

# EARLY YEARS SAFEGUARDING REFORMS 2025





# Session Aims

- To provide an overview of the Early Years Reforms to be implemented with effect from September 2025
- To provide settings with useful and helpful tips and guidance relating to implementation of the Reforms
- Consider the next steps and any other action(s) required



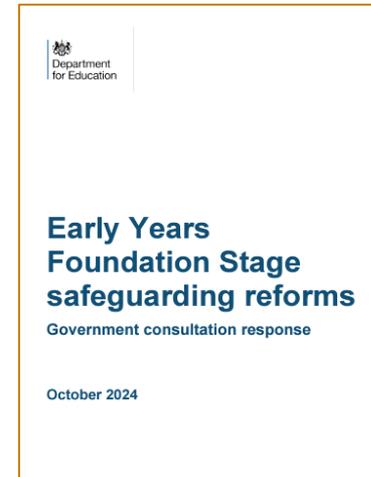
# Context to the Reforms

Consultation

[EYFS framework](#)

[consultation outcome](#)

<https://www.foundationyears.org.uk/files/2024/10/Summary-of-EYFS-changes-for-publication-PDF.pdf>



# WHAT WAS CONSULTED ON ?

**Amendments to promote safer recruitment**

**Amendments to Paediatric First Aid training requirements**

**New requirements in relation to children's absences**

**Creation of a safeguarding training matrix**

**Amendments relating to children's privacy during changing and toileting**

**New requirements to ensure safer eating**

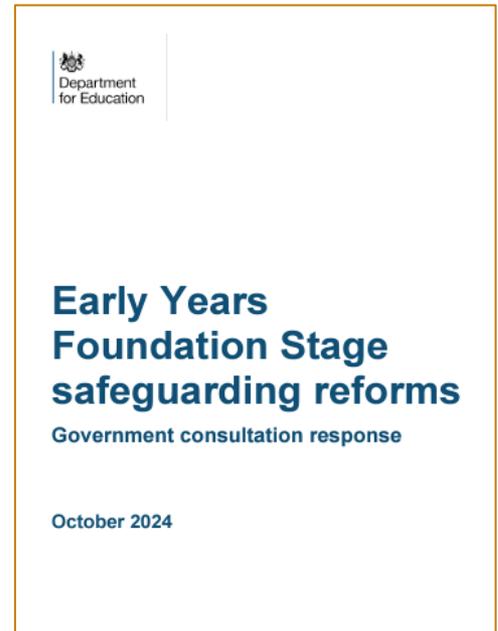
# CONSULTATION OUTCOMES

Proposed changes to the EYFS safeguarding requirements would improve children's safety and align with current best practice in early years settings.

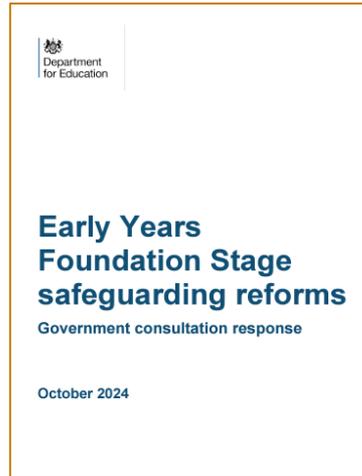
Also to be implemented;

- New whistleblowing requirements
- New expectations to provide references

Reforms implementation from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2025



# Changes to promote safer recruitment



- Requirement to obtain employment references
- Expectation to provide employment references
- A requirement for safeguarding policies to include procedures to help ensure that only suitable individuals are recruited

# Safer recruitment – references

From Sept 2025, providers **must** obtain a reference *before* employment. Providers should:

- not accept open references e.g. to whom it may concern
- not rely on applicants to obtain their reference
- ensure any references are from the candidate's current employer, training provider or education setting and have been completed by a senior person with appropriate authority
- not accept references from a family member
- obtain verification of the individual's most recent relevant period of employment where the applicant is not currently employed
- secure a reference from the relevant employer from the last time the applicant worked with children (if not currently working with children).



