

The Government's Response to Lord Laming: One Year On

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Ministerial Foreword

*The protection of children in England: action plan – The Government’s response to Lord Laming set out our shared commitment to do everything possible to deliver improvements in safeguarding practice following the publication of Lord Laming’s report, *The Protection of Children in England: A Progress Report*, in March 2009.*

A year on, this is a good time for us to take stock of, and learn from, progress so far and to consider what our priorities should be in the year ahead.

A great deal has been achieved. The Social Work Transformation Programme is already delivering results; over 50,000 people have registered for information on how to become a social worker in response to our national recruitment campaign. The Action on Health Visiting Programme has raised the profile of this important profession and introduced new requirements to monitor their numbers and case loads. A new Police Child Protection Delivery Plan has been commissioned which will set out recommendations for future improvements to police capability and practice to enhance the delivery of child protection within forces.

Of course, what makes the most difference to vulnerable children and their families is what happens day to day at the front line. We want to pay tribute to the many thousands of social workers, teachers, police officers, doctors, nurses, health visitors and many others who support and protect children and young people. This year, as in all years, they are making a positive difference to children’s lives across the country.

Keeping vulnerable children safe is vitally important, and immensely demanding, work. We recognise too that many professionals and practitioners are working in challenging local contexts. Demand has increased in many services, especially, though not exclusively, in children’s social care. The progress made through the Every Child Matters reforms means that increasingly the most vulnerable children and young people are being better identified and supported. That is good news.

Increased demand, however, brings new challenges. The tight fiscal climate requires robust prioritisation and a relentless focus on ensuring consistently high levels of professional practice. It also means that we all need to be prepared to ask ourselves some hard questions about what works best, whether we could be doing things differently, and where and how the greatest, sustainable improvement can be achieved.

Early intervention and prevention have a critical role to play. Many local areas are examining their investment in preventative services to explore how they can make the best use of universal services such as schools, Sure Start Children’s Centres and primary care and community health services to support children who may not require specialist child protection services but who are still vulnerable and in need of regular support. Our forthcoming paper on Early Intervention contributes to the debate on this important area of work. We have also strengthened partnership working by putting Children’s Trust Boards on a statutory footing and giving them the

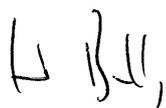
responsibility for the Children and Young People's Plan, which is a joint strategy setting out how the Children's Trust partners will co-operate to improve outcomes for local children and young people. This will help to ensure that the responsibility for intervening early and well is clearly understood and can have real impact.

Lord Laming asked Government to be more explicit in its strategic priorities for safeguarding and protecting children. That is why, since its establishment last summer, the National Safeguarding Delivery Unit has been working to strengthen and co-ordinate cross-Government safeguarding work to bring greater coherence. Over the coming months, the Unit will maintain the necessary focus, energy and drive to deliver Lord Laming's recommendations, as well as providing support and challenge to local partners in driving up the quality of frontline practice.

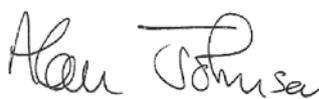
We are very grateful to Sir Roger Singleton, the Chief Adviser on the Safety of Children, for his advice and support over the past year which has helped to shape and strengthen safeguarding policy across many areas. We welcome *The Chief Adviser on the Safety of Children: First annual report to Parliament*, published 17 March. This provides valuable insights into priorities for the next year and we are committed to responding positively to the challenges he has set.

In the challenging times ahead, it will be ever more important to remain firmly focused on securing the best possible outcomes for children and young people. Progress is being made and we are in no doubt about the strength of commitment among national and local partners and professionals at the front line. But this will be another tough year for many working to promote children's safety and wellbeing, particularly those who are most closely involved in child protection and safeguarding. The stakes are high, and the task is hugely challenging, but there could be nothing more important.

Keeping children safe is our highest priority and we are determined that it will remain so. We are committed to working across Government and with our national and local partners to do all we can to support, and where appropriate to challenge, with the aim of delivering the best possible outcomes for children and young people.



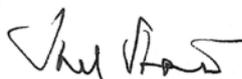
Ed Balls



Alan Johnson



Andy Burnham



Jack Straw

1. Introduction

‘Relationships are crucial; it’s not about structures, it’s about making it work out there for children’

Social Worker

- 1 The Children’s Plan reaffirmed that children, young people, their families and carers are at the heart of our vision for the future. *The Children’s Plan: Two Years On* published at the end of last year, highlighted the success of the Every Child Matters reforms and the foundations that have been secured by bringing professionals together around the needs of children, young people, their families and carers.
- 2 We have been working with partners to take forward the recommendations from Lord Laming’s report last year with a firm focus on improving practice in order to secure better outcomes for children. This has been within a rapidly changing context in which new challenges have emerged. We have seen a significant rise in demand for children’s services, particularly children’s social care. The latest set of national data available up to March 2009 indicates that referrals to children’s social care services have increased by 2%, initial assessments by 9% and core assessments by 15%¹. There have also been sharp rises in the number of children entering the care system, up 9%², and in the number of children who are the subject of a child protection plan, up 17%³. Many local areas will be experiencing significant challenges around workforce capacity and competing priorities.
- 3 As Lord Laming reminds us, getting safeguarding practice right needs a clear and distinct focus but it also needs to be a central part of children’s services overall, complemented and reinforced by early intervention and preventative work with children, young people, their families and carers. People with the right skills, doing the right thing at the right time, make the crucial difference to children’s outcomes and their futures.
- 4 Getting it right every time for every child is an enormous challenge, made all the more demanding by the tight financial climate. It is important that we all use those challenges as a spur to smarter prioritisation, innovative thinking, and more dynamic learning.
- 5 The Government will continue to provide clear national leadership and support and is committed to talking openly and constructively with partners to understand and respond to new challenges. It is particularly important that we learn together and across the whole system about new solutions, emerging practice and innovation including:

1 <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000873/index.shtml>

2 <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000878/index.shtml>

3 <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000873/index.shtml>

- the role of universal services in developing comprehensive, inclusive and early support for families, given that this is where people see children and young people day to day, know them well and may be best placed to identify risk factors and provide the support they need;
 - the most effective arrangements for sharing safeguarding responsibilities across the partners of Children's Trust Boards and through the associated statutory Children and Young People's Plan;
 - what makes for effective work with families whose children are on the edge of the care system – making best use of the advice from the national task group on the roll-out of family intervention, led by Kim Bromley-Derry (President of the Association of Directors of Children's Services and Director of Children's Services, Newham) and learning from evidence including the pilots on Family Group Conferencing and Multi-Systemic Therapy;
 - the potential of developing 'Total Place' policies and the impact that local arrangements might have for children, young people and families, including the performance of services, reductions in duplication and inefficiencies;
 - cost effective practice, particularly through the sector-led commissioning support and service transformation programmes;
 - the interventions and services that produce the best outcomes for children including those which deliver less well and should therefore stop or change;
 - a range of effective interventions and services where there is known vulnerability for children and their families; and
 - improved support and capacity for social workers set out in *Building a safe, confident future*, the comprehensive reform programme recommended by the Social Work Task Force.
- 6 Lord Laming challenged us all to deliver 'a step change in the arrangements for the protection of children from harm'. The cross-Government National Safeguarding Delivery Unit (NSDU), which reports directly to Cabinet through its Families, Children and Young People Sub-Committee, is working to ensure that at national level there is strong, co-ordinated leadership across the safeguarding system. The Unit will provide support and challenge to local authorities and their partners to help improve the quality of frontline practice. In all its work, the Unit will focus on practical solutions that are developed in partnership with those responsible for delivering services to children, young people and their families and carers.
- 7 Decisions made locally over the next few months will also have a fundamental impact in the longer term. Making sure that preventative services, often delivered through universal services, play the most effective role they can in supporting children is key. This is particularly the case for children who may become the subject of a child protection plan and those who live in homes where there is violence, substance misuse or an adult with mental health difficulties. A tight financial climate requires partners to be more enquiring about what works best and where the most improvement can be achieved. It also places an even higher premium on rigorous, high quality local knowledge about the needs of children, young people, their families and carers in local communities. The local needs assessment required to underpin and inform the new statutory Children and Young People's Plan will be a critical tool in the prioritisation and planning for children's services as we move forward.

- 8 The 'Think Family' reforms set out in the *Families and Relationships Green Paper*⁴ published in January 2010 aim to ensure that there is a co-ordinated local response to families with additional needs. Since April 2009, all local authorities have received funding to support these reforms and introduce targeted services for children, young people, their families and carers. Details can be found on www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/thinkfamily including guidance setting out joint working arrangements between children and family services and adult drug/alcohol and mental health services, probation, prisons and police services.
- 9 Family Intervention Projects (FIPs) are an important part of the Think Family programme. These provide intensive support to families with complex needs, including those with children who may need safeguarding. FIPs now operate in every authority and supported over 3,000 families in 2009-10, with a planned expansion in capacity to 10,000 families a year from 2011-12.
- 10 There are many encouraging developments in safeguarding services:
- child protection is now one of the priorities for the National Police Protective Services Board which reports to the Home Secretary on major challenges to public safety such as terrorism and serious crime. A child protection delivery plan, which will set out a series of recommendations for areas of future improvement to police capability and practice in child protection is being developed by the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) and will be finalised in the spring. Together with the recent Policing White Paper, which reaffirms the importance of the police contribution to safeguarding, this work will help raise the profile of child protection and safeguarding within police forces and ensure that both Child Abuse Investigation Units and frontline officers are fully equipped to deliver their commitments on safeguarding and child protection;
 - there has been extensive work to strengthen safeguarding arrangements in the NHS, taking account of the findings from the Care Quality Commission in July 2009. *The Operating Framework for the NHS* – the high-level document which sets out the priorities for NHS organisations for the year ahead – states that it expects NHS organisations to continue to monitor and embed the minimum safeguarding arrangements in 2010-11 and to build on this to improve services and outcomes for children. The Operating Framework highlights the importance of the Healthy Child Programme and outlines new arrangements for PCTs to monitor workforce and caseload figures for health visitors;
 - in addition, the Chief Executive of the NHS has commissioned Sir Ian Kennedy to undertake a review of NHS services for children, to explore the cultural obstacles that might stand in the way of sustained improvement in the provision of care for children and to consider what can be done to develop the contribution of the NHS to safeguarding children. He is due to report in spring 2010;

4 <http://publications.dcsf.gov.uk/default.aspx?PageFunction=productdetails&PageMode=publications&ProductId=Cm%207787&>

- the quality of safeguarding arrangements is now a limiting judgement in the Ofsted inspection framework for schools. A school which is inadequate for safeguarding is likely to be judged inadequate for overall effectiveness. The *'21st Century Schools' White Paper*⁵ also provides a new opportunity for schools to plan for the best use of their own school improvement resources. This may include consideration about wider support to improve outcomes for children and young people, such as parenting support programmes or co-located health and social care professionals;
 - early years provision is now a key part of the safeguarding landscape. We recently announced we had reached the target for at least 3,500 Sure Start Children's Centres to be in place by March 2010. These centres provide easy access to a range of universal services, with a particular focus on vulnerable children and families. In all their inspections of children's centres, which will start in April 2010, Ofsted will make a judgement on the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements. If these are judged inadequate, this is likely to limit the overall judgement;
 - Lord Laming reported that he was concerned about the delays in care proceedings and the consequent impact on the needs of children, young people and their families and carers. It is positive progress that the announcement to abolish fees from April 2011 has been made. The new system-wide target to reduce unnecessary delay in care and supervision proceedings is due to come into force from April 2010 and will be an integral part of the overall efforts, nationally and locally, to ensure that the significance of care proceeding arrangements for children and young people is recognised; and
 - Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission, with Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary where appropriate, also began a three year programme of full inspections of safeguarding and looked after children services in all local authorities in summer 2009.
- 11** While a good deal of progress has been made nationally and locally, there is much more still to do. Ofsted's unannounced inspections of contact, referral and assessment arrangements in local authorities thus far have identified that at least half of those visited had a priority area for action. A priority for Ofsted during the coming year is to draw out the learning from these inspections and the National Safeguarding Delivery Unit will consider the most helpful and efficient means of ensuring that the learning from these inspections and other evidence sources is used, shared and acts as a catalyst for further improvement.
- 12** The purpose of this short report is to provide an overview of progress against Lord Laming's recommendations and set out future priorities. A detailed progress update is at Annex A. This report summarises that progress and sets out how the National Safeguarding Delivery Unit will seek to make a difference over the coming year. The Unit's priorities have been developed alongside practitioners and key stakeholders, though the Unit is still keen to hear further suggestions about potential areas for focus – www.dcsf.gov.uk/nsdu.

⁵ <http://publications.dcsf.gov.uk/default.aspx?PageFunction=productdetails&PageMode=publications&ProductID=Cm+7588>

2. Progress

National Leadership and Accountability

National leadership

- 13 Lord Laming rightly emphasised the importance of strong, national, cross-Government leadership of safeguarding. A new Ministerial sub-group of the Cabinet Sub-Committee on Families, Children and Young People comprising the four key Secretaries of State – from the Department for Children, Schools and Families, the Department of Health, the Ministry of Justice and the Home Office – now meets quarterly with Sir Roger Singleton, the Government’s Chief Adviser on the Safety of Children, to review progress and consider joint improvement priorities. There are also regular meetings of an Implementation Programme Board comprising senior officials across Government, and the inspectorates, in order to provide systematic scrutiny and challenge to progress on the implementation of Lord Laming’s recommendations.
- 14 These arrangements are helping to develop more coherent, strategic leadership which should result in more consistent prioritisation, clearer messages to the sector, and more effective impact on outcomes for children and young people.

Chief Adviser on the Safety of Children

- 15 Sir Roger Singleton has been appointed to a new independent role as the Government’s Chief Adviser on the Safety of Children and has been in post since 1 April 2009. His aim is to ensure that the Government remains absolutely focused on driving through improvement and change in its safeguarding work programme. Sir Roger is supported by an expert advisory group whose advice is supplemented by regular visits to local areas where frontline practitioners are able to inform his challenge to Government.
- 16 The Chief Adviser’s first annual report on the safety of children in England is being laid before Parliament to the same timetable as this report.

The National Safeguarding Delivery Unit (NSDU)

- 17 In response to Lord Laming’s specific recommendation, the NSDU was established in July 2009. Staff in the Unit are drawn from the four key Government departments, local government, other local safeguarding partners and frontline practitioners. This blend of skills and experience will be important to the Unit’s potential success in supporting and challenging local areas effectively and driving stronger national leadership.

- 18** The NSDU's interim progress report and work programme for 2009-10 was published in December 2009 and is available at www.dcsf.gov.uk/nsdu. It sets out how the Unit will:
- drive forward improvements in safeguarding standards, with better, more consistent practice across the country;
 - ensure a strong, co-ordinated cross-Government lead on safeguarding, maintaining the profile of safeguarding within Government and ensuring that this is reflected in clear and consistent strategic priorities and performance systems through local authorities, health and police;
 - monitor and report on progress on safeguarding children, including progress on the implementation of the Government's action plan in response to Lord Laming's report; and
 - increase public and professional confidence in arrangements for safeguarding children.
- 19** In the year ahead, the Unit will also work alongside local and regional partners to develop innovative programmes which make a difference in practice. It will focus on developing practical solutions that are developed in partnership with those responsible for delivering safeguarding services.

Safeguarding national indicators and targets

- 20** As Lord Laming highlighted, a key role for central Government is making sure that there is an effective system of performance management to drive forward a strong focus on improving outcomes for children. Legislation is now in place to enable new statutory safeguarding targets for local areas to be agreed and the results of the recent NSDU consultation on new safeguarding indicators will feed into the overall exercise to review the National Indicator Set.
- 21** There is still more work to be done, however. The lack of readily available outcome measures, and the long lead in times necessary to establish and embed new data collections to support them, means that it is necessary to pursue a two stage approach to this work. The next stage will be to develop new, more outcome focused and multi-agency performance measures, based on new data collections.
- 22** It is widely acknowledged that national indicators and associated targets can only form part of a coherent and meaningful performance management framework. As we move into next year, the NSDU is committed to supporting the development of a robust local performance framework, which describes the quality and impact of services and interventions, as well as the quantity of work being undertaken. This priority will be taken forward in partnership with national and local leaders and will form the basis for optional improvement work, as opposed to being a centrally mandated performance framework.

Working Together to Safeguard Children

- 23** *Working Together to Safeguard Children* is the key statutory guidance used by safeguarding professionals. Getting this right is essential for a safe system. In revising it, we have consulted extensively with national stakeholders, local partners and front line practitioners to ensure that it is stronger where it needed to be and even more useful for frontline practitioners. The final version of this guidance is being published in parallel with this

report. It now clarifies how the Local Safeguarding Children Board and Children's Trust Board relate to one another; strengthens the importance of multi-agency training and effective supervision; and places an increased emphasis on the importance of all practitioners listening to and focusing on the needs of the child, when making critical judgements.

- 24 Chapter 8 of *Working Together*, on Serious Case Reviews (SCRs), was revised in December 2009, following a separate public consultation exercise, and made clear that the prime purpose of the SCR is to learn from the review and to improve practice. This chapter has been further updated to stress the importance of full and thorough executive summaries, with a practical template as a guide.
- 25 The challenge is now to support local areas as they implement the revised *Working Together* guidance. The NSDU work programme discussed later in this report, is specifically aimed at achieving this with a very clear focus on practice.

Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs)

- 26 LSCBs have a significant safeguarding leadership role. The Ofsted-led integrated inspections of safeguarding and looked after children services indicate that LSCBs are making a difference to their local services and there are examples of them leading programmes of outstanding partnership work on safeguarding, as well as several focused campaigns that are making a difference to cyber bullying and to public awareness of the signs of neglect. To support them in this work, new LSCB practice guidance⁶ has been issued today for consultation. It includes sections on governance, accountability and developments relating to LSCB functions as well as advice on the effectiveness of LSCB partnership working, the strengths and weaknesses of different models of delivery in terms of Board structure and membership, and information on the issues to consider when monitoring and evaluating the delivery of safeguarding training. Research⁷ published today has found that LSCBs have addressed a number of weaknesses of Area Child Protection Committees. It also found that the most effective LSCBs had been realistic about what they were able to achieve and had focused upon the core business of ensuring that work to protect children was properly co-ordinated and effective.
- 27 In many cases, appropriate and relevant information is made available to LSCBs, but Lord Laming noted that in some situations practitioners still feel uncertain about when they can share information. The Government has introduced a duty in the Children, Schools and Families Bill that (subject to it becoming law) would require information to be supplied on request to an LSCB to enable or assist in the performance of its functions. This provision will help remove this uncertainty and give greater confidence to practitioners that they can share appropriate information with the LSCB.

