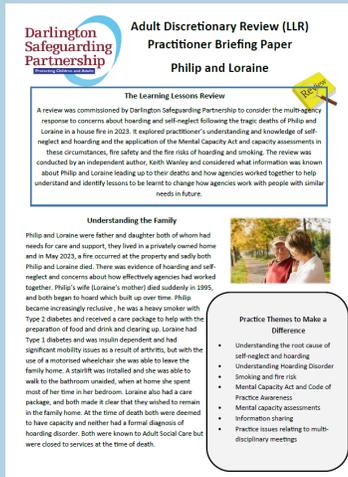
- Making a child-centred government
- Keeping families together and children safe
- Supporting children with care experience to thrive
- Cracking down on excessive profit making
- Driving high and rising standards for every child
- Removing barriers to opportunity in schools
- Creating a safer and higher quality education system for every child

Read the full document [here](#)



# Briefing Papers

The following two new briefing papers are now available on the DSP website.  
Please share appropriately with colleagues



Briefing paper on the Adult Discretionary Review Philip and Loraine. Read the briefing paper [here](#)

Briefing paper on Safe Sleeping Messages. Read the briefing paper [here](#)

Concerned about a child?

Contact the Children's Initial Advice Team  
Professionals on **01325 406252**  
Public on **01325 406222**

Concerned about an adult?

Contact the Adult Contact Team  
on **01325 406111**



## Statutory Safeguarding Partners

Ann Baxter, Independent Chair/Scrutineer  
James Stroyan, Group Director of People  
Nicola Lawrence, Detective Chief Superintendent  
Chris Piercy, Director of Nursing and Quality