

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Department for Education and Skills and the Home Office should:

3.1 Give consideration in national consultation on Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) to:

- developing appropriate links with the full range of agencies working with children in addition to the core agencies on Local Safeguarding Children Boards. This should include the courts, the Crown Prosecution Service and, where appropriate, the immigration service, including removal centres and local enforcement offices;
- the management of and dissemination of learning from serious case reviews; and
- accountability arrangements and responsibility for forward planning between the Local Safeguarding Children's Boards and the children's trust governance arrangements.

The Department for Education and Skills should:

3.2. Review arrangements to safeguard children where they are away from home in settings that are currently unregulated, such as sports, music or language centres etc. to ensure that appropriate regulation and safeguarding arrangements are in place. This review should also apply to armed services settings which accommodate children.

3.3. Reinstate the duty on social workers to visit children looked after at a minimum specified frequency and require social services, and subsequently, children's services, to monitor these arrangements effectively.

The Department for Education and Skills, the Department of Health, the Youth Justice Board and the National Offender Management Service should:

3.4. Issue one agreed set of principles for the use of control methods in all settings where children are cared for, including secure settings. This should take account of children's views and the need to place the use of physical control within an overall behaviour management strategy and in a wider context of prevention. Arrangements should be made for comprehensive accredited and/or approved training for staff.

The Home Office, the Association of Chief Police Officers, and the Association of Police Authorities should:

3.5. Consider introducing national performance indicators for the police for

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child protection and the investigation of child abuse to give it due priority.

The Department of Health, in consultation with the Royal College of Paediatricians and Child Health and the Royal College of Nursing, should:

3.6. Ensure that clear guidance is drawn up for NHS organisations on role definitions and specifications for named and designated health professionals who have specific responsibilities for child protection, including arrangements to provide protected time to undertake this additional work.

The Youth Justice Board should:

3.7 Support youth offending teams in discharging their responsibilities by advising them on their strategic role on Local Safeguarding Children Boards and providing further direction on work to safeguard children and young people.

The Youth Justice Board and the National Offender Management Service should:

3.8. Promote the personal officer role as an integral part of the team in young offender institutions; and promote good practice in safeguarding children in prison custody, especially in relation to behaviour management and the care of particularly vulnerable children.

HM Courts Service and CAFCASS should:

3.9. Promote increased participation of children in family court proceedings.

The Immigration and Nationality Directorate of the Home Office, in agreement with the Department for Education and Skills, should:

3.10. Issue guidance to Immigration Removal Centres and local councils to ensure that:

- a care plan, incorporating good quality health, educational and social care provision, is drawn up at the point of detention for each detained child, following an assessment in line with the *Framework for Assessment of Children in Need and their Families* (2000);
- continuity of education is taken into account when children are detained;
- an investigation is carried out and a multi-disciplinary conference is convened by the local ACPC (or its successor Local Safeguarding Children Board) if the assessment shows the child to be at risk of significant harm under S.47 of the Children Act 1989, in line with *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (1999);
- a multi-disciplinary review is in any event convened for any child to be detained for more than three weeks; and

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- all assessments inform decisions on the necessity for continued detention.

All agencies and organisations directly involved with children should:

3.11. Review their approach to safeguarding, in line with the requirements of the Children Act 2004 and guidance, in order to:

- identify the relevant safeguarding issues specific to their area of work;
- ensure that there are policies and procedures in place to address these issues; and
- put in place regular quality assurance and monitoring systems to ensure that policy is followed through consistently in practice, and demonstrates effective outcomes.

3.12. Ensure that staff working with or in contact with:

- children with disabilities;
- children in private fostering situations; and
- asylum-seeking children,

know how to recognise the signs of abuse or neglect and which procedures to follow in such cases.

3.13. Audit their recruitment and staff checking procedures so that the following practices are carried out consistently:

- references are always verified and properly recorded in staff files;
- a full employment history is available on file for every member of staff, any gaps in employment history are checked and accounted for and qualifications are checked; and
- enhanced Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks are consistently undertaken on new staff and those working with children who have not previously been subject to checks, including temporary, agency or contract staff, prior to the establishment of the centralised vetting and barring scheme proposed in response to the Bichard recommendations.

3.14. Review existing safeguarding policies to ensure that they take full account of the needs of children with disabilities and assess the professional development needs of staff who work with children with disabilities to equip them to:

- communicate effectively with children;
- identify potential child protection concerns;
- track and monitor behaviour patterns; and

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- follow appropriate child protection procedures.

Local councils and partner agencies should:

3.15. Ensure, when developing Children and Young People's Plans, that

- they reflect priorities for safeguarding as well as for universal and preventive services; and
- thresholds for specialist services are consistent with ensuring that children are safeguarded effectively.

Local councils should:

3.16. Ensure, in introducing the Common Assessment Framework, that sufficient priority and adequate resources are given to delivering their responsibilities to safeguarding children effectively.

3.17. Ensure that safeguarding requirements are consistently applied to looked after children in all settings, including:

- children placed for adoption;
- children on care orders placed with parents; and
- children placed with extended family.

3.18. Ensure that robust arrangements for safeguarding children looked after are in place, including:

- specific safeguarding requirements in all placement contracts; and
- effective monitoring arrangements, including regular visits by social workers.

3.19. Ensure that unaccompanied asylum seeking children receive a comprehensive assessment of their needs and that appropriate services are put in place.

3.20. Ensure, when children are placed in residential special schools, that their needs are assessed under the *Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families* to inform the care plan.

3.21. Put plans in place to ensure that good working relations between professionals, especially teachers and social workers, are actively promoted.

3.22. Develop parallel pathway plans for unaccompanied asylum seeking children who have been given discretionary leave to remain in the UK to age 18, taking account of the uncertainty about what immigration decisions will be made at that time.

Local councils and NHS trusts should:

3.23 Establish clear arrangements, when a looked after child is placed out of their area, for notifying NHS Trusts in the area where they are placed, in line with the National Service Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services.

NHS trusts and independent hospitals should:

3.24 Develop robust protocols for:

- post-mortems, to ensure that staff are aware of the criteria for Serious Case Review, and how to request that a case is considered for a Serious Case Review through the Area Child Protection Committee (ACPC), and subsequently the LCSB; and know which cases of death must be referred to, or discussed with, the Coroner, and, for cases not referred to the Coroner, are familiar with the process of gaining consent for post-mortem examination; and
- ensuring that staff working with children who spend more than three months in hospital notify social services about these children to trigger an assessment, under the Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families, and follow up of their welfare needs.