6 <http://publications.dcsf.gov.uk/default.aspx?PageFunction=productdetails&PageMode=publications&ProductId=DCSF-00312-2010>

7 *The evaluation of arrangements for effective operation of the new LSCBs in England.*

<http://publications.dcsf.gov.uk/default.aspx?PageFunction=productdetails&PageMode=publications&ProductId=DCSF-00311-2010>

Local Leadership and Accountability

Children's Trusts Boards

- 28** Strong local leadership is essential, particularly for safeguarding where the strategic co-ordination of many services is so important. The Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning (ASCL) Act 2009 aims to strengthen the strategic leadership of Children's Trusts, driving better partnership and effective prioritisation that makes a difference. Every local area is required to have a Children's Trust Board from April 2010 and, importantly, responsibility for preparing, publishing, monitoring and reviewing the local strategic Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) transfers from the local authority alone to the Children's Trust Board as a whole. Individual partners remain responsible for implementation and delivery. This formally recognises the shared responsibility of all partners for safeguarding and should help to create a new shared commitment to assess and prioritise against the local needs of children, young people, their families and carers. The CYPP will set out the joint strategy describing how Children's Trust partners co-operate and prioritise their safeguarding including within their plans.

Directors of Children's Services and Lead Members

- 29** Statutory guidance in July 2009 set out the expectations for Directors of Children's Services (DCSs) and lead members for children's services in relation to safeguarding. The National College for Leadership of Schools and Children's Services now provides a training programme for DCSs and demand for this training is high. The programme has been welcomed by DCSs and the high uptake of places is very encouraging. Detailed design work has begun on the Aspirant DCS programme. A mentoring programme is also running for newly appointed DCSs which is progressing well with 21 serving or recently retired DCSs registering to become accredited mentors. The NSDU is working closely with the College to ensure that change and improvement priorities for safeguarding are developed together and are incorporated into the leadership programmes where appropriate.

'I have found the coaching support provided as part of the DCS Leadership Programme incredibly useful. It's tailored for me and supports my professional and personal development. I found my coach to be challenging in a way that helps me think outside of the box, as well as supportive in acting as a sounding board. I would encourage DCSs on future programmes to invest time in and engage with the coaching as quickly as possible to make the best possible use of it. I have so far found this to be one of the best elements of the leadership programme.'

Director of Children's Services

- 30** The Centre for Excellence and Outcomes (C4EO) has held a series of national safeguarding workshops for senior leaders (including Lead Members) from among the Children's Trust partners. These are reinforced by an extended programme of research briefings. Further regional workshops, focusing on working with resistant families, are taking place in March and April 2010.

Public confidence

- 31** The Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 requires every LSCB to appoint two lay members. As well as bringing their own insights and skills, they will play a key role in opening up the safeguarding system to wider public scrutiny with the aim of improving transparency and public understanding and engagement in child safety issues. To support this development, during 2010-11, the NSDU will be considering what support it can make available to LSCBs in respect of its new lay members. The Unit will also consider, in partnership, how it can become closely involved with and be able to represent accurately, the views and experiences of children and young people on safeguarding issues and priorities.

Supporting Children

- 32** Lord Laming's report reaffirmed the importance of focusing absolutely on the child and their needs. There is a great deal of work underway to ensure that the voice of the child is central to professional practice in safeguarding and child protection.
- 33** The Office of the Children's Commissioner, 11 Million, has prioritised safeguarding for 2010-11. They will be considering the needs of children and young people at risk of harm from adults who abuse alcohol, drugs and other illegal substances. They will also be exploring and promoting the best ways to support and encourage professionals working with families to identify and intervene earlier to safeguard children and young people at risk of harm, including working with families who have refused to engage with or accept help from social workers, despite exhibiting clear signs of need.
- 34** The Children's Rights Director for England has a statutory duty to ascertain the views of children in care, receiving social care services, or living in boarding or residential schools or colleges. Earlier this year, he published a report giving children's views on their own rights and responsibilities. The children's right scored highest of all by children was the right to be protected from abuse. Other rights that were scored highest by the children and young people were, the right not to suffer discrimination, the right not to be treated in a way that is cruel or meant to make a child feel bad about themselves, and the right not to be bullied. Children also placed taking responsibility for their own safety fourth in their list of their own responsibilities.
- 35** The Director publishes a programme of consultations and reports each year. Over the past year, reports have been published on children's experiences of living in particular settings such as children's homes, secure units, residential special schools and residential further education colleges, and on children's experience of prejudice. Current consultation work for publication includes the experience of admission into care and prevention of admission, experience of being a 'corporate child', and children's experiences of fairness and unfairness. Consultation work by the Director feeds directly into national and local policy; all children's views reports are sent to Government ministers and opposition spokespersons, to local councils, and to Ofsted. Many consultations and reports are carried out specifically to feed children's views on the development of national policy, for example, children's proposals fed into the development of planning, placement and review regulations under the Children and Young Persons Act 2008.
- 36** Many LSCBs are also prioritising work to ensure that children and young people have the opportunity to influence service provision. Examples include an independent chair of a LSCB

appearing before the Youth Parliament to answer questions on the Board's work and LSCBs that have established children and young people's shadow safeguarding boards.

- 37** Nowhere is it more important that the voice of the child is heard than where there are concerns about their welfare and safety. The revised *Working Together to Safeguard Children* guidance includes specific references to the child being seen alone, where appropriate, by the lead social worker. Further it requires that the social worker records when the child is seen and if seen alone.
- 38** There are other groups of children whose voice may be at risk of not being heard. The support provided for children who are not yet in need of specialist services but who are nonetheless vulnerable is critical. Too often their needs can rapidly escalate if they do not get the support they need.
- 39** The forthcoming paper on Early Intervention is designed to help Children's Trust Boards as they think through how to improve their early intervention arrangements in developing new Children and Young People's Plans. Many areas are already making good progress with early intervention. Effective use of the Common Assessment Framework offers a mechanism to enable professionals to share and lead interventions, whilst prioritising those children and young people most in need of services. Its use, and the subsequent interventions provided, often by universal services such as schools, are of fundamental importance in ensuring that such children get the right level of support and, where possible, from a professional who is already familiar with the child and their family environment. Further reference to common assessment is made in paragraph 52 of this report.

Inspection and Regulation

- 40** A rigorous, joined up inspection framework is a key element in ensuring that the local safeguarding system is safe in every area.

Ofsted

- 41** To date, over half of local authorities have received an unannounced inspection of their contact, referral and assessment arrangements by Ofsted. All will have been inspected by summer 2010. Typically these inspections have provided reassurance that there are safe and secure systems in place in most local areas. Where aspects of service provision requiring further improvement have been identified these have often related to issues such as the analysis of risk of significant harm, delays in allocating cases, timeliness and quality of assessment, quality of case recording and the effectiveness of supervision. A three year programme of full inspections of safeguarding and looked after children services, conducted jointly by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission, with Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary where appropriate, has been put in place. To date, 15 inspections have been published.
- 42** Ofsted has also put improved systems in place to ensure that there is greater and deeper learning from Serious Case Reviews (SCRs). SCRs will now be shared in confidence with partner inspectorates and executive summaries with the Association of Chief Police Officers, Primary Care Trusts and Strategic Health Authorities, to promote learning. Importantly, Ofsted will also shortly publish for consultation its revised framework for the evaluation of

SCRs. It is anticipated that the depth and impact of learning and change will be central criteria in the judgements as to whether an SCR is adequate.

Care Quality Commission (CQC)

- 43** New registration arrangements for the NHS from April 2010 (and for the independent sector in October) will be more focused on ensuring that safeguarding arrangements are in place and delivering well. CQC has also strengthened its own staffing in this area. Nine regional safeguarding leads have been appointed to provide advice and support to the field and four dedicated inspectors (plus a team leader) will bring the complement of staff with specific safeguarding expertise to 19. A National Adviser post to provide advice and expertise at senior level has also been created. Central information and helpline staff have also been fully trained in the identification of safeguarding alerts, and they have access to appropriate advice and support from within the team. CQC, working jointly with Ofsted, also participate in the integrated inspections of safeguarding and looked after children, and detailed findings are shared with local health partners and contribute to assessment of compliance with regulation of provided services.
- 44** In July 2009, CQC published the report of its review of arrangements in the NHS for safeguarding children⁸ (commissioned by the Department of Health from its predecessor body, the Healthcare Commission). The review found that most NHS Trusts had the right people and systems in place for safeguarding children, but also identified areas where further improvement was required. Work is now underway within the NHS to address these issues and CQC will monitor improvement, and link this to the Essential Standards⁹.

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC)

- 45** HMIC has introduced a more structured system for the inspection of specialist police work, including the work of Child Abuse Investigation Units. Child protection and safeguarding sits within the wider role of Protecting Vulnerable People (PVP). Each Police Force was graded on PVP in 2007 and a 'lessons learned' report from this inspection was published in 2008. PVP, as part of the suite of 'Protective Services', will be subject to examination and analysis in spring 2010. This is expected to generate targeted fieldwork to feed into the Police Report Card (previously known as Rounded Assessment) for 2010-2011. In addition, a revised inspection framework for PVP has been developed and, subject to agreement, the child protection element of this will be also be piloted this spring.

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation (HMI Probation)

- 46** The Chief Inspector of Probation has consistently promoted the inspection of the safeguarding and public protection aspects of both Probation and Youth Offending work. New inspection programmes started in 2009, which continue and further develop this approach. With both programmes:

⁸ Safeguarding Children – A review of arrangements in the NHS for Safeguarding Children – http://www.cqc.org.uk/publications.cfm?fde_id=12694

⁹ Essential Standards of Quality and Safety – CQC December 2009 www.cqc.org.uk

- the inspection methodology centres on assessing the quality of work done with a representative sample of cases – how often was the right thing done with the right individual in the right way at the right time;
 - key criteria are the assessment, planning and management of safeguarding and public protection work in each individual case; and
 - an inspection of cases is carried out in every area of England and Wales at least once every three years.
- 47 Each of the new inspections of Youth Offending work since April 2009 has included the award of a highly visible 'safeguarding score'.

Supporting the Frontline

- 48 People working at the front line deserve our total support and continuous encouragement. They are making the most important decisions on a day to day basis about the lives of children and young people. Effective safeguarding and child protection rely on social workers, police, GPs, paediatricians, nurses, health visitors, teachers, court staff and many others working cohesively together for the good of children and young people.

Information sharing

- 49 Effective information sharing between professionals is an essential feature of working together. The cross-Government Information Sharing Guidance, *Information Sharing: Guidance for practitioners & managers* provides a clear, up to date and sound framework. In addition, the *Embedding information sharing toolkit*, published in January 2010, focuses on the organisational and cultural aspects of embedding good practice in information sharing. It describes activities that are specifically designed to address the key barriers and drivers of effective information sharing and presents real examples of these activities from local areas. The guidance, toolkit and other supporting materials are available at www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/informationsharing.
- 50 What happens at local level to support good information sharing is vitally important. Local areas need to address all relevant aspects of governance, strategy, process and front-line delivery. Practitioners must have confidence in the ongoing support of their managers and organisations and have sources of good local advice they can draw upon. Many areas are achieving this by establishing clear information sharing policies, by training, and through other means, such as the appointment of information sharing champions across the various professions. National support for this work will continue, including stronger messages across all government departments to reinforce the importance of good and appropriate information sharing. DCSF has been working closely with the Department of Health to develop a leaflet with a very specific focus on health, children's centres and information sharing, to address some of the key issues practitioners have raised in this area. The leaflet will be based upon, and will complement, the existing cross-Government guidance on information sharing and is for all staff working in, and with, children's centres. The content has been through a rigorous consultation exercise with a wide range of interested parties and has received very positive feedback from key health stakeholders and practitioners. The leaflet will also be accompanied by a practical toolkit produced by Together for Children.

An example of how one organisation is championing information sharing, and building information sharing principles into their organisational governance is Devon Children's Trust.

The Devon Children's Trust Board has established a framework that sets out the core objectives and standards for sharing information related to children, young people and families to which all partners subscribe.

The objectives of this framework are:

- to produce an effective and practical Children's Trust Information Sharing framework for Devon;
- to provide guidance and training for practitioners in order to support them to share information appropriately and improve outcomes for children and young people; and
- to provide consistent guidelines to practitioners working with children and young people in Devon.

The top-level document in the framework is primarily concerned with the exchange of personal information across the partnership. It includes core objectives and standards related to:

- sharing of personal information where decisions have to be made on a case-by-case basis;
- pre-planned sharing of personal information for specific purposes;
- storage, retention and disposal of personal information;
- subject access requests;
- handling of complaints; and
- review of the framework.

The framework is complemented by a Practitioner Guide (based on the cross-Government information sharing guidance) that aims to improve practice by giving practitioners clearer guidance on when and how they can share information legally and professionally, using training and sources of advice on information sharing in each of the partner organisations. There is also a leaflet for children and young people, and a series of agreements supporting pre-planned sharing of information about children, young people and their families for specific purposes.

- 51** ContactPoint, a national online directory for people who work with children and young people, continues to be implemented. Practitioner training and use of the system began in the 'Early Adopters' in May 2009, and across England from October 2009, building up use according to local plans. Local authorities are working with partner organisations to support them through implementation. Practitioners using ContactPoint are positive and report that they are already seeing benefits from its use, including better communication and more integrated working across children's services. The recently published *ContactPoint: Lessons Learned from the Early Adopter Phase*, available at www.dcsf.gov.uk/ecm/contactpoint provides further details.

Consultant Paediatrician: *'ContactPoint was a very easy tool to use. It allowed me to rapidly access relevant information about a child for whom there was suspected non-accidental injury. This information was invaluable in supporting further management of the case and the whole process took less than five minutes, whereas previously a lot of time would have been spent making phone calls and trying to track people down for information.'*

Education Welfare Officer: *'From my experience, ContactPoint is already proving to be an important tool to help ensure that children and young people get the support they need in a timely, joined-up way. As an education welfare officer it is essential that I have the best possible information available about the children I work with. In each case where I have used ContactPoint, I have been able to quickly get in touch with the right people. More importantly, the children received the support they required.'*

Common Assessment Framework

- 52** The Common Assessment Framework (CAF) is promoted in statutory guidance. Local authorities and Children's Trust partners including schools, primary and community health services have been implementing and refining the processes and practices around its use since April 2006. Evidence shows that there is variation in the way common assessment is used locally and there is a need for clarity about its relationship and purpose alongside other types of assessments for children and young people. The Department for Children, Schools and Families has responded to the need for greater consistency and clarity in the use of common assessment, setting out some standard principles for assessment, *National CAF Process Standards for Children's Trusts*. The Department has also developed a *National Quality Framework for the CAF process* in the form of guidance and tools. This is intended to support local Children's Trusts in introducing arrangements to ensure that the common assessment process is being administered to a high standard across all children's services (including Sure Start Children's Centres, schools, primary and community health services and voluntary sector organisations). For information on the Quality Framework see www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/resources-and-practice/IG00662/. To further support the consistent and effective use of the CAF, a new electronic system – National eCAF – is being introduced in a steady and incremental way and will initially be made available in six 'Early Adopter' organisations on 22 March 2010. National eCAF is not limited to operating within single local authority areas and will therefore help practitioners and services work more effectively across borders, which has particular benefits for families who receive services from more than one local authority area or who move home.
- 53** We recognise, however, that we need to do more to ensure that common assessment is used consistently across the Children's Workforce and Children's Trusts. We are establishing a working group on early support and intervention, and will ask it to advise on how we can construct efficient and effective early identification and assessment of additional needs across the universal and targeted services of local Children's Trusts.

Hull City Council CAF Team

The Common Assessment Framework (CAF) is a key part of delivering frontline services that are integrated and focused around the needs of children and young people. Used effectively, the CAF can:

- **improve integrated working** by promoting coordinated service provision;
- **improve responses to children and young people who do not require formal child protection services but who are vulnerable and/or' in need'**; and
- identify and **target the most appropriate and effective services** to address the needs of the child or young person.

Good system design incorporating the benefits of CAF can increase the efficiency and capacity of staff and, ultimately, lead to better outcomes.

Hull City Council, like many local authorities, has established a CAF Team, which is co-located with the Children's Social Services Central Duty Team, meaning it is available for quick, on-site consultation relating to individual cases and joint visits to children and families. Because of this close working, enquiries to the Central Duty Team do not always generate a formal referral, given the signposting and advice that CAF workers are able to provide both to callers and colleagues.

Integrated Children's System

- 54** Following the Social Work Task Force (SWTF) advice about the Integrated Children's System (ICS) in May 2009, the DCSF changed its approach to the regulation of IT systems in children's social work, introducing greater flexibility. It has embarked on a programme of support to local authorities to take ownership of their own systems, including working with expert social workers and their managers to develop guidance for local authorities about how their computer systems can be simplified and how usability can be improved. Two sets of simplifications and guidance were issued by the DCSF, shortly to be followed by another. As set out in *Building a Safe and Confident Future: Implementing the recommendations of the Social Work Task Force*, published today, the ICS improvement programme will continue in 2010-11, supported by a £15 million grant to local authorities for further improvement to local systems.

Police

- 55** The National Police Protective Services Board (NPPSB), which reports directly to the National Policing Board, is driving the work programme to ensure that all police forces deliver effective protective services for the public. These are often services that are less visible to the public but are crucial to ensuring that local communities are protected from a wide range of potential threats such as organised crime or major crime.
- 56** The NPPSB has prioritised a focus on improving the policing approach to child protection and has commissioned ACPO to develop a child protection delivery plan. The plan, which will be finalised in spring 2010, will be led and owned by ACPO and will focus on the police contribution to child protection.

- 57 ACPO has undertaken a wide consultation process in developing the plan. The plan considers what measures can be put in place on a national, regional and local level to improve the police response and equip officers to better protect children. The plan will help to ensure the police are fully equipped to perform their key role in safeguarding children and will support improvements to leadership, resourcing, and police training and awareness.
- 58 The plan also attempts to provide synergy between a number of areas of work going on within other agencies, such as HMIC, the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP) and the National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA), all of which have an interest in the delivery of child protection within policing. ACPO has considered those areas highlighted in Lord Laming's report that the service can build upon, for example, the need for tailored training for officers working in specialist units. Good progress has been made on the provision of training for specialist staff and senior police leaders by the NPIA.
- 59 The outcomes of the delivery plan will go forward to inform force child protection policy and practice. This, along with the recently revised ACPO Guidance on Investigating Child Abuse and Safeguarding Children provides a comprehensive toolkit for forces to incorporate into practice. The revised guidance, which supports the multi-agency approach in *Working Together to Safeguard Children*, was published by NPIA and ACPO in November 2009 and is available at www.npia.police.uk/en/14532.htm
- 60 The Government has also announced its intention to place CEOP on a statutory footing, with formal non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs) status and the inclusion of the national lead for missing and abducted children within its remit. This commitment reflects the importance the Government attaches to this area of work. CEOP will be key to the delivery of the improvements proposed within the police child protection delivery plan. Good progress is also being made on the protection of children living in households where there is domestic violence. The commitments in the *Together We Can End Violence against Women and Girls Strategy* published by the Home Office in November 2009, include the intention to ensure that there is a Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) in every geographic area by 2011. MARACs are multi-agency meetings which have the safety of high risk victims of domestic abuse as their focus. They provide an important vehicle to ensure the protection of children living in those households. In the 12 months to September 2009, for example, over 33,000 cases were brought to a MARAC with over 46,000 children considered in the safety planning as well. By 2011, the intention is for MARACs to be protecting at least 50,000 victims a year, with these victims supported by Independent Domestic Violence Advisers (IDVAs). However more needs to be done to ensure that the needs and safety of children are carefully considered and appropriately actioned by every MARAC and that there are effective working relationships between MARACs and LSCBs. In furtherance of this objective, the NSDU will be working with the National MARAC Steering Group partners to identify improvement priorities and to engage and work well with local areas.

Case study: Blackpool Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)

Hannah is a 15 year old girl who was referred to the Children's Independent Domestic Violence Adviser (IDVA) service following the domestic abuse she witnessed between her mother and her mother's former partner. Following a number of incidents Hannah felt unsafe within her own home. Hannah was also experiencing conflict with other children in school. Hannah's mother was being supported by an Independent Domestic Violence Advisor and requested support from a Children's IDVA for her daughter. The CIDVA arranged for the Schools Learning Mentor to have regular support sessions at school during which Hannah discussed emotions/experiences, identified her support network and arranged a safety plan. Hannah then went on to participate in a 5 week confidence and self-esteem building group. During the one to one sessions and the group activities Hannah has developed an increased awareness of domestic abuse. She has grown in confidence from having the opportunity to talk about her experiences and from mixing with other young people who have had similar experiences to herself. She has also formed positive relationships with a group of girls in school. Hannah says that she feels safer within her own home as she is aware of ways in which she can keep herself safe. Hannah's mother commented, *'I would like to thank you for all your work with my daughter. She has benefitted tremendously from the work done and now has the confidence to face life again after all we have been through'*

Health

- 61** Following the Care Quality Commission's (CQC) review of safeguarding arrangements in the NHS in England, the Chief Executive of the NHS, David Nicholson, wrote to NHS chief executives in December 2008 and again in July 2009 asking all Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) and Trust Boards to assure themselves that they have robust arrangements in place in relation to child safeguarding, setting out a list of minimum arrangements for assurance. Monitor, the independent regulator of NHS Foundation Trusts, wrote in parallel to NHS Foundation Trusts. Department of Health meetings with each Strategic Health Authority (SHA) in the autumn suggest that there has been a significant focus on and challenge to safeguarding in PCTs over the last year. All SHAs now have an assurance framework in place and all NHS organisations have been asked to publish a statement of compliance with the assurance requirements on their website.
- 62** There has also been progress on specific themes highlighted in Lord Laming's report. The Action on Health Visiting Programme, developed jointly by DH and the Community Practitioners and Health Visitors Association (CPHVA), has led the response to Lord Laming's challenges to strengthen the confidence, competence and capacity of the health visiting workforce. Through extensive engagement with the profession and across the NHS, the programme has made good progress in raising the profile of the profession; defining five key dimensions of the health visitor's role, including working with vulnerable families and protecting children; disseminating good practice; and promoting health visiting as a career. Action in hand on professional development includes support for clinical development with a new e-learning programme for the Healthy Child Programme, and investment in clinical leadership fellowships, with health visitors as a priority. Initiatives to build capacity include action on recruitment, retention and return to practice.

- 63** In parallel, health visiting capacity for safeguarding was discussed with each Strategic Health Authority during DH/SHA meetings on safeguarding in autumn 2009 and SHAs set out plans to strengthen capacity in a sustainable way where needed. To reinforce this, the Secretary of State for Health has introduced a new requirement, confirmed in the NHS Operating Framework for 2010-11, for PCTs and SHAs to monitor health visitor numbers and caseload sizes from April 2010.
- 64** Improving information sharing in Accident and Emergency (A&E) Departments and other urgent care settings has been another focus for attention. The CQC's review published in July 2009 covered policies and systems in A&E, including systems for checking whether a child is the subject of a child protection plan, and systems for flagging where there were safeguarding concerns about a child. These issues were further followed up as part of the process of SHA and board assurance set in train following the CQC report. The Department of Health is also working with NHS Connecting for Health and urgent care clinicians on proposals for better IT systems support for information sharing in A&E and other urgent care settings.
- 65** Staff development and support has been an important theme on which DH has worked closely with the professions. The roles of designated and named health professionals for safeguarding children are of fundamental importance. A range of support has been put in place to help them. All SHAs have commissioned safeguarding leadership programmes for designated and named professionals and some have also extended these programmes to staff in other groups. Where these programmes have been evaluated, the feedback has been very positive. The Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH) is working to explore the potential benefits and feasibility of developing more formal, managed clinical networks for child protection. The professional learning for health professionals in their initial training is also significant. The Department of Health has led a review of safeguarding training for NHS staff, working closely with NHS and professional leaders. The review identified a need for greater clarity about what training should be received and how frequently. In response, the Department will work with its partners to produce a training matrix which describes learning outcomes, maps existing training courses, and outlines training pathways for different professional groups. The Royal Colleges have also agreed to update existing intercollegiate guidance on roles and competencies for health care staff in safeguarding children.

Portsmouth Primary Care Trust

Portsmouth City Teaching Primary Care Trust (PCT) have developed a handbook for practitioners 'Safeguarding Children, Everyone's responsibility' which has been circulated to all staff as a practical tool to help them in delivering the PCT's vision and policies for safeguarding children and young people in Portsmouth. It emphasises the importance of focusing on the needs of the child, answers some typical questions that may occur to health professionals when they suspect that a child is at risk of harm and provides sources of additional help. It is available at www.dcsf.gov.uk/nsdu

- 66** The Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) and the British Medical Association (BMA) wrote to all GPs in autumn 2009 to raise the profile of child protection training. The Department of Health wrote in parallel to all PCTs to remind them of the requirements to support child protection training. GPs who wish to provide services to NHS patients are required to apply to join a 'Performers List' maintained by their local PCT. Amendments to

the Performers List Regulations for general practice, are being considered as part of strengthening the PCT role in ensuring suitability and eligibility of clinicians for the role. The amendment being considered is to ensure that primary care contractors cannot be included in the Performers List Regulations unless they are registered with the Independent Safeguarding Authority.

Social Work Reform¹⁰

- 67** Social workers play a vital role in the delivery of safeguarding children services. They need to be highly skilled in their interactions with children, young people, their families and carers, drawing on sound professional understanding of the activities and interventions which will make a difference. They need to be able to do all of this where possible in partnership with the children, young people, parent or carers with whom they are working. At the same time, social workers must be able to make and defend complex professional judgements about when statutory powers should be used to ensure that children are safe. They need to be able to listen to children and young people and be able to use the knowledge and skills of other professionals to support their work. They must also be resilient in dealing with the emotional impact of routinely engaging with children and families in distress or crisis, including those families who are resistant to support and intervention.
- 68** In May 2009, Government announced a range of initiatives to support the recruitment, retention and development of children and families' social workers, underpinned by an additional £58 million between 2009 and 2011. Since then we have launched our *Be the Difference and Help Give Them a Voice* social worker recruitment campaigns which so far have prompted over 53,000 people to register for information on how to become a social worker. The expansion of the children and families' Newly Qualified Social Worker (NQSW) programme announced in May has also been successful, with 2,000 NQSWs projected to take part this year. *Step Up to Social Work*, the new employer-based graduate fast track route into social work is on track to begin in the autumn and since our *Return to Social Work Scheme* was set up last summer, 600 former social workers have registered their interest in returning to the profession with the scheme.
- 69** In December 2009, the Social Work Task Force made 15 recommendations for the reforms that are necessary so that Government, employers and social work educators all fully support the social work profession and its continued improvement and development. The Government accepted the Task Force's recommendations and committed to taking forward the comprehensive reform programme it proposed. While the work of the Task Force and its report span both adult and children's social work, Lord Laming's specific recommendations in relation to children's social work contributed to the Task Force's problem analysis and final recommendations, and will be taken forward through that reform programme. The Government has already established the Social Work Reform Board to drive the programme, and today publishes its Implementation Plan for Social Work, *Building a Safe and Confident Future: Implementing the recommendations of the Social Work Task Force* which sets out how it will work with the profession, employers, the regulator, educators and people who use social work services to put these reforms in place. The plan sets out how a new independent College of Social Work will be established

¹⁰ www.dcsf.gov.uk/swrb/

that will promote a strong culture of professional development, as well as establishing a powerful voice for the profession.

- 70** The plan also describes how a new career framework for social workers will be developed which encourages excellent social workers to stay in frontline practice and is reflected in pay arrangements. Other elements of the plan include, reviewing the initial training curriculum and the introduction of an assessed first year in employment for new social workers with the anticipation that, subject to consultation and parliamentary approval, this will be in place for 2016. New standards for employers will also be introduced which will ensure that social workers have manageable workloads and high quality supervision. Over time and subject to consultation and parliamentary approval, there will also be a move to a 'licence to practise' model of regulation which will ensure that the highest standards of practice are maintained by members of the profession and supported by their employers. The Government will invest more than £200 million in social work reform and support to students in 2010–11. In Children's Services, this includes continuing the Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC) programmes to support recruitment, retention and remodelling and a £23 million Local Social Work Improvement Fund that local authorities will be able to access through CWDC to use flexibly in response to local needs in consultation with practitioners and local safeguarding partners.

The local social work improvement programme

- 71** It is essential that local authorities have effective systems for responding to contacts and referrals about possible children in need (including those children and young people who are suffering or likely to suffer significant harm) and can ensure that all vulnerable children, young people and families have the right support at the right time. This requires social work expertise to be deployed well and to best effect and it requires Children's Trust Boards to maximise the impact of their shared professional resources. Many local areas are developing effective 'initial pathway support' teams, led by senior social workers with both qualified and unqualified staff who provide clear signposting and onward referral where appropriate and who can support robust common assessment in universal services. Such teams are often multi-disciplinary and include police officers, teachers, housing staff and health visitors. Key to those that are successful seems to be the presence of a range of staff with specialist knowledge about housing, education, health and social care, all of whom can navigate their way through the systems they know well, finding appropriate signposts or solutions without necessarily deploying statutory social care services. Leadership by a senior social worker is, however, critical to the assessment and prioritisation of contacts.
- 72** Lord Laming was clear in his recommendation that good systems should be developed to manage referrals concerning vulnerable children and young people. To achieve this requires professional social work assessment and in particular, of the risk factors presented at contact and referral. But not all cases will require a statutory social care service or response. Prioritising well means that resources can be used most effectively. This approach will be fundamental in establishing consistent high quality early support in order to help children and young people at the right time but also ensuring that local social work teams are able to be effective where the need is greatest.

Improvement, Learning and Change

Regional support

- 73** Regional Government Offices, working with regional partners including SHAs, have a vital role in supporting and challenging local area safeguarding priorities for improvement. Support currently ranges from advice and challenge on the terms of reference and follow-up to Serious Case Reviews; support before and after inspection; the facilitation of regional partnerships and safeguarding networks; and direct support to LSCBs. The new and increased Safeguarding Adviser capacity in Government Offices will help to improve the impact of this work. Safeguarding Advisers work as part of the NSDU and, from April this year, will support the delivery of national, as well as regional, safeguarding priorities.

Serious Case Reviews

- 74** SCRs are an important part of learning lessons following the death of, or serious incident involving, a child or young person where abuse or neglect is known or suspected to have been factors. Lord Laming made a number of recommendations to further develop the process of SCRs to strengthen their impact. As a result, the relevant chapter of the statutory guidance, *Working Together to Safeguard Children* has been revised and places increased emphasis on learning and improvement. It makes clear that executive summaries should accurately reflect the full overview report and include information about the review process, key issues arising from the report, the recommendations and the action plan. The full revised *Working Together* guidance published alongside this report clarifies further the requirements for executive summaries and makes clear that LSCB annual report should include progress updates on actions taken in response to current and recent SCRs. A template for executive summaries is at Annex B.
- 75** There are many examples where local areas are acting on the learning from Serious Case Reviews:

- The Fire Service in East Sussex are running a campaign on fire prevention as a result of issues raised in a SCR. Research conducted locally by Brighton University indicated that approximately one in nine households experience a fire in the home caused by children (though many of these are not reported or result in the Fire & Rescue Service being called). Under the banner of 'learning not burning' a local radio station is broadcasting a series of advertisements for two weeks to promote the scheme. Information is also available on line and a confidential email and telephone hotline have also been created. The aim is to encourage more people to seek help so that issues can be identified and resolved at an early stage. The campaign will be evaluated to assess its impact.
- Portsmouth LSCB ran a creative awareness raising campaign offering advice to parents and carers about the potential risks of co-sleeping. The campaign was carried out as a result of issues raised in SCRs. This was an excellent example of multi-agency working between midwifery services and health visiting and multi-agency working to progress the awareness raising campaign. It involved the development of clinical guidance, advice leaflets for parents and carers, information posters and the production of printed bibs with safe sleeping messages for all children born in Portsmouth. Since this campaign the number of child deaths due to overlay in Portsmouth has reduced to zero.
- Reading LSCB made use of an Overview Author and a Headteacher to feed back learning to local schools from a SCR relating to an older child. They are also undertaking an impact assessment with their partner agencies to ensure that there is evidence of change in practice and outcomes for children as a result of implementing the lessons from SCRs.
- Oxfordshire LSCB has led some work on closer working with the Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPAs) in the local area as a result of learning from a SCR. The report from MAPPAs was used within the process as an IMR which ensured that their review was fully integrated into the SCR process. This has led to strategic MAPPAs Board of Thames Valley and the Oxfordshire LSCB developing a closer understanding of working practices in each area. One of the outcomes is a conference led by SMB on Safeguarding in MAPPAs to be held in July 2010 where these lessons can be shared across the South East region.

- 76** Securing good SCR authors and panel chairs is also essential. The NSDU has been leading on the development of a national training programme for SCR overview report authors and panel chairs. Pilots have already begun following a successful tendering process. The regional Government Offices, in partnership with local LSCBs, and regional improvement partners have also already co-ordinated training to Individual Management Review authors. Discussions will continue about the future training needs of the sector.
- 77** The NSDU has also commissioned research from the University of Warwick to understand what more needs to be done to stimulate learning from serious case and child death reviews across the safeguarding system for children and young people. It is also commissioning separate work to identify when, and under what circumstances, varying methodologies could be used when undertaking SCRs, to assist with the effective learning of lessons.
- 78** Recurring circumstances in the death or serious injury of children and young people, include adult substance misuse, domestic violence and the mental ill health of a parent or carer. Lord Laming emphasised the importance of identifying these vulnerable children early on

and ensuring that services working with the adults make appropriate referrals to children's social care services. Progress has already been made, including the revision of the Working Together guidance, the Home Office strategy on Violence against Women and Girls¹¹; the protective policing reforms; the national focus on the quality of health visiting and preventative services that can intervene early. NSDU aims to continue to support improvement through its learning and change priority and the planned 'intervening early' programme for 2010.

Solution Focused Therapy and other research

- 79** The executive summary published in May 2009 of the SCR on the case of Baby Peter undertaken by Haringey Safeguarding Children Board raised concerns about the use of Solution Focused Brief Therapy (SFBT) within the context of child protection. NSDU has commissioned a systematic review of the research findings on the effectiveness of this method of intervention which will be completed by autumn 2010.
- 80** The Government has also commissioned a full programme of research into safeguarding, child protection and assessment, the details of which are at www.dcsf.gov.uk/nsdu. NSDU will be working with stakeholders to consider how best to disseminate the findings from this research and support their application in practice.

Child neglect

- 81** Many practitioners and much recent research (including SCRs) also raise the issue of long term child neglect. NSDU and the DCSF have therefore jointly commissioned new training resources for practitioners and managers to support their work with children and families, where children are being or are likely to be neglected. The training resources are designed to provide support for practice, and to help professionals understand their responsibilities when undertaking assessments, and when intervening in circumstances where there is concern about child neglect. These training resources are due for completion in early 2011. In addition, NSDU has recently published a practitioner's guide for use when working with neglected adolescents. This is available at www.dcsf.gov.uk/nsdu/research.shtml.

Safeguarding data

- 82** Access to high quality data is fundamental in supporting planning, performance and improvements for safeguarding. Some local areas have made good progress in their use of existing data but others would welcome further support on improving the data that is available to them. This includes considering comprehensive data that will help inform an understanding of need and create a better local understanding of safeguarding performance across the breadth of the Children's Trusts Board. It is also important that we develop ways of understanding the experiences of children, young people and their families, and of everyone working in the system about the strengths and areas for development in safeguarding and child protection. Nationally, data in respect of safeguarding children and young people must also improve. Further information about this priority area for NSDU is referenced in paragraph 91 of this report.

¹¹ www.homeoffice.gov.uk/documents/vawg-strategy-2009

3. Challenges and Moving Forward

- 83** As this report illustrates, priority is being given to safeguarding and child protection across Government. New solutions are also being sought in answer to increases in demand, at a time when resources are becoming more difficult to obtain.
- 84** NSDU has been created to support the system, nationally, regionally and locally as it develops its improvement priorities. The Unit will learn from what is and is not working and will help to encourage innovation. It will stay tightly focused on the needs of children, young people and their carers. The work programme for the Unit over the next two years is designed around six priority areas which have been established with the close involvement of national stakeholders, partnership network colleagues and front line practitioners. There is still work to do to design and fill in the detail in partnership with stakeholders, but we remain convinced that support in these areas will make a difference. With the help of regional and local leaders there are positive opportunities ahead.

‘Do it now, do it right, intervene early’

- 85** This priority is likely to include support for early work with vulnerable families through piloting and evaluation of ‘first response’ services. In particular, local responses and support for children and young people affected by domestic violence, adult mental ill health and/or substance misuse will be prioritised. Early assessment and intervention are integral to this programme, as is the concept of ‘front doors’, considering all universal services where children, young people, their families and carers access services.
- 86** Additionally this priority will examine:
- learning from family assessment and early intervention;
 - professional support at the point of contact and referral to local children’s social care services, including the development of effective common assessment and early intervention prior to referral to children’s social care; and
 - learning from the ‘Total Place’ pilots, including how to make best use of resources.

Leading well and working together

- 87** This priority area aims to look more closely at practice improvement through the revised statutory guidance, *Working Together to Safeguard Children*. Specifically this work programme area will support:
- professional safeguarding practice networks in Government Office regions, including tailored support for designated and named safeguarding professionals;

- the development of Children’s Trust Boards, their safeguarding responsibilities and leadership of change;
- safeguarding, leadership and learning in collaboration with the National College leadership programme for Directors of Children’s Services and aspirant Directors;
- leadership, practice and the role of Local Safeguarding Children Boards;
- a programme of national expert and good practice seminars;
- a project to support the implementation of ‘best and next practice’, engaging with families who are not willing or able to accept support and help; and
- a learning set approach to ‘child centred practice’ and listening to children.

Learning and change

- 88** The theme of this work area is focused on innovation and learning: for example, finding ways to change and improve practice through the use of learning from SCRs, Serious Incident Notifications and interventions that have worked in protecting a child or young person. It will include learning from inspection, intervention and strengths in the performance of services. Child Death Overview Panels and their learning and improvement will also feature as a part of this priority area. There will be an emphasis on peer learning and support, as well as inter-professional and multi-agency learning opportunities. The work will also be informed by the findings of the Department of Health’s review of safeguarding training for NHS staff.
- 89** Some challenges remain which the NSDU will consider in the year ahead. These include:
- the need for strong strategic leadership across all central government departments to prioritise the necessary changes in professional practice that SCRs recommend;
 - better sharing of innovative ideas about early learning from serious incidents which does not prejudice any judicial or other processes that have started;
 - learning from the most common themes emerging from SCRs and ensuring that any improvement is well embedded at the frontline and in professional practice;
 - ensuring that the initial training programmes for all safeguarding professionals take account of the lessons emerging from SCRs; and
 - finding mechanisms for learning which use local leadership capacity more effectively and which really improve professional practice.

Regional improvement and support

- 90 Additional resource for safeguarding advisory capacity in regional Government Offices provides new opportunities to ensure that local areas are able to access the improvement support and challenge they require. The new Safeguarding Advisers have specialist skills and knowledge of safeguarding and have worked in a senior capacity within local services. They work on behalf of NSDU as an integral part of the Children and Learner Teams in Government Offices. In doing so, they work alongside the new Children and Learner Strategic Advisers (CLSAs) and wider cross sector teams within the region who have a role and interest in safeguarding. A description of the role of Safeguarding Advisers in the Government Offices is available at www.dcsf.gov.uk/nsdu and a summary is at Annex C. This area of the NDSU work programme will also support the further development of improvement and change networks in the region, encouraging alignment with existing improvement partners. Some Strategic Health Authorities (SHAs) have developed safeguarding improvement teams or are taking other action to share good practice. They are doing this in close collaboration with regional Government Office staff and the networks will continue to align closely with regional health colleagues. Specific projects integral to this priority area include:
- regional Serious Case Review integrated learning clinics;
 - regional and local needs assessment seminars; and
 - regional learning from inspection and intervention.

Understanding need, performance and data

- 91 The importance of an effective and robust needs assessment was emphasised in Lord Laming's report. A good understanding of the needs of children, young people, families and carers is the basis upon which local priorities and Children and Young People's Plans are agreed. Management information about current and potential demand, alongside data about performance, impact and outcomes, is fundamental to planning and prioritisation. The national and regional data are also an important element of planning and improvement. In the year ahead, NSDU intends to:
- support the development of local needs assessments, ensuring their alignment with the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for every local area;
 - work to support local areas in developing their own performance monitoring systems informed by national indicators as well as other local measures that are useful for their own locality and particular services; and
 - support the development of national targets and indicators alongside better national data with a focus on measuring impact and difference in safeguarding outcomes and the performance of services.

Confidence and trust in the safeguarding system

- 92** The circumstances in which professionals undertake their safeguarding responsibilities remain challenging, as we know. In the year ahead, NSDU intends to prioritise work to support improved public and professional confidence in the system. Integral to this is ensuring that children and young people remain absolutely central to all safeguarding improvement. One option NSDU is considering is the establishment of a 'young NSDU', working with some of our voluntary sector partners to get a good representation of children and young people from across the country to help the work of the Unit. Further possible options to support this priority area include:
- establishing a network of new lay members from LSCBs. Such a network could offer considerable potential for learning, in addition to providing a forum for advice and support; and
 - seeking out local areas where there is community engagement with safeguarding priorities and reviewing the impact and difference that this can make.
- 93** The NSDU looks forward to working with partners nationally, regionally and locally to progress this important programme of work in the year ahead.

Annex A: The Government's Response to Lord Laming: Progress Update on 58 Recommendations

Ref No	Lord Laming's Recommendation March 2009	Government's Response May 2009	Progress update March 2010
1	The Home Secretary and the Secretaries of State for Children, Schools and Families, Health and Justice must collaborate in the setting of explicit strategic priorities for the protection of children and young people and reflect these in the priorities of frontline services.	These four Departments are committed to working together on strategic priorities for the front line and will ensure effective co-ordination through a new Ministerial sub-group and the new cross-Government National Safeguarding Delivery Unit (see Rec 2).	In order to establish, implement and monitor explicit strategic priorities for the protection of children and young people a Ministerial sub-group of the Cabinet's Families, Children and Young People Sub-Committee was set up in July 2009. This sub-group has overseen the establishment of a National Safeguarding Delivery Unit (NSDU, see recommendation 2), the publication of the NSDU work programme and revisions to the statutory guidance <i>Working Together to Safeguard Children</i> . The four Secretaries of State continue to meet quarterly with the Chief Adviser on the Safety of Children to give effective, co-ordinated national leadership across the safeguarding system.

Ref No	Lord Laming's Recommendation March 2009	Government's Response May 2009	Progress update March 2010
2	<p>A National Safeguarding Delivery Unit be established to report directly to the Cabinet Sub-Committee on Families, Children and Young People. It should have a remit that includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● working with the Cabinet Sub-Committee on Families, Children and Young People to set and publish challenging timescales for the recommendations in this report; ● challenging and supporting every Children's Trust in the country to implement recommendations within the agreed timescales, ensuring improvements are made in leadership, staffing, training, supervision and practice across all services; ● raising the profile of safeguarding and child protection across children's services, health and police; ● supporting the development of effective national priorities on safeguarding for all frontline services, and the development of local performance management to drive these priorities; 	<p>We announced on 12 March the appointment of Sir Roger Singleton to the new role of Chief Adviser on the Safety of Children. Sir Roger will advise the Government on the effective implementation of policy and report annually to Parliament on safeguarding progress, including the delivery of the recommendations from Lord Laming's report as set out in this action plan.</p> <p>Sir Roger took up this new role, which is a three year appointment, on 1 April 2009. He will submit his first report to Parliament in April 2010.</p> <p>To assist him in his new role, Sir Roger is establishing a new Chief Adviser's Expert Group.</p> <p>The Chief Adviser will work with Government to establish a cross-Government National Safeguarding Delivery Unit (NSDU) to give strong, co-ordinated national leadership across the system.</p> <p>With expert staff from DCSF, Home Office, the Department of Health, the Ministry of Justice, local agencies and the voluntary sector, the Unit will provide support and challenge to local authorities, promote dynamic learning and good practice development, including through sector-led approaches, and act as a bridge between national policy development and local implementation. The Unit will also support the development of explicit strategic priorities, and related national targets, where appropriate, for the protection of children</p>	<p>The NSDU became operational on 1 July 2009 to oversee the implementation of Lord Laming's recommendations for the protection of children. Working with the new Chief Adviser on the Safety of Children, the NSDU continues to focus on national safeguarding priorities, working with central, regional and local partners.</p> <p>The NSDU has established a Partnership Network to ensure its work is firmly rooted in what is happening at the frontline and to pursue specific issues impacting on effective frontline safeguarding practice. The Unit will continue to work with this Network in 2010-11. An Interim Progress Report & Work Programme was published on 18 December 2009 and the priorities for the year ahead are set out in the main narrative to this report.</p> <p>The Chief Adviser's Expert Group was established in May 2009. The Group operates largely virtually and has met formally twice, in October 2009 and March 2010. The Group has most recently supported the Chief Adviser in producing his first annual report. A full list of Group members can be found at www.dcsf.gov.uk/singleton/expertgroup.shtml.</p> <p>In addition, the Chief Adviser has maintained regular contact with safeguarding professionals, through visits to local authorities, NHS services, police forces and Her Majesty's Court Services to inform his annual report published on 17 March 2010.</p> <p>The NSDU has reported regularly to the new Ministerial subgroup.</p>

Ref No	Lord Laming's Recommendation March 2009	Government's Response May 2009	Progress update March 2010
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● leading a change in culture across frontline services that enables them to work more effectively to protect children; ● having regional representation with expertise on safeguarding and child protection that builds supportive advisory relationships with Children's Trusts to drive improved outcomes for children and young people; ● working with existing organisations to create a shared evidence base about effective practice including evidence-based programmes, early intervention and preventative services; ● supporting the implementation of the recommendations of Serious Case Reviews in partnership with Government Offices and Ofsted, and put in place systems to learn the lessons at local, regional and national level; ● gathering best practice on referral and assessment systems for children affected by domestic violence, adult mental health problems, and drugs and alcohol misuse, and provide advice to local authorities, health and police on implementing robust arrangements nationally; and 	<p>and young people for frontline services. Regional Government Office staff will work as part of the National Safeguarding Delivery Unit and will link as appropriate with Strategic Health Authorities and their networks of professionals.</p> <p>A 'Partnership Network' will be established to work with the Unit and the Chief Adviser to pursue specific issues impacting on effective frontline safeguarding practice.</p> <p>The Unit will publish a detailed work programme by September 2009 and will support the Chief Adviser in preparing his annual progress report to Parliament on safeguarding progress and on the implementation of this action plan.</p> <p>The Unit will be operational by 1 July 2009.</p> <p>It will be hosted within the DCSF and will report to the Cabinet Sub-Committee on Families, Children and Young People through a new Ministerial sub-group comprising Secretaries of State from DCSF, Home Office, Department of Health and the Ministry of Justice which will meet quarterly, together with the Chief Adviser.</p>	

Ref No	Lord Laming's Recommendation March 2009	Government's Response May 2009	Progress update March 2010
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● commissioning training on child protection and safeguarding and on leading these services effectively for all senior political leaders and service managers across those frontline services responsible for safeguarding and child protection 		
3	<p>The Cabinet Sub-Committee on Families, Children and Young People should ensure that all government departments that impact on the safety of children take action to create a comprehensive approach to children through national strategies, the organisation of their central services, and the models they promote for the delivery of local services. This work should focus initially on changes to improve the child-focus of services delivered by the Department of Health, Ministry of Justice and Home Office.</p>	<p>The Cabinet Sub-Committee will take regular reports on safeguarding and the new Ministerial sub-group (see Recommendation 2) will meet quarterly, with the Chief Adviser, to provide an even stronger focus.</p>	<p>The DA(FCY) Ministerial sub-group meets quarterly with the Chief Adviser to monitor progress and to consider joint priorities for improvement. A cross-Government programme board comprising senior officials, is in place to oversee the implementation of the recommendations arising from Lord Laming's progress report.</p>
4	<p>The Government should introduce new statutory targets for safeguarding and child protection alongside the existing statutory attainment and early years targets as quickly as possible. The National Indicator Set should be revised with new national indicators for safeguarding and child protection developed for inclusion in Local Area Agreements for the next Comprehensive Spending Review.</p>	<p>The Government has brought forward amendments to the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Bill to allow for the Secretary of State to amend the set of statutory targets which apply to all areas. The current set of statutory targets covers early years and school attainment targets and the proposed amendment to the Bill will extend this to a number of safeguarding targets within the revised list of indicators. The precise number of statutory targets will be decided in the light of further discussion with partners.</p>	<p>The Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009, which gives the Secretary of State the power to set statutory safeguarding targets, received Royal Assent in November, shortly after the launch of a consultation exercise on the proposed new safeguarding indicators and targets in October 2009. This work will now be taken forward as part of the forthcoming review of the National Indicator Set.</p>

Ref No	Lord Laming's Recommendation March 2009	Government's Response May 2009	Progress update March 2010
5	<p>The Department of Health must clarify and strengthen the responsibilities of Strategic Health Authorities for the performance management of Primary Care Trusts on safeguarding and child protection. Formalised and explicit performance indicators should be introduced for Primary Care Trusts.</p>	<p>Work with NHS Chief Executives to clarify accountabilities and management arrangements has already begun, following David Nicholson's 1 December 2008 letter to the NHS. We shall build on this in alignment as far as possible with work in response to Recommendation 4, to develop new statutory targets and their indicators.</p>	<p>The Chief Executive of the NHS, David Nicholson, wrote to NHS chief executives in December 2008 and again in July 2009 asking all Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) and Trust Boards to assure themselves that they have robust arrangements in place in relation to child protection and safeguarding, setting out a list of minimum arrangements for assurance available at www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Lettersandcirculars/Dearcolleagueletters/DH_102864</p> <p>Monitor wrote in parallel to NHS Foundation Trusts. All Strategic Health Authorities (SHAs) now have an assurance framework in place and <i>Working Together</i> provides statutory guidance on the roles and responsibilities of SHAs in relation to performance management and child safeguarding.</p> <p>Child safeguarding has been included in the core standards for Core Quality Commission (CQC) registration and the NHS Operating Framework for 2010–11 requires NHS organisations to continue to monitor and embed their child protection and safeguarding arrangements and to build upon these to improve their services and outcomes for children.</p>
6	<p>Directors of Children's Services, Chief Executives of Primary Care Trusts, Police Area Commanders and other senior service managers must regularly review all points of referral where concerns about a child's safety are received to ensure they are sound in terms of the quality of risk assessments, decision making, onward referrals and multi-agency working.</p>	<p>To be developed as part of revised <i>Working Together to Safeguard Children</i> guidance.</p>	<p>All relevant organisations share a duty in accordance with section 11 of the Children Act 2004 to ensure that their functions are discharged with regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. The new guidance for Children's Trusts, also being published in March, reaffirms the shared responsibilities of statutory partners in understanding local need, prioritising against that need and articulating those priorities in the statutory Children and Young People's Plan for the local area. Chapter 3 of <i>Working Together to Safeguard Children</i>, published on 17 March 2010, further specifies that Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) should keep under review the volume and sources of contact and referral to local authority children's social care services, monitoring the quality and action taken in response, including feedback to the person making the referral.</p>

Ref No	Lord Laming's Recommendation March 2009	Government's Response May 2009	Progress update March 2010
7	All Directors of Children's Services who do not have direct experience or background in safeguarding and child protection must appoint a senior manager within their team with the necessary skills and experience.	This will be included in revised statutory guidance on Lead Members and DCSs and reflected in revised <i>Working Together to Safeguard Children</i> guidance.	Revised statutory guidance on the <i>Roles and Responsibilities of the Lead Member for Children's Services and the Director of Children's Services</i> (DCS) published in July 2009 highlights the particular importance of senior managers working with the DCS having relevant skills and experience in child protection and safeguarding. The revised version of <i>Working Together to Safeguard Children</i> , published today, re-emphasises this important requirement.
8	The Department for Children, Schools and Families should organise regular training on safeguarding and child protection and on effective leadership for all senior political leaders and managers across frontline services.	<p>C4EO extended programme to include an additional strand on Protecting children living in families where they are at high risk of abuse, harm or neglect for delivery.</p> <p>Research briefings will be published in early June 2009 on C4EO's website and findings will be disseminated through four national workshops, to take place in June with 600 places available to: Chief Executives, DCSs, Lead Members, Chairs of Local Safeguarding Children Boards, Assistant Directors (Safeguarding); and senior leaders from the Children's Trust partners, such as health and the police.</p> <p>C4EO will also extend the scope of regional workshops planned for November 2009.</p> <p>Following C4EO's programme detailed here, DCSF and the NSDU will discuss with the Improvement and Development Agency and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives the extent to which this meets the needs of their members and will develop further training as appropriate.</p>	<p>The Centre for Excellence and Outcomes (C4EO) has hosted national safeguarding workshops for senior leaders across Children's Trusts as well as lead members. These are reinforced by an extended programme of research briefings. Further such regional workshops, focusing on working with families who are difficult to engage, are taking place in spring 2010.</p> <p>Safeguarding and child protection are reflected in the leadership programme for serving DCSs being delivered by the National College for Leadership of Schools and Children's Services and will be covered in the programme for aspirant DCSs which is currently in development. The NSDU is also working with the College to ensure that there is good alignment of national improvement priorities for safeguarding and the influence and experience of local leaders.</p>

Ref No	Lord Laming's Recommendation March 2009	Government's Response May 2009	Progress update March 2010
9	<p>Every Children's Trust should ensure that the needs assessment that informs their Children and Young People's Plan regularly reviews the needs of all children and young people in their area, paying particular attention to the general need of children and those in need of protection. The National Safeguarding Delivery Unit should support Children's Trusts with this work. Government Offices should specifically monitor and challenge Children's Trusts on the quality of this analysis.</p>	<p>To be developed in revised <i>Working Together to Safeguard Children</i> guidance and reflected in the NSDU work programme in which an early priority is expected to be the development of exemplars of needs analyses which draw out clearly the implications for safeguarding children and the impact on services that need to be provided.</p>	<p>The Children and Young People's Plan regulations, and the <i>Children's Trusts: statutory guidance on co-operation arrangements, including the Children's Trust Board and the Children and Young People's Plan</i> also to be published in March, specify the provision of a local needs assessment for children and young people as a foundation for the statutory Children and Young People's Plan locally. The needs assessment should include the safeguarding needs of local children and young people who require safeguarding from harm. The safeguarding role for regional Government Offices has been revised and makes clear that Safeguarding Advisers alongside the Children and Learners Strategic Advisers, will support and challenge Children's Trusts in the development and implementation of robust Children and Young People's Plans, which should be informed by robust and comprehensive needs analysis.</p>
10	<p>Ofsted should revise the inspection and improvement regime for schools giving greater prominence to how well schools are fulfilling their responsibilities for child protection.</p>	<p>Ofsted have designed the new school inspection framework which will apply from September 2009 so that it will have a stronger focus on safeguarding. The current inspection framework already includes a judgement about whether safeguarding arrangements are satisfactory but this will be strengthened in the new framework with a grading on a scale from 1(outstanding) to 4(inadequate) for a school's safeguarding arrangements. Any school which receives a grade of 4 will also be likely to be awarded an inadequate grade for its overall performance and will need therefore to make urgent improvements. These arrangements will 'raise the bar' about the importance of safeguarding for schools and will also facilitate the identification and dissemination of best practice.</p>	<p>The new school inspection framework was implemented on 1 September 2009. Safeguarding is now a limiting judgement across all inspections. All inspectors have been trained against the new framework. The NSDU in the year ahead plans to support the development of a programme which helps schools alongside other Children's Trust Board partners to develop effective safeguarding arrangements.</p>

Ref No	Lord Laming's Recommendation March 2009	Government's Response May 2009	Progress update March 2010
11	<p>The Department for Children, Schools and Families should revise Working Together to Safeguard Children to set out clear expectations for all points where concerns about a child's safety are received, ensuring intake/duty teams have sufficient training and expertise to take referrals and that staff have immediate, on-site support available from an experienced social worker. Local authorities should take appropriate action to implement these changes.</p>	<p>To be reflected in revised <i>Working Together to Safeguard Children</i> guidance.</p>	<p>The revised Chapter 5 of <i>Working Together to Safeguard Children</i>, published on 17 March 2010, reiterates the importance of expertise and support to manage contact and referrals where there are concerns about children and young people. Revisions to Chapter 4 stress the importance of specialist training for these roles and Chapter 2 references the local authority's responsibility to ensure relevant staff receive this high quality training. The revised statutory guidance for Children's Trusts also makes clear that the Children's Trust Board should ensure that clear arrangements for early intervention are set out in the Children and Young People's Plan.</p> <p>A revised version of <i>What To Do If You Are Worried a Child is Being Abused</i>, the best practice guidance, will be revised by the summer to reflect changes in Working Together.</p>
12	<p>The Department of Health and the Department for Children, Schools and Families must strengthen current guidance and put in place the systems and training so that staff in Accident and Emergency departments are able to tell if a child has recently presented at any Accident and Emergency department and if a child is the subject of a Child Protection Plan. If there is any cause for concern, staff must act accordingly, contacting other professionals, conducting further medical examinations of the child as appropriate and necessary, and ensuring no child is discharged whilst concerns for their safety or well being remain.</p>	<p>We shall work with the College of Emergency Medicine, representatives of other A&E staff and other key stakeholders to take forward work to ensure systems, guidance and training arrangements are in place so that all A&E departments are playing their full part in identifying and dealing appropriately with children at risk. In doing so, we shall consider the information technology options within the Department of Health Informatics Directorate and co-ordinate this work with our broader look at safeguarding training of health professionals and with the Government's revision of <i>Working Together to Safeguard Children</i> guidance.</p>	<p>The CQC's review of NHS safeguarding arrangements, published in July 2009, included policies and systems in A&E Departments, including systems for checking whether a child was the subject of a child protection plan, and systems for flagging where there were safeguarding concerns about a child. These issues were further followed up as part of the process of SHA and board assurance set in train following the report. NHS Connecting for Health (CfH) has undertaken a high level feasibility study looking at NHS-focussed IT solutions for sharing relevant information in A&E and other urgent care settings.</p> <p>The Department of Health is now working with CfH and clinicians to develop recommendations for the next phase of the work programme, including preliminary assessment of the resource implications of different options. This will also take into account the potential contribution of ContactPoint within NHS safeguarding requirements.</p>

Ref No	Lord Laming's Recommendation March 2009	Government's Response May 2009	Progress update March 2010
13	Children's Trusts must ensure that all assessments of need for children and their families include evidence from all the professionals involved in their lives, take account of case histories and significant events (including previous assessments) and above all must include direct contact with the child.	To be reflected in revised <i>Working Together to Safeguard Children</i> guidance.	The revised Chapter 5 of <i>Working Together to Safeguard Children</i> , published on 17 March 2010, includes a specific reference to the child being seen, alone when appropriate, by the lead social worker. It also requires that the social worker should record when the child is seen alone as well as at other times. It also sets out that assessments of children in need, including where it is suspected that a child is suffering harm, should involve all professionals who are involved with the child and family members. In addition, specialist assessments may need to be commissioned from, for example, a child and family psychiatrist or Drug Action and Alcohol Team (DAAT) in order to inform the decision making process about a child's safety and welfare. <i>Working Together to Safeguard Children</i> stresses the importance of information about the family's history and functioning being obtained as part of the assessment process and, in particular, about difficulties being experienced due to domestic violence, mental illness and substance misuse.
14	Local authorities must ensure that 'Children in Need', as defined by Section 17 of the Children Act 1989, have early access to effective specialist services and support to meet their needs.	To be developed further and feed into the revision of <i>Working Together to Safeguard Children</i> guidance.	The Department for Children, Schools and Families will shortly be publishing a document on early intervention for vulnerable children and young people which is designed to contribute to the debate about what else needs to happen to make early intervention more systematic, coherent, evidence based and cost effective. The revised version of <i>Working Together to Safeguard Children</i> , published on 17 March 2010, also makes clear the responsibilities of local authorities in this area.

Ref No	Lord Laming's Recommendation March 2009	Government's Response May 2009	Progress update March 2010
15	The Social Work Task Force should establish guidelines on guaranteed supervision time for social workers that may vary depending on experience.	<p>We have already introduced guaranteed supervision for participants in the Newly Qualified Social Worker pilot, which will be extended to all entering the profession in statutory and third sector roles from September this year.</p> <p>We welcome the Social Work Task Force's commitment to taking forward this recommendation as part of their work to ensure that high quality and effective supervision is embedded throughout the social work workforce.</p> <p>The Secretaries of State for Health and Children, Schools and Families would like the Task Force particularly to advise about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● how much supervision time social workers need, and; ● how Government, employers and social workers can ensure that guidance in relation to supervision time is fulfilled in practice. 	<p><i>Building a Safe and Confident Future: Implementing the recommendations of the Social Work Task Force</i>, the implementation plan for social work reform has been published by the Government alongside this report.</p> <p>In its final report, the Social Work Task Force recommended clear national requirements for the supervision of social workers and set out its expectations of the minimum frequency levels of that supervision. The implementation plan sets out how Government, employers and the profession will ensure that this is taken forward. As a first step, it is important that all employers, together with their workforce, undertake the organisational health check recommended in the Social Work Task Force's report.</p>

Ref No	Lord Laming's Recommendation March 2009	Government's Response May 2009	Progress update March 2010
16	<p>The Department for Children, Schools and Families should revise Working Together to Safeguard Children to set out the elements of high quality supervision focused on case planning, constructive challenge and professional development.</p>	<p>Guidance on high quality supervision for children and families' social workers is critical. Building on work underway by CWDC on training on effective supervision, as part of the revision of <i>Working Together to Safeguard Children</i> guidance, and on the advice of the Task Force, the Government will consider the best place for that guidance.</p> <p>In addition, through the comprehensive reform programme for social work the Government wants to ensure that high quality supervision is supported by training and development, standards and the structure and the capacity of the workforce. It will set out how it will do this in the light of the Task Force's further advice.</p>	<p>Chapter 4 of <i>Working Together to Safeguard Children</i> makes it clear that social workers should have appropriate supervision and that it is an important part of the support that employers should provide to social workers. It also reproduces the critical elements of social work supervision which were set out in the Social Work Task Force's final report.</p> <p><i>Building a Safe and Confident Future: Implementing the recommendations of the Social Work Task force</i>, the implementation plan for social work reform published by the Government alongside this report makes it clear how Government, employers and the profession will ensure that this is taken forward through the Social Work Reform Programme.</p>
17	<p>The Department for Children, Schools and Families should undertake a feasibility study with a view to rolling out a single national Integrated Children's System (ICS) better able to address the concerns identified in this report, or find alternative ways to assert stronger leadership over the local systems and their providers. This study should be completed within six months of this report.</p>	<p>We will work with local authorities to reform the ICS and to reflect the Social Work Task Force's advice that there should be locally-owned, locally-led systems on the basis of a greatly simplified set of national requirements. The Government's approach will be to remove unnecessary and prescriptive national requirements from the ICS, while providing more effective support to local authorities and professionals in commissioning and developing high quality local systems.</p>	<p>Following the Social Work Task Force's advice about ICS in May 2009, the DCSF changed its approach to the regulation of IT systems in children's social work, introducing greater flexibility. It has embarked on a programme of support to local authorities to take ownership of their own systems, including working with expert social workers and their managers to develop guidance for local authorities about how their computer systems can be simplified and how usability can be improved.</p> <p>Two sets of simplifications and guidance were issued by the DCSF, shortly to be followed by another available at www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/safeguardingandsocialcare/integratedchildrenssystem/ics/.</p> <p>As set out in <i>Building a Safe and Confident Future: Implementing the recommendations of the Social Work Task Force</i>, the ICS improvement programme will continue in 2010-11, supported by a £15 million grant to local authorities for further improvement to local systems.</p>

Ref No	Lord Laming's Recommendation March 2009	Government's Response May 2009	Progress update March 2010
18	<p>Whether or not a national system is introduced, the Department for Children, Schools and Families should take steps to improve the utility of the Integrated Children's System, in consultation with social workers and their managers, to be effective in supporting them in their role and their contact with children and families, partners, services and courts, and to ensure appropriate transfer of essential information across organisational boundaries.</p>	<p>We will take immediate action to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● free up national requirements in relation to the ICS. We will authorise local authorities and suppliers, in discussion with professionals, to remove or revise forms and exemplars in local ICS systems, giving them more flexibility to use their professional judgement in deciding how they will comply with statutory requirements; ● support local authorities in implementing Phase 1C of the ICS, while relaxing the deadline to allow them to focus on fixing problems with local systems that they regard as a priority; and ● improve support to local authorities through carrying out a usability review of each ICS product, providing procurement support and issuing guidance on how the ICS can be used to support practice. ● We agree with the Social Work Task Force that, over time, the ICS should be reformed to reflect the Task Force's forthcoming advice on professional roles, practice and support in social work. We will therefore work closely with the Task Force to ensure that happens. 	<p>Following the Social Work Task Force advice about the Integrated Children's System (ICS) in May 2009, the DCSF changed its approach to the regulation of IT systems in children's social work, introducing greater flexibility. It has embarked on a programme of support to local authorities to take ownership of their own systems, including working with expert social workers and their managers to develop guidance for local authorities about how their computer systems can be simplified and how usability can be improved. Two sets of simplifications and guidance were issued by the DCSF, shortly to be followed by another. As set out in <i>Building a Safe and Confident Future: Implementing the recommendations of the Social Work Task Force</i>, the ICS improvement programme will continue in 2010-11, supported by a £15 million grant to local authorities for further improvement to local systems.</p>

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19	<p>The Department for Children, Schools and Families must strengthen Working Together to Safeguard Children, and Children's Trusts must take appropriate action to ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● all referrals to children's services from other professionals lead to an initial assessment, including direct involvement with the child or young person and their family, and the direct engagement with, and feedback to, the referring professional; ● core group meetings, reviews and casework decisions include all the professionals involved with the child, particularly police, health, youth services and education colleagues. Records must be kept which must include the written views of those who cannot make such meetings; and ● formal procedures are in place for managing a conflict of opinion between professionals from different services over the safety of a child. 	<p>To be reflected in revised <i>Working Together to Safeguard Children</i> guidance.</p>	<p>The revised Chapter 5 of <i>Working Together to Safeguard Children</i>, published on 17 March 2010, reaffirms that all referrals to local authority children's social care about the welfare or safety of children should be met by, or followed up with, a conversation between a professionally qualified social worker and the referrer. The purpose of that conversation is to establish the nature of these concerns, how and why they have arisen, what appear to be the needs of the child, young person and their family and the nature of the referrer's involvement with the child and family. In particular, the social worker needs to identify clearly whether there are concerns about maltreatment and whether it may be necessary to take urgent action to ensure the child or children are safe from harm. The information provided at referral and the agreed local authority response is recorded in the children's social care electronic records system.</p> <p>The guidance makes it clear that it is the local authority's responsibility to decide whether to undertake an initial assessment based on the information provided by the referrer, other professionals involved with the child and family and that held in existing children's social care records. An initial assessment will be undertaken where there are concerns about a child's welfare, including that the child is or may be suffering harm, such that this is possibly a child in need under section 17 of the Children Act 1989. Professionals making referrals to children's social care should be provided with feedback on how their referral is being taken forward. This should happen within one working day of a referral being received. During an initial assessment the lead social worker should see and speak to the child, including alone when appropriate. The guidance also emphasises the importance of all professionals who are involved with, or have knowledge of, a child and family, attending core group meetings, reviews and other key decision making meetings, wherever possible, or alternatively preparing a</p>

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			<p>written report and delegating a colleague to attend and participate on their behalf.</p> <p>Chapter 3 sets out that the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) should consider developing protocols for resolving different professional opinions about a specific case.</p>
20	<p>All police, probation, adult mental health and adult drugs and alcohol services should have well understood referral processes which prioritise the protection and well-being of children. These should include automatic referral where domestic violence or drug or alcohol abuse may put a child at risk of abuse or neglect.</p>	<p>To be reflected in revised <i>Working Together to Safeguard Children</i> guidance.</p>	<p>The revised version of <i>Working Together to Safeguard Children</i>, published on 17 March 2010, states clearly the need for all professionals (working in both adult and children's services) to refer their concerns to local authority children's services in <i>all</i> circumstances where they believe a child may be suffering, or be likely to suffer harm, including, but not exclusive to, circumstances where the source of such concerns involve domestic violence, parental drug or alcohol abuse, mental health difficulties and/or learning disabilities. Local agreements and protocols for assessing and managing risk are a fundamental part of the arrangements put in place to manage such referrals and are a matter for local Children's Trust Boards to resolve. Arrangements for shared common assessment and early support are also part of the local solutions to this recommendation.</p> <p>The newly revised <i>Children's Trusts: statutory guidance on co-operation arrangements, including the Children's Trust Board and the Children and Young People's Plan</i> requires the Children's Trust Board to make an assessment of the local needs of children and to prioritise those needs in their statutory plans. Vulnerable children living with violence, the mental ill health of a parent, or a substance abusing adult, should be included in any analysis of local need and the local response to that need should be agreed by statutory partners and prioritised appropriately in the Children and Young People's Plan.</p>

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21	<p>The National Safeguarding Delivery Unit should urgently develop guidance on referral and assessment systems for children affected by domestic violence, adult mental health problems, and drugs and alcohol misuse using current best practice. This should be shared with local authorities, health and police with an expectation that the assessment of risk and level of support given to such children will improve quickly and significantly in every Children's Trust.</p>	<p>The NSDU will publish its work programme by September 2009 and we expect this guidance to be identified as an early priority.</p>	<p>Five 'Think Family' guidance documents have been produced to support local implementation of whole family ways of working and respond to safeguarding concerns.</p> <p>The Department for Children Schools and Families (DCSF), Department of Health, National Treatment Agency, alongside the NSDU, have jointly published guidance on the development of local protocols between drug and alcohol treatment services, LSCBs and children and family services.</p> <p>Joint DCSF/Ministry of Justice guidance setting out how prisons, probation trusts and children's and family services should work together to better support the children and families of offenders has also been issued.</p> <p>The Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) has published guidance, endorsed by DCSF, that sets out a 'Think Family' approach for professionals working with parents suffering with mental ill health.</p> <p>The Home Office, DCSF, Association of Chief Police Officers, Youth Justice Board and National Policing Improvement Agency have also produced guidance for neighbourhood policing managers and practitioners on early intervention and prevention to show how this can have a real impact on reducing crime and anti-social behaviour. The guidance demonstrates the role the police have to play in 'Think Family' service delivery.</p> <p>The Associations of Directors of Adult and Children's Services have published a model local protocol for local authorities to adopt which sets out how services to support young carers and their families should work more closely together to address the support needs of the person being cared as well as the young carers.</p>

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			<p>The NSDU interim work programme, published in December 2009, also prioritises work in this area. The Unit has been working to identify any gaps in existing guidance on referrals, identify current or emerging best practice and recommend any further action that will help Children's Trusts, professionals and LSCBs to better identify, assess and intervene appropriately to meet the needs of children who may be suffering harm as a consequence of parental domestic violence, substance misuse or mental health difficulties. Further work with local Children's Trust Boards, health, police and specialist third sector organisations will continue in 2010–11 as part of the NSDU's prioritised work programme to support the improvement of local professional practice and support for children, young people, their families and carers.</p>
22	<p>The Department for Children, Schools and Families should establish statutory representation on Local Safeguarding Children Boards from schools, adult mental health and adult drug and alcohol services.</p>	<p>To be reflected in revised <i>Working Together to Safeguard Children</i> guidance. Mental Health Trusts are already statutory members of LSCBs.</p>	<p>The Local Safeguarding Children Boards (Amendment) Regulations 2010 will, from 1 April 2010, require the local authority to take reasonable steps to ensure representation of schools on LSCBs. <i>Working Together to Safeguard Children</i> reminds LSCBs that the work of drug, alcohol and mental health services should already be included in the work of LSCBs through the representation of existing statutory members.</p>

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23	<p>Every Children's Trust should assure themselves that partners consistently apply the Information Sharing Guidance published by the Department for Children, Schools and Families and Department for Communities and Local Government to protect children.</p>	<p>To be reflected in revised <i>Working Together to Safeguard Children</i> guidance.</p>	<p>The revised version of <i>Working Together to Safeguard Children</i>, published today, includes a new section in Chapter 2 which focuses specifically on information sharing and makes it clear that the Children's Trust Board has a role in ensuring that all Children's Trust partners follow the Government's Information Sharing Guidance. NSDU and DCSF are also working with policy and delivery partners to ensure that key messages are reinforced in guidance and activities around embedding good practice in information sharing are locally actioned, emphasising the importance of effective information sharing in both early intervention and safeguarding. To support this local action, the DCSF, in conjunction with NSDU, has developed a toolkit of activities designed to address the key organisational and cultural barriers and drivers of effective information sharing.</p>
24	<p>The Social Work Task Force should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● develop the basis for a national children's social worker supply strategy that will address recruitment and retention difficulties, to be implemented by the Department for Children, Schools and Families. This should have a particular emphasis on child protection social workers; ● work with the Children's Workforce Development Council and other partners to implement on a national basis, clear progression routes for children's social workers; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Government is committed to developing a supply strategy for social workers in both children and families social work, and this will form a critical part of the comprehensive reform programme to be set out in the autumn. In the immediate term, the Government is already taking a number of actions to address recruitment and supply challenges in the workforce, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● a national marketing and recruitment campaign to launch later this year; ● a Return to Social Work Scheme to support former social workers back into the profession; ● a Graduate Recruitment Scheme to sponsor high quality graduates to undertake social worker training; 	<p><i>Building a Safe and Confident Future: Implementing the recommendations of the Social Work Task Force</i>, the implementation plan for social work reform has been published by the Government alongside this report.</p> <p>In its final report, the Social Work Task Force recommended a single nationally recognised career structure which should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● classify the main stages of a career in social work (from first year student onwards); ● make clear the expectations that should apply to social workers at each of these stages; ● link eventually to a national framework for Continuing Professional Development (also recommended by the Social Work Task Force), the forthcoming Masters in Social Work Practice and the 'licence to practise' (also recommended by the Social Work Task Force); and

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● develop national guidelines setting out maximum case-loads of children in need and child protection cases, supported by a weighting mechanism to reflect the complexity of cases, that will help plan the workloads of children's social workers; and ● develop a strategy for remodelling children's social work which delivers shared ownership of cases, administrative support and multi-disciplinary support to be delivered nationally. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Recruitment and retention pilots in two regions with high vacancy and turnover rates. We have already committed to creation of a new role of Advanced Social Work Professional in children and families' social work which will be implemented as part of a full career framework for children and families' social workers. This will be in place in the autumn to enable experienced social workers to stay in frontline practice. We expect that this role should form part of a full career structure for social workers, which includes practice-focused as well as managerial progression routes. <p>The Government will work with employers to implement clear progression routes for social workers in both adult and children's services as part of its comprehensive reform programme for social work. This will be based on the advice of the Task Force about how clearer progression routes can best support social workers in developing their careers and improving the service they provide. The Government is committing to take steps, based on the advice of the Social Work Task Force, to ensure that social workers have manageable case loads which enable them to work effectively and efficiently to secure the best possible outcomes for service users.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● be used by employers and unions to agree pay and grading structures which properly reward social workers in line with their skills, experience and responsibilities – including those social workers who stay in frontline practice. <p>The Social Work Task Force was in favour of a whole-system approach to managing social workers' workloads and recommended clear, universal and binding standards for employers to cover how frontline social work should be resourced, managed and supported-including clear requirements governing supervision- so that high quality practice is an achievable aim for all social workers.</p> <p>The implementation plan published on 17 March 2010 sets out how the Task Force's recommendations will be achieved.</p> <p>In addition to this, over the past year through the DCSF-funded social work programme being implemented by the Children's Workforce Development Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● over 53,000 people have registered for information on how to become a social worker in response to our national recruitment campaigns ● 600 former social workers have registered their interest in returning to the profession through the Return to Social Work Scheme ● 330 high calibre graduates are being sponsored to undertake Masters-level training through the <i>Graduate Recruitment Scheme</i> with a further 200 due to start on the employer-based <i>Step Up to Social Work</i> entry route into social work later this year; ● and the assessment process for the Advanced Social Work Professional role will begin from summer 2010

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		<p>It looks to Social Work Task Force to ensure, through its recommendations, that the steps take to do this – including guidelines on appropriate caseloads – can be implemented effectively in ways that will improve practice and not lead to unnecessary bureaucracy.</p> <p>We are already exploring a number of different approaches to remodelling in social work, including through CWDC's current Remodelling the Delivery of Social Work pilots and the Social Work Practices pilots. We will set out our plans in relation to remodelling as part of the comprehensive reform programme we will bring forward in the autumn, based on the advice of the Social Work Task Force.</p>	
25	Children's Trusts should ensure a named, and preferably co-located, representative from the police service, community paediatric specialist and health visitor are active partners within each children's social work department.	To be reflected in the revised <i>Working Together to Safeguard Children</i> guidance.	Both the revised Working Together and the Children's Trust Board guidance, also being published in March, highlight the importance of workforce development and of integrated frontline delivery of services to maximise effectiveness.

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26	<p>The General Social Care Council (GSCC) together relevant government departments should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● work with higher education institutions and employers to raise the quality and consistency of social work degrees and strengthen their curriculums to provide high quality practical skills in children's social work; ● work with higher education institutions to reform the current degree programme towards a system which allows for specialism in children's social work, including statutory children's social work placements, after the first year; and ● put in place a comprehensive inspection regime to raise the quality and consistency of social work degrees across higher education institutions. 	<p>The Government will consider radical reforms of the social work education system if this is what the Task Force recommend.</p> <p>The Secretaries of State for Health and Children, Schools and Families look to the Social Work Task Force, with the support of GSCC and working closely with employers and Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), to advise on the improvements necessary to social work degrees and post graduate training, and the system which provides them. The Government currently spends approximately £160 million each year on funding and bursaries for initial social work training. It is critical that this resource supports high quality university education which effectively prepares student social workers for their future roles. Universities, employers and the General Social Care Council must be able to work together to secure this.</p> <p>The Government will implement Lord Laming's recommendation in the light of the Task Force's recommendations about how and when social workers should be able to specialise in their training in order to ensure that they are fully effective in practice.</p> <p>The Government will implement Lord Laming's recommendations about inspection of higher education in the light of the Task Force's recommendations.</p>	<p>The Social Work Task Force made a number of recommendations on strengthening the quality and consistency of initial social worker education.</p> <p>The implementation plan for the Task Force's recommendations, <i>Building a Safe and Confident Future: Implementing the recommendations of the Social Work Task Force</i>, describes the ways in which the GSCC, HEIs, employers, the profession, and the Government will work together – in consultation with social workers, students and service users to strengthen initial social work education.</p> <p>The Task Force has also recommended a review of the content and delivery of social work degree courses. As stated in the implementation plan, a review of the skills, knowledge and experience outcomes required of social work degree graduates will be conducted over the next year and any changes to the degree will start to take effect from September 2012 and mandatory from September 2013 (including revised requirements for practice placements). The practical skills requirements of all social workers, including those in the children and families' sector, will be considered as part of this review as will the potential impact of the recommended Assessed Year in Employment in boosting these practical skills before the social worker is awarded full registration.</p> <p>The Task Force also recommended more transparent and effective regulation of social work education to give greater assurance of consistency and quality. The implementation plan sets out the commitment to a new regulatory framework for initial social work education (undergraduate and masters). This work will be taken forward by the GSCC in consultation with stakeholders and will be brought into effect at the earliest possible juncture.</p>

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27	<p>The Department for Children, Schools and Families and Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills should introduce a fully funded, practice-focused children's social work postgraduate qualification for experienced children's social workers, with an expectation they will complete the programme as soon as is practicable.</p>	<p>We have committed to development of a practice-based Masters programme for social workers, which will be implemented as part of the comprehensive reform programme.</p> <p>To support the professional development of all social care staff, including social workers, Government already allocates £18 million a year through the area-based grant.</p> <p>This recommendation further cements Government's commitment to the professional development of social workers and the new practice-based Masters in social work will be implemented in the light of the Task Force's recommendations.</p>	<p>The Social Work Task Force recommended a more coherent and effective national framework for the continuing professional development of social workers, along with mechanisms to encourage a shift in culture which raises expectations of an entitlement to ongoing learning and development. The Masters in Social Work Practice will be incorporated into this framework as one of its main features and will be piloted in the children and families' sector from autumn 2011.</p>

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28	<p>The Department for Children, Schools and Families, working with the Children's Workforce Development Council, General Social Care Council and partners should introduce a conversion qualification and English language test for internationally qualified children's social workers that ensures understanding of legislation, guidance and practice in England. Consideration should be given to the appropriate length of a compulsory induction period in a practice setting prior to formal registration as a social worker in England.</p>	<p>Social workers coming into this country need to meet the highest standards, and also to be well supported. From September, all those joining statutory and third sector children's services will be able to access the "newly qualified social worker" support package which includes induction and protected time for training and supervision.</p> <p>We will take forward Lord Laming's recommendations about conversion qualifications and language tests in the light of the advice of the Social Work Task Force about the qualifications and basic skills requirements which should be in place for English as well as overseas trained social workers.</p>	<p>It is vital that employers ensure that their social work employees, whether trained within the UK or abroad, are appropriately inducted, supported and supervised and have workloads commensurate with their skills and experience. To help employers in this regard, we have made the Children's Workforce Development Council's children and families' Newly Qualified Social Worker programme open to all new social workers joining statutory and third sector children's services whether they have been trained within the UK or abroad.</p> <p>The Government has accepted the Social Work Task Force's recommendation that a new Assessed Year in Employment and Licence to Practise should be introduced. The assessed year model will provide a clear benchmark for support to, and assessment of different groups of social workers. Models for ensuring that support and appropriate assessment for these groups will be developed in parallel with the assessed year for new entrants and requirements for assessment will be introduced as part of legislation to introduce the license to practice. The first year in which the Assessed Year in Employment is expected to become a statutory requirement is 2016. As part of this work, we will consider the needs of and implications for those trained within the UK or outside the European Economic Area (EEA). For those trained in the EEA we will also take into account our legal obligations under EU law.</p>
29	<p>Children's Trusts should ensure that all staff who work with children receive initial training and continuing professional development which enables them to understand normal child development and recognise potential signs of abuse or neglect.</p>	<p>To be reflected in revised (<i>revised Working Together to Safeguard Children</i> guidance and in the NSDU's work programme.</p>	<p>Chapter 4 of <i>Working Together</i> outlines that LSCBs should ensure that all staff who work or have contact with children are appropriately trained to understand normal child development and to recognise potential signs of abuse and neglect. LSCBs should provide an assessment of their progress in ensuring that all staff who work with or have contact with children are appropriately trained through the LSCB annual report to the Children's Trust Board.</p>

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30	<p>All Children's Trusts should have sufficient multiagency training in place to create a shared language and understanding of local referral procedures, assessment, information sharing and decision making across early years, schools, youth services, health, police and other services who work to protect children. A named child protection lead in each setting should receive this training.</p>	<p>To be reflected in revised <i>Working Together to Safeguard Children</i> guidance and in the NSDU's work programme.</p>	<p>Working Together further highlights the key role that LSCBs play in ensuring the single-agency and inter-agency training on safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. LSCBs should provide an assessment of their progress in ensuring that all staff who work with or have contact with children are appropriately trained through the LSCB annual report to the Children's Trust Board.</p> <p>The Children's Trust Board (Children and Young People's Plan) (England) Regulations 2010 laid on 9 March also refer to the need for each plan to set out how Children's Trust partners will co-operate on the training and development of the local children's workforce.</p> <p>Guidance on Sure Start Children's Centres for local authorities and centres themselves is clear that Sure Start Children's Centres Managers should appoint a lead person whose job it is to ensure every member of staff is competent in their knowledge of child protection and knows what the procedure is for reporting and recording child protection issues.</p> <p>This will be underlined in the children's centres statutory guidance which explains the provisions relating to children's centres and the new Vetting and Barring Scheme (VBS) in the ASCL Act 2009. The guidance recommends that local authorities should ensure that the named safeguarding lead in the children's centre is required to liaise with local statutory children's services agencies as appropriate, attends a child protection training course and is trained in inter-agency procedures and undertakes refresher training at two yearly intervals. The named lead should ensure that induction for new staff includes child protection procedures and that parents are made aware that centre staff have a duty to share child protection issues with other professionals and agencies.</p>

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31	<p>The General Social Care Council (GSCC) should review the Code of Practice for Social Workers and the employers' code ensuring the needs of children are paramount in both and that the employers' code provides for clear lines of accountability, quality supervision and support, and time for reflective practice. The employers' code should then be made statutory for all employers of social workers.</p>	<p>We agree with the Social Work Task Force that there should be a Code of Practice for Social Work which is distinct from wider social care. We will work with GSCC to develop in this in the light of the Task Force's work on describing social work roles and purpose.</p> <p>The DCSF and DH will support GSCC in reviewing the Code of Practice for Employers and will seek to legislate appropriately at the earliest opportunity.</p>	<p>The Social Work Task Force recommended the development of a clear national standard for the support social workers should expect from their employers in order to do their jobs effectively. The development of this Employers' Standard is being taken forward by the profession, employers, Government and other stakeholders working together through the Social Work Reform Board. <i>Building a Safe and Confident Future: Implementing the recommendations of the Social Work Task Force</i> describes how this will be done.</p> <p>As part of this programme, in 2010–11, the GSCC will review their Codes of Practice for social care workers and for employers having regard in particular to their purpose in the context of the new reform programme, their relationship to the new Employers' Standard and also to the service inspection frameworks of CQC and Ofsted. GSCC will then act on the outcome of this review in consultation with DH, DCSF and other key partners. The Codes of Practice are UK-wide and the GSCC's work will be done in conjunction with Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.</p> <p>It is important that the employers of social workers are clear about when and how to engage the GSCC in matters of potential social worker misconduct. Therefore in 2010–11 GSCC will also develop, and take forward, a programme of employer engagement to ensure that the employers of social workers understand when and how they should be engaging with, and notifying, the GSCC about potential social worker misconduct cases.</p>

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32	<p>The Department of Health should prioritise its commitment to promote the recruitment and professional development of health visitors (made in <i>Healthy lives, brighter futures</i>) by publishing a national strategy to support and challenge Strategic Health Authorities to have a sufficient capacity of well trained health visitors in each area with a clear understanding of their role.</p>	<p>The Action on Health Visiting programme was agreed at a joint Department of Health/Community Practitioners' and Health Visitors' Association (CPHVA) summit on 5 May. It will be taken forward in partnership with the CPHVA and other stakeholders. Action will be prioritised to increase workforce capacity and capability and to clarify the contribution of health visitors to the Healthy Child Programme, to working with vulnerable children and families and to safeguarding.</p>	<p>The Action on Health Visiting Programme has progressed work on raising the profile of health visiting, defining roles, and disseminating good practice. The report on Phase 1 of the programme, published in October 2009, included agreed definitions for the five key dimensions of health visitors' roles, including working with vulnerable families and protecting children. Phase 2 of the programme is focusing on building capacity through action on recruitment, retention and return to practice; promoting health visiting as a career; and supporting professional development.</p> <p>Health visiting capacity for safeguarding was discussed with each SHA during DH/SHA meetings on safeguarding in autumn 2009 and SHAs set out plans to strengthen capacity where needed. The Secretary of State for Health has introduced a new requirement, confirmed in the NHS Operating Framework for 2010–11, for PCTs and SHAs to monitor workforce and caseload figures for health visitors from 2010.</p>

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33	<p>The Department of Health should review the Healthy Child Programme for 0-5 year olds to ensure that the role of health visitors in safeguarding and child protection is prioritised and has sufficient clarity, and ensure that similar clarity is provided in the Healthy Child Programme for 5 – 19 year olds.</p>	<p>The universal Healthy Child Programme (HCP) is key to the prevention of child abuse and neglect and the early identification of safeguarding concerns. This is reflected in the updated programme published by the Department of Health in March 2008. To strengthen the contribution of the HCP to safeguarding, we shall clarify the role and responsibility of the health visitor in the HCP through the Action on Health Visiting Programme, and work with the service to promote the commissioning and implementation of the HCP across England.</p> <p>The HCP is now being extended to cover 5-19 year olds. It will be an early intervention and public health programme setting out the good practice framework for the delivery of services for 5-19 year olds and their families to promote optimal health and well-being. It will include a universal service that is offered to all families with additional services for those with specific needs and risks. The safeguarding needs of children and young people will be fully embedded within this extended HCP.</p> <p>At the same time, we shall expand the Family Nurse Partnership programme in England to 70 test sites by 2011. Evidence suggests that this intensive preventive programme from early pregnancy to 2 years has the potential to prevent child maltreatment and improve the outcomes of vulnerable, first time young parents and their children.</p>	<p>Phase 2 of the Action on Health Visiting Programme includes the development of an e-learning programme on the Healthy Child Programme (HCP). Action to support commissioning has included the development of a contract specification and work on contract currencies. Safeguarding is being embedded in a range of products to support professional practice, including guidance on the HCP two year review, published in October 2009. The HCP for 5-19 year olds, launched in October 2009, includes a discrete section on safeguarding.</p> <p>Family Nurse Partnership, which is a £36 million programme providing intensive support for vulnerable first time young mothers and their families, is now delivering to over 3,400 families and expansion continues with a view to reaching 7,000 families by 2011.</p>

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34	<p>The Department of Health should promote the statutory duty of all GP providers to comply with child protection legislation and to ensure that all individual GPs have the necessary skills and training to carry out their duties. They should also take further steps to raise the profile and level of expertise for child protection within GP practices, for example by working with the Department for Children, Schools and Families to support joint training opportunities for GPs and children's social workers and through the new practice accreditation scheme being developed by the Royal College of General Practitioners.</p>	<p>Sheila Shribman (National Clinical Director for Children, Young People and Maternity Services) and David Colin-Thome (National Director for Primary Care) will consider, with the Royal College of General Practitioners and other key primary care stakeholders, joint work on effective ways to enhance GP training and development. We shall co-ordinate this work with our broader look at safeguarding training of health professionals. The Department of Health is already supporting the College in developing the practice accreditation scheme, which will include standards for safeguarding. We shall also build on other initiatives in <i>Healthy Lives, brighter futures</i> to support greater involvement of GPs in children's health, including engagement on Children's Trust Boards.</p> <p>We are going beyond promoting "the statutory duty of all GP providers to comply with child protection legislation" by proposing to amend the Performers List Regulations to ensure that primary care contractors cannot be included in a performers list (and therefore perform primary medical, dental, or optical services) unless they have had a Vetting and Barring Scheme check.</p> <p>By the terms of their contract, GPs will need to ensure that any staff they engage to carry out regulated activity have had similar checks.</p>	<p>The Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) and the British Medical Association (BMA) wrote to all GPs in autumn 2009 to raise the profile of child protection training, linking this with both accreditation and appraisal. The Department of Health wrote in parallel to all PCTs to remind them of the requirements to support child protection training. GPs who wish to provide services to NHS patients are required to apply to join a 'Performers List' maintained by their local PCT. Amendments to the performers list regulations for general practice are being considered as part of strengthening the PCT role in ensuring suitability and eligibility of clinicians for the role.</p> <p>The Department of Health alongside the NDSU is continuing to engage with the GP profession and others to develop further action to raise the profile and level of expertise for child protection within GP practices, including through accreditation. The development of revalidation for doctors will mean that in the future, all doctors will be required to demonstrate that they are up-to-date and fit to practise medicine. This will include, where their role requires it, that doctors can show that they have current knowledge of child protection legislation and guidance.</p>

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35	<p>The Department of Health should work with partners to develop a national training programme to improve the understanding and skills of the children's health workforce (including paediatricians, midwives, health visitors, GPs and school nurses) to further support them in dealing with safeguarding and child protection issues.</p>	<p>Dr Sheila Shribman (National Clinical Director for Children, Young People and Maternity Services) will work closely with NHS and professional leaders to ensure the children's health workforce benefits from high quality training and support. As a first step, this will involve a stocktake of current training programmes to get a clear picture of what is currently being delivered and where the gaps are.</p> <p>The Department of Health is sponsoring the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health to develop further components of its child protection training, and is also working with the College to scope work to develop clinical networks for child protection within the NHS.</p>	<p>The review of safeguarding training for NHS staff has been completed and the report of the review has been shared with contributors and stakeholders. To address a lack of sufficient clarity about what training should be received and how frequently, the Department will produce a training matrix which describes learning outcomes, maps existing training courses, and outlines training pathways for different professional groups. The Royal Colleges have also agreed to update existing intercollegiate guidance on roles and competencies for health care staff in safeguarding children.</p>

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36	The Home Office should take national action to ensure that police child protection teams are well resourced and have specialist training to support them in their important responsibilities.	Working with the Association of Chief Police Officers, the Association of Police Authorities, and the National Policing Improvement Agency the Home Office will be developing a new Strategic Framework for delivering Protective Services that will, for the first time, provide a clear structure for driving the delivery of all protective services – those services which are not so visible to the public but are crucial to ensuring that local communities are protected from a wide range of potential threats such as organised crime or major crime. Child Protection will be one of the first priorities for implementation of the new Framework, making clear that nationally the Police Service, including every Police Force, must ensure that they have the right arrangements and the right levels of resource in place locally to protect children and young people from abuse.	<p>The Home Office chaired National Police Protective Services Board (NPSSB) has formally commissioned a child protection delivery plan from the Association of Police Officers (ACPO). ACPO have worked with a range of partners including Her Majesty's Inspection of Constabulary, National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA) and local forces to finalise the plan which focuses on the police contribution to child protection and sets out areas for future development to ensure the police service is fully equipped to deliver on the improvements that Lord Laming set out in this report.</p> <p>ACPO has undertaken a wide consultation process across all police forces and key ACPO areas in developing the plan. The plan considers what measures can be put in place on a national, regional and local level to improve the response by forces, and equip officers to better protect children. The plan will help to ensure the police are fully equipped to perform their key role in safeguarding children and will support improvements to leadership, resourcing, and police training and awareness.</p> <p>The plan also attempts to provide synergy between a number of areas of work ongoing within other agencies, such as HMIC, the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP) and the NPIA, all of which have an interest in the delivery of child protection within policing. ACPO has considered those areas highlighted in Lord Laming's report that the service can build upon, for example, the need for tailored training for officers working in specialist units.</p>

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		<p>Lord Laming also recommended that the Home Office must ensure that child protection teams have specialist training to support them in their work. The NPIA will continue their development of the Specialist Child Abuse Investigators' Development Programme. The Programme is being updated to take account of the new ACPO Guidance on Investigating Child Abuse and in <i>Working Together</i> guidance. The updated Programme will be available to Police Forces by December 2009. This training programme ensures that those police officers working in child protection have access to detailed, accredited training that prepares them for this difficult and complex area of policing. In addition to the specialist training for those in child protection teams, NPIA will also develop new training modules for child protection supervisors and Senior Investigating Officers dealing with child homicides to ensure that Police Forces have access to training for officers at all levels.</p>	<p>The outcomes of the Delivery Plan will go forward to inform force child protection policy and practice. This, along with the recently revised ACPO Guidance on Investigating Child Abuse and Safeguarding Children (available from www.ceop.police.uk) provide a comprehensive toolkit for forces to incorporate into practice.</p> <p>The NPIA has updated the Specialist Child Abuse Investigators' Development Programme and this is now available to all police forces. This programme is the foundation stone for child abuse investigation by the police service, but is just one aspect of child abuse investigation professional development that is currently being progressed by the NPIA. Other examples include six new Child Homicide modules which will also be made available later this year for Senior Investigating Officers, Heads of Criminal Investigation Departments and Borough Commander Detective Inspectors.</p> <p>In addition in January of this year, the Government announced its intention to place the CEOP on a statutory footing with formal Non Departmental Public Body status. This commitment reflects the importance the Government attaches to this area of work. Creating CEOP as an NDPB will contribute to the multi-agency step change envisaged by Lord Laming in the delivery of child protection work.</p>

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37	<p>The Care Quality Commission, HMI Constabulary and HMI Probation should review the inspection frameworks of their frontline services to drive improvements in safeguarding and child protection in a similar way to the new Ofsted framework.</p>	<p>The Care Quality Commission's Annual Health Check of all NHS trusts in England includes assessing the quality of safeguarding arrangements against core standards criteria. By 1 May, all NHS bodies had declared compliance or otherwise with a set of Standards including C2, specifically relating to child protection arrangements. These declarations include where possible a commentary for the LSCB for each trust providing support or further information relating to the organisation's performance in this area. CQC will be rigorous in its assessments of services and will take follow-up action taken against non-compliance where necessary.</p> <p>From 2010, the new regulatory framework established by the Health and Social Care Act 2008 takes effect, which includes all of the independent healthcare sector, adult social care and the NHS, and covers children, young people and adults. The secondary legislation setting out the arrangements that a registerable service must have in place to become registered is supported by compliance guidance being produced by CQC, which explains what this means in practice for specific services. There is a major section on safety and safeguarding, which will be refined to accommodate the recommendations of the Laming review and form the basis of a robust CQC assessment and enforcement model.</p>	<p>All NHS providers of health and adult social care services will be required to register with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) from April 2010 under the Health and Social Care Act 2008, with independent providers registering from October 2010. Registered bodies must comply with Essential Standards of Quality and Safety which include requirements for safeguarding, partnership working, training and quality of care. A range of mechanisms, including inspection, will contribute towards CQC's risk-assessment systems of ongoing compliance for providers. The quality of commissioning of services is assessed separately by CQC and findings from the joint inspection programme will contribute to this assessment. The joint inspection programme with Ofsted will be feeding key information into the risk-based assessment systems for healthcare providers.</p> <p>Ofsted's new and strengthened inspection programme and framework is now firmly in place. To date, over half of local authorities have received an unannounced inspection of their contact, referral and assessment arrangements by Ofsted, and the first cycle will be fully complete by summer 2010. Fifteen full inspections of safeguarding and looked after children services, carried out jointly with CQC, have been published, and the full cycle as planned will be completed by July 2012. The clarity and focus of inspection, and the precision with which areas for development and for priority action are identified, are expected to support improvement in the quality, timeliness and consistency of service provision, and the effectiveness with which children are safeguarded. A priority for Ofsted during the year is to draw out the learning from these inspections, and the NSDU will consider the most helpful and efficient means of ensuring that the learning is used and shared and acts as a catalyst for further improvement.</p>

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		<p>A 3-year Ofsted-led rolling programme of safeguarding inspections commences in June 2009, under the Comprehensive Area Assessment arrangements. These inspections also include assessment of the arrangements for care of looked after children – a particularly vulnerable group often linked to safeguarding concerns. The CQC is committed to working in partnership with Ofsted to inspect and assess the health-related elements of this programme and thus provide leverage alongside SHAs to improvement of practice and outcomes.</p> <p>HMIC is currently reviewing its inspection methodology and is moving to Rounded Assessment. A Rounded Assessment of every force will be conducted throughout the year on a regular basis to provide for judgements and narratives across five domains. Child abuse investigations and safeguarding children will fall under one of these domains – Protection from Serious Harm. Rounded assessment will identify key areas of vulnerability which may, in turn, trigger separate, dedicated inspections – for example, on either a force or 'thematic' basis. Fieldwork for Rounded Assessment is due to commence July/August this year with graded judgements produced by 30 November 2009.</p>	<p>The Chief Inspector of Probation has consistently promoted the inspection of the safeguarding and public protection aspects of both Probation and Youth Offending work. New inspection programmes started in 2009, which continue and further develop this approach. With both programmes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● the inspection methodology centres on assessing the quality of work done with a representative sample of cases – how often was the right thing done with the right individual in the right way at the right time; ● key criteria are the assessment, planning and management of safeguarding and public protection work in each individual case; ● an inspection of cases is carried out in every area of England and Wales at least once every three years. <p>Each of the new inspections of youth offending work since April 2009 has included the award of a highly visible 'safeguarding score'.</p> <p>HMIC has introduced a more structured system for identifying specialist skills requirements for inspection work streams and has applied this to all inspections since January 2010. Child abuse investigations/safeguarding (child protection) was assessed and graded under the Programmed Inspection of Protecting Vulnerable People (PVP) in 2007. As well as individual force reports, a Lessons Learned report was published in 2008. PVP, as part of the suite of 'Protective Services', will be subject to examination and analysis in spring 2010. This is expected to generate targeted fieldwork to feed into the Police Report Card (previously known as Rounded Assessment) for 2010–11. In addition, a revised inspection framework for 'protecting vulnerable people' (PVP) has been developed and the child protection element will be piloted in eight inspections during April and May 2010. These inspections will also give important</p>

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			<p>feedback to the forces concerned and, in addition, there will be an overview report published setting out the key findings and forming the basis for further targeted, risk-assessed inspection, both single agency and joint. From May 2010, HMIC will have a dedicated person evaluating Serious Case Reviews, working in liaison with Ofsted and other inspectorates to ensure that trends and lessons are identified and acted upon by police.</p>
38	<p>Ofsted, the Care Quality Commission, HMI Constabulary and HMI Probation should take immediate action to ensure their staff have the appropriate skills, expertise and capacity to inspect the safeguarding and child protection elements of frontline services. Those Ofsted Inspectors responsible for inspecting child protection should have direct experience of child protection work.</p>	<p>Ofsted will ensure that inspectors have appropriate skills and expertise to inspect the safeguarding and child protection elements of frontline services.</p> <p>CQC is working to ensure that all staff inspecting children's services are suitably experienced and qualified by setting clear criteria for their involvement.</p> <p>HMIC currently has a small number of specialist staff across a range of specialist areas (including safeguarding and child protection). When inspections require particular skills and expertise, HMIC secures this from external sources, including police forces. For example, a dedicated specialist team was put together to conduct the inspections of counter terrorism. As part of its response to the recent Police Green Paper, HMIC is seeking to build its capacity in this area through the development of more flexible staffing models.</p> <p>Historically, HMIP has used inspectors on secondment from Ofsted and there is an existing agreement in principle for Ofsted to assist with safeguarding for newly appointed HMIP staff.</p>	<p>All Ofsted inspections of safeguarding and child protection are undertaken solely by inspectors at HMI level, who have extensive experience of child protection at operational and strategic levels and hold a social work qualification recognised by the General Social Care Council. Ofsted has taken robust action through a long term strategy to maximise the potential of its diverse inspector workforce in delivering rigorous inspections of safeguarding and child protection across all inspection remits. An immediate review of capacity to deliver the new programmes for inspection of safeguarding and child protection identified a clear need to expand the number of social care HMI in order effectively to deliver the rolling programme of inspections of safeguarding and arrangements for looked after children, unannounced annual inspections of contact referral and assessment services, inspection of Cafcass and evaluation of Serious Case Reviews. This has been resourced and actioned. A significant number of new social care HMIs, professionally qualified and with extensive and current experience of contemporary safeguarding work, have now been appointed or are in the process of appointment, and further national recruitment is planned. Ofsted has also recruited a number of senior staff from Children's Services Departments to participate as 'additional inspectors' in the inspection programme.</p>

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			<p>CQC has recruited a specialist team to conduct the majority of the integrated inspections with Ofsted from February 2010. The complement of staff with specific expertise in safeguarding has been expanded to 19. All inspection staff have received safeguarding training relevant to their part in the programme. Staff conducting routine assessments against the Essential Standards are supported by clear guidance and colleagues with specialist safeguarding knowledge. A new national adviser on safeguarding will also be appointed to provide advice and expertise at senior level to the Board.</p> <p>Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary has introduced a more structured system for identifying specialist skills requirements for inspection work streams and has applied this to all inspections since January 2010.</p> <p>HMIP ensure that all their inspectorates have training and support in child safeguarding.</p>
39	<p>The Department for Children, Schools and Families should revise <i>Working Together to Safeguard Children</i> so that it is explicit that the formal purpose of Serious Case Reviews is to learn lessons for improving individual agencies, as well as for improving multi-agency working.</p>	<p>The Government will publish a revised Chapter 8 of <i>Working Together to Safeguard Children</i> for consultation by July 2009 so that these important improvements can be put in place as quickly as possible.</p>	<p>Public consultation on a revised Chapter 8 of <i>Working Together to Safeguard Children</i> was held from 31 July to 23 October 2009 and was supported by seminars across all Government Office regions. The revised <i>Working Together to Safeguard Children</i>, Chapter 8: Serious Case Reviews, which comes into force today, emphasises that the key role for SCRs is to learn the lessons and for LSCBs to ensure that the subsequent action plans are implemented in a timely manner. The NSDU has also commissioned research by the University of Warwick to better understand what more needs to be done to stimulate learning across the safeguarding system for children and young people.</p>

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40	The Department for Children, Schools and Families should revise the framework for Serious Case Reviews (SCRs) to ensure that the SCR panel chair has access to all of the relevant documents and staff they need to conduct a thorough and effective learning exercise.	The Government will publish a revised Chapter 8 of <i>Working Together to Safeguard Children</i> for consultation by July 2009 so that these important improvements can be put in place as quickly as possible.	The revised Chapter 8 of <i>Working Together to Safeguard Children</i> highlights that it is crucial for the SCR Panel and the overview report author to have access to all relevant documentation and where necessary individual professionals to enable both to undertake effectively their respective SCR functions.
41	The Department for Children, Schools and Families should revise <i>Working Together to Safeguard Children</i> to ensure Serious Case Reviews focus on the effective learning of lessons and implementation of recommendations and the timely introduction of changes to protect children.	The Government will publish a revised Chapter 8 of <i>Working Together to Safeguard Children</i> for consultation by July 2009 so that these important improvements can be put in place as quickly as possible.	<p>The revised Chapter 8 of <i>Working Together to Safeguard Children</i> emphasises that the prime purpose of a SCR is to learn lessons, to disseminate these effectively and implement the recommendations in a timely manner. The NSDU is also commissioning work to identify when, and under what circumstances, varying methodologies could be used when undertaking SCRs to assist with effective learning of lessons.</p> <p>The expanded capacity of Safeguarding Advisers in regional Government Offices will also provide increased support to local areas to embed the lessons from SCRs. Several regions have established SCR networks to share the learning from SCRs, support training and development for chairs and authors, and devise implementation plans to ensure that actions are taken forward across the region where appropriate. The NSDU's training model for SCR panel chairs and overview report writers will also provide a useful forum to share learning. The regional Government Offices in partnership with their LSCBs and regional improvement partners, have also already delivered/co-ordinated training for Individual Management Review authors as well as providing a wide range of support such as newsletters summarising key learning across the region from SCRs.</p>

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42	Ofsted should focus their evaluation of Serious Case Reviews on the depth of the learning a review has provided and the quality of recommendations it has made to protect children	Ofsted are convening a partners' discussion in May about revising the Serious Case Review Evaluation framework. This will be developed and consulted alongside the review of Chapter 8 of <i>Working Together</i> so that there is a consistent end to end set of arrangements with clear roles and responsibilities for all partners published by the end of July 2009.	Ofsted will shortly publish a draft of a revised framework for the evaluation of Serious Case Reviews for full consultation. The proposed framework will seek to give full effect to Lord Laming's recommendation, supporting further improvement in the quality of Serious Case Reviews, and the thoroughness with which necessary lessons are learned and necessary actions taken to improve the protection of children.
43	The Department for Children, Schools and Families should revise <i>Working Together to Safeguard Children</i> to underline the importance of a high quality, publicly available executive summary which accurately represents the full report, contains the action plan in full, and includes the names of the Serious Case Review panel members.	The Government will publish a revised Chapter 8 of <i>Working Together to Safeguard Children</i> for consultation by July 2009 so that these important improvements can be put in place as quickly as possible.	The revised Chapter 8 of <i>Working Together to Safeguard Children</i> makes clear that the executive summary must accurately reflect the full SCR overview report, and include information about the review process, key issues arising from the case, the recommendations and the action plan (including any actions that have been completed). It also requires the names of the LSCB Chair, SCR Panel Chair, the overview report author, and the job titles and employing organisations of all the SCR Panel members. The revision of the remainder of <i>Working Together</i> was used as an opportunity to further strengthen the requirements for executive summaries to ensure that they provide a full, thorough account of the SCR and a template has been provided.
44	Local Safeguarding Children Boards should ensure all Serious Case Review panel chairs and Serious Case Review overview authors are independent of the Local Safeguarding Children Board and all services involved in the case and that arrangements for the Serious Case Review offer sufficient scrutiny and challenge.	To be reflected in revised <i>Working Together to Safeguard Children</i> guidance.	The revised Chapter 8 of <i>Working Together to Safeguard Children</i> requires both the SCR Panel Chair and overview report author to be independent. It clarifies governance arrangements for undertaking SCRs and highlights the important role of Government Offices of providing advice, support and challenge to LSCBs.

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45	All Serious Case Review panel chairs and authors must complete a training programme provided by the Department for Children, Schools and Families that supports them in their role in undertaking Serious Case Reviews that have a real impact on learning and improvement.	This will be an early priority for the new NSDU.	<p>A ready supply of appropriately skilled and high quality SCR panel chairs and report authors was identified by Lord Laming as critical to maximising the potential learning from SCRs. By the end of March 2010, the NSDU will have identified the key skill sets for SCR overview authors and panel chairs, commissioned an initial training programme to improve the quality and focus of Serious Case Reviews on change and learning and be ready to support all Government Office regions as they develop (in partnership with local areas) sustainable systems and processes to secure adequate numbers of panel chairs and overview authors.</p> <p>A training model for overview authors and panel chairs has been developed by the NDSU in consultation with a range of key stakeholders and pilots have already begun following a successful tendering process. The LSCB practice guidance will be the means through which Individual Management Review Authors are supported. Discussions will continue about the future training needs of the sector.</p>
46	Government Offices must ensure that there are enough trained Serious Case Review panel chairs and authors available within their region.	This will be an early priority for the new NSDU.	Government Offices, working with LSCBs and other stakeholders, will ensure that training opportunities are in place to ensure a sufficient supply of trained overview authors and panel chairs.
47	Ofsted should share full Serious Case Review reports with HMI Constabulary, the Care Quality Commission, and HMI Probation (as appropriate) to enable all four inspectorates to assess the implementation of action plans when conducting frontline inspections.	Ofsted will share copies of Serious Case Reviews in confidence with partner inspectorates so that the implications for frontline inspections and for joint safeguarding inspections can be fully assessed and learned.	Arrangements are in place for the sharing of SCR documentation with partner inspectorates. The intended impact is that the findings of Serious Case Reviews will more effectively inform inspection across all safeguarding services.

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48	Ofsted should share Serious Case Review executive summaries with the Association of Chief Police Officers, Primary Care Trusts and Strategic Health Authorities to promote learning.	Ofsted will include a website link so that all interested organisations can easily access the published executive summaries of Serious Case Reviews. The revised version of Chapter 8 of <i>Working Together to Safeguard Children</i> will reinforce the importance of all relevant organisations making arrangements to draw to the attention of relevant staff the importance and availability of executive summaries as learning tools, together with Ofsted's regular summary and thematic reports.	Arrangements are in place for sharing SCR executive summaries with the Association of Chief Police Officers, Primary Care Trusts and Strategic Health Authorities. These arrangements should help to ensure that leaders across the system are sharing in the learning which the SCR process is designed to promote.
49	Ofsted should produce more regular reports, at six monthly intervals, which summarise the lessons from Serious Case Reviews.	Ofsted have confirmed that they will produce regular six monthly reports covering the lessons of Serious Case Reviews. One of these each year will be a summary report covering all SCRs in the year and will consider the format of the second interim report to enable more in-depth analysis where this would be beneficial.	In October 2009 Ofsted published their latest annual report entitled <i>Learning Lessons from Serious Case Reviews: Year 2</i> which covered SCRs carried out and completed in 2008-09. Plans are also in place to produce six monthly reports, the first of which is scheduled to be published later in spring 2010. This report will focus on key learning for safeguarding agencies and will highlight those lessons which have national significance or which can be applied across a wide range of services and can make an impact on improving outcomes for children and young people.

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50	<p>The Department for Children, Schools and Families must provide further guidance to Local Safeguarding Children Boards on how to operate as effectively as possible following the publication of the Loughborough University research on Local Safeguarding Children Boards later this year.</p>	<p>An interim report on the Loughborough University research will be published in June 2009. Practice guidance will be developed in light of its findings.</p>	<p>A summary outline and call for evidence for the practice guidance was published on 18 December 2009. Today a research brief has been published on the findings from the Loughborough University research. The research has found that LSCBs have addressed a number of weaknesses of Area Child Protection Committees. It also found that the most effective LSCBs had been realistic about what they were able to achieve and had focused upon the core business of ensuring that work to protect children was properly co-ordinated and effective before seeking to develop their preventative work.</p> <p>Alongside this the NSDU has published practice guidance for LSCBs for full consultation, alongside the revised <i>Working Together to Safeguard Children</i> statutory guidance.</p>
51	<p>The Children's Trust and the Local Safeguarding Children Board should not be chaired by the same person. The Local Safeguarding Children Board chair should be selected with the agreement of a group of multi-agency partners and should have access to training to support them in their role.</p>	<p>To be reflected in revised regulations and revised <i>Working Together to Safeguard Children</i> guidance.</p>	<p>The revised guidance published today clarifies that there must be a clear distinction between the roles and responsibilities of the LSCB and the Children's Trust Board to ensure appropriate challenge, scrutiny and impartiality. The complementary roles of the two boards – and the challenge function of the LSCB to the Children's Trust Board – will only work if the two bodies are chaired by different people. The LSCB must be able to form a view about the quality of local activity, to challenge partners as necessary, and to speak with an independent voice.</p>
52	<p>Local Safeguarding Children Boards should include membership from the senior decision makers from all safeguarding partners, who should attend regularly and be fully involved as equal partners in Local Safeguarding Children Board decision making.</p>	<p>To be reflected in revised regulations and revised <i>Working Together to Safeguard Children</i> guidance.</p>	<p>The revised <i>Working Together</i> published on 17 March 2010 clarifies that the members of the LSCB should be senior decision makers who have a strategic role in relation to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children within their organisation. They should be able to speak for their organisation with authority, commit their organisation on policy and practice matters and hold their organisation to account.</p>

Ref No	Lord Laming's Recommendation March 2009	Government's Response May 2009	Progress update March 2010
53	<p>Local Safeguarding Children Boards should report to the Children's Trust Board and publish an annual report on the effectiveness of safeguarding in the local area. Local Safeguarding Children Boards should provide robust challenge to the work of the Children's Trust and its partners in order to ensure that the right systems and quality of services and practice are in place so that children are properly safeguarded.</p>	<p>The Government has brought forward amendments to the ASCL Bill to require LSCBs to produce annual reports. Subject to Parliamentary approval, this will be reflected in revised <i>Working Together to Safeguard Children</i> guidance.</p>	<p>The Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act received Royal Assent in November 2009. The Act includes a provision, which comes into force on 1 April, to introduce a new statutory requirement that LSCBs must publish an annual report on the effectiveness of safeguarding in the local area. Both the <i>Working Together to Safeguard Children</i> and the LSCB practice guidance make specific reference to the annual report.</p> <p>The Act also includes provisions to introduce new statutory targets for safeguarding and child protection, to open up LSCBs to wider public scrutiny through the appointment of two lay members and to ensure that LSCBs publish an annual report on the effectiveness of safeguarding in the local area.</p>
54	<p>The Department for Children, Schools and Families, the Department of Health and the Home Office, together with HM Treasury, must ensure children's services, police and health services have protected budgets for the staffing and training for child protection services.</p>	<p>Children's Trusts will prepare their annual assessments of need on which the financial contributions made by local partners to jointly-funded safeguarding initiatives will be based, taking account of other local priorities. These will be set out each year in the Children and Young People's Plan. Government Offices will challenge the quality of local needs analysis, the alignment of that analysis with local children and young people plan priorities and the adequacy of what is then commissioned in respect of support for all children, children 'in need' and those in need of protection. The NSDU, as one of its early priorities will explore the scope for disseminating comparative information on the pattern of local spend on children's services.</p>	<p>At local level all Children's Trust Boards have a responsibility to prepare their Children and Young People's Plans based on an assessment of needs. In preparing their Plans, Children's Trust Boards should be clear about what resources are available, the cost of delivering the priorities identified in the Plan – including those relating to safeguarding – and how those priorities will be implemented. The NSDU, in its forward work programme, is looking at the pattern of spend across local authorities in safeguarding and how this relates to outcomes, including the impact of investment in preventative services.</p>

Ref No	Lord Laming's Recommendation March 2009	Government's Response May 2009	Progress update March 2010
55	<p>The Department for Children, Schools and Families must sufficiently resource children's services to ensure that early intervention and preventative services have capacity to respond to all children and families identified as vulnerable or 'in need'.</p>	<p>It is the responsibility of all partners on Children's Trusts to assess the adequacy of their funding on children's services (see response to rec 54). Under the new arrangements for statutory targets on safeguarding, the Government will closely monitor the trend in outcomes through indicators and targets and the quality of services through Ofsted's new inspection arrangements. The NSDU will also explore the scope for benchmarking and disseminating comparative information on the pattern of local spend in children's services (see rec 54).</p>	<p>The Government will continue to talk openly and constructively with partners to understand and respond to the new demand pressures that some services and areas are facing. The tight financial climate does, however, increase the importance of making sure that there is good learning across the whole system about new solutions, emerging practice, innovation and efficiency to the benefit of all. The new responsibility for Children's Trust Boards to consider local need and prioritise accordingly is also a fundamental part of planning for early support.</p> <p>Understanding the patterns of spend in other local areas may help inform decision making on investment at local level. Details of spend on children and young people's services by each local authority is available at www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/strategy/financeandfunding/informationforlocalauthorities/section52/dataarchive/s52da. Combining this data with information from the National Indicator Set, local authorities, if they wish, can use this to do a comparison of their own spend versus outcomes achieved.</p>
56	<p>A national annual report should be published reviewing safeguarding and child protection spend against assessed needs of children across the partners in each Children's Trust.</p>	<p>The Chief Adviser will present his first annual report in April 2010.</p>	<p>From 1 April 2010, each Children's Trust Board will have responsibility for preparing a Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP). All CYPPs should be based on a joint needs assessment, and Children's Trust Boards should ensure that these needs assessments pay particular attention to safeguarding and child protection priorities. Children's Trust Boards will work closely with LSCBs to do this. The needs assessment will inform the first joint CYPP, which must be published in every local area by April 2011.</p> <p>The NSDU will also be looking at how it can support local areas in effective needs assessment.</p>

Ref No	Lord Laming's Recommendation March 2009	Government's Response May 2009	Progress update March 2010
57	<p>The Ministry of Justice should lead on the establishment of a system-wide target that lays responsibility on all participants in the care proceedings system to reduce damaging delays in the time it takes to progress care cases where these delays are not in the interests of the child.</p>	<p>The Ministry of Justice is working closely with the Department for Children, Schools and Families to establish a system-wide target for reducing delays that draws in all participants within the care proceedings system. Whilst the detail is yet to be finalised with the relevant key partners, the intention is to have an overarching objective, related to the timetable for the completion of proceedings for an individual child, supported by a suite of Key Performance Indicators owned by individual participants in the system. This will include commitments to continuous performance improvement in order to avoid unnecessary delay by Her Majesty's Courts Service, the Legal Services Commission, and the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service. Improvement and success will be measured in a Balanced Scorecard.</p>	<p>During 2009–10 the Ministry of Justice has led on establishing a holistic approach towards reducing delay in care proceedings. A new system-wide target to reduce unnecessary delay will come into force from the outset of 2010–11, and will supersede the existing PSA4 target. This target is fully supported by key partners within the system including Her Majesty's Court Service, Cafcass and the Legal Services Commission. The details of the target will be announced to key stakeholders through a series of regional events during March/April 2010. Local commitment to reducing delay will be secured through interagency performance groups set up across England during the first quarter of 2010–11, encouraging local ownership and a more proactive approach to problem solving. MoJ together with the NSDU will provide implementation support to local managers to ensure that the targets are embedded and that all agencies are fully engaged.</p>
58	<p>The Ministry of Justice should appoint an independent person to undertake a review of the impact of court fees in the coming months. In the absence of incontrovertible evidence that the fees had not acted as a deterrent, they should then be abolished from 2010/11 onwards.</p>	<p>In response to Lord Laming's recommendation, the Ministry of Justice has appointed Francis Plowden to conduct a review of court fees, and to establish whether or not court fees act as a deterrent when local authorities decide whether or not to commence care proceedings.</p> <p>Francis Plowden has already commenced work and is expected to present his findings to the Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice by mid September 2009. Appropriate steps would then be taken to implement changes which Mr Plowden might recommend.</p>	<p>Sir Francis Plowden's review of court fees has been published and an announcement made that fees will be abolished from April 2011.</p>

Annex B: Serious Case Review template for executive summaries

Format of serious case review executive summary

Introduction

- Summarise the circumstances that led to a SCR being undertaken in this case and the process followed by the review.
- List the names of the LSCB Chair, SCR Panel Chair and the author of the overview report, and the job titles and employing organisations of all SCR Panel members.
- Note the parallel processes, where relevant, that are being or have been conducted and how they have interrelated with the processes followed by the review (for example, criminal proceedings, Prisons and Probation Ombudsman investigation following the death of a child in custody, or independent investigation of adverse events in mental health services).
- Note the extent to which the family (and the child, where he or she has been seriously harmed) have been involved in the review.

The facts / summary of events

- Summarise the key facts of the case and the sequence of events. This should be an accurate précis of circumstances of the child and their family and of the chronology of the involvement of the relevant agencies. The narrative should be consistent with the detailed chronology in the full overview report.
- Care should however be taken to ensure that the summary is appropriately anonymised and sensitive to the child and family in respect of information that will be available in the public domain.

Key issues or themes arising from the case

- Summarise the key issues or themes arising from the analysis in the overview report, and highlight the key decisions taken in respect of the child and their family and the opportunities for early intervention where they existed. With hindsight could or should different decisions or actions have been taken at the time?

Priorities for learning and change

- Describe clearly the conclusions and lessons learned from the review, both for individual agencies and for inter-agency working through the LSCB and the Children's Trust Board, ensuring these are in the context of the issues or themes that arose from the case.
- Identify examples of good practice as well as being clear where systems should improve.

Recommendations and action plan

- Reproduce the recommendations and action plan from the full SCR.
- The action plan should highlight which recommendations are relevant to which agencies, the agency/ies responsible for taking forward specific recommendations, how action will be monitored and by whom. It should also set out the progress that has already been made in implementing or completing recommendations and plans to evaluate the impact of these changes.

Annex C: Government Office (GO) Children and Learner Teams

Safeguarding – summary version

GO Children and Learner Teams have a significant role in supporting and challenging safeguarding services in local areas. This includes:

- 1 Working with all Children’s Trust Boards and Local Safeguarding Children Boards to drive improvements in safeguarding:
 - using analysis and understanding of the relevant safeguarding data to challenge performance, support improvement activity and monitor progress;
 - providing advice, support and challenge to individual Local Safeguarding Children Boards and local partners across the full range of their safeguarding responsibilities;
 - discussing inspection recommendations with the local authority, advising on and supporting improvement and seeking assurance that plans are in place and action taken; and
 - understanding any specific challenges for local areas which require targeted additional support.
- 2 Supporting and challenging Local Safeguarding Children Boards/Children’s Trusts in relation to Serious Case Reviews and Child Death Overview Panels (CDOPs):
 - monitoring the pattern of serious incident notifications and challenging as necessary;
 - advising local authorities and LSCBs on the application of the criteria for holding a SCR and, when requested, advising LSCBs on SCR terms of reference;
 - assisting individual LSCBs to source suitably trained SCR chairs and authors;
 - seeking assurance that plans are in place and action is being taken to address recommendations from SCRs and Ofsted evaluations and helping to embed and share the learning;
 - challenging and supporting the development of CDOPs, including in the use of data; and
 - drawing out and disseminating regional learning from Serious Case Reviews and Child Death Overview Panels and sharing this learning with the National Safeguarding Delivery Unit (NSDU).

- 3** Using local knowledge to inform and influence the development of national policy
- providing regional input and feedback to policy and programme development;
 - identifying early warning signs and concerns about the strength of safeguarding arrangements in particular areas which require escalation and supporting government intervention where that is necessary; and
 - alerting and briefing Ministers on serious safeguarding incidents, child protection correspondence sent to DCSF and serious issues raised by Ofsted in respect of safeguarding.