# Safer recruitment- references

- If the applicant has never worked with children, ensure a reference is from their current employer, training provider or education setting
- ensure electronic references originate from a legitimate source
- contact referees to clarify content where information is vague or insufficient information is provided
- compare the information on the application form with that in the reference and take up any discrepancies with the candidate
- establish the reason for the candidate leaving their current or most recent post, and
- ensure any concerns are resolved satisfactorily before appointment is confirmed



# Safer recruitment- providing references

- References should be provided for previous employers upon request in a timely manner
- When asked to provide references, providers should ensure the information confirms whether they are satisfied with the applicant's suitability to work with children
- Provide the facts (not opinions) of any substantiated safeguarding concerns / allegations that meet the harm threshold\*

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



# Record of vetting checks

From Sept 2025, group and school-based providers are required to record information about:

- staff qualifications
- identity checks
- vetting processes
- references that have been completed
- the criminal records check reference number, the date the certificate was obtained and details of who obtained (saw) it



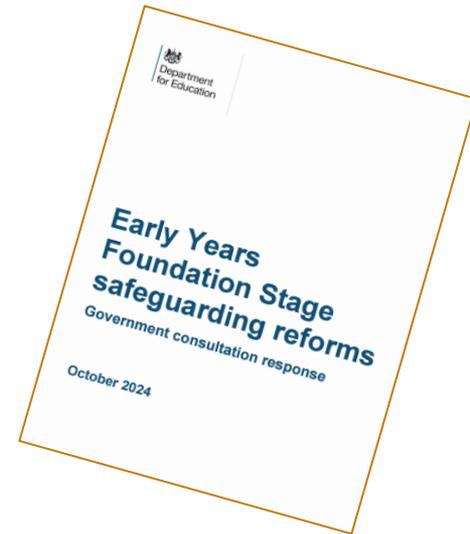
Known as a Single Central Record (SCR)





# Changes to Paediatric First Aid (PFA) training

Early Years students and trainees are required to have PFA training in order for them to be included in ratios at the level below their level of study



# Paediatric First Aid

- Settings are responsible for selecting your own suitable provider for PFA training
- HSE's guidance – [www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/geis3.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/geis3.htm)



# Changes to children's absences

- Requirement for a provider to follow up if a child is absent for a prolonged period of time
- Requirement to have an attendance policy that is shared with families
- Providers should hold additional emergency contact numbers for each child

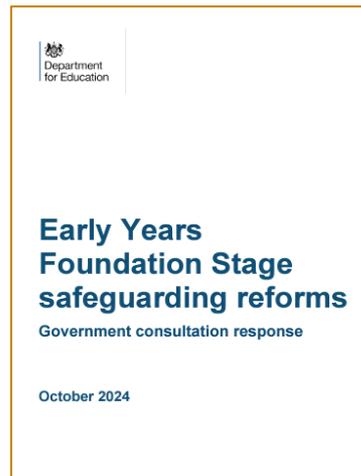


# Changes to safeguarding training

A new Annex C setting out minimum requirements for effective safeguarding training

Safeguarding training renewal of every two years

For safeguarding policies to include details of how safeguarding training is delivered, including how practitioners are supported to put it into place



# Changes to safeguarding training

What to do if you're worried a child is being abused:  
Advise for practitioners

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/419604/What to do if you re worried a child is being abused.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/419604/What_to_do_if_you_re_worried_a_child_is_being_abused.pdf)

Change of title from Lead Practitioner to DSL



# Annex C - Criteria for effective safeguarding training

- 1. Training is designed for staff caring and for 0-5 year olds and in appropriate to the age of the children being cared for**
- 2. The safeguarding training for all practitioners must cover the following areas;**
  - What is meant by term safeguarding
  - Main categories of abuse, harm and neglect
  - The factors, situation and actions that could lead or contribute to abuse, harm or neglect
  - How to work in ways that safeguard children, from abuse, harm and neglect
  - How to identify signs of possible abuse, harm and neglect at the earliest opportunity which may include;
  - Significant changes in children's behaviour
  - A decline in children's general well being
  - Unexplained bruising, marks or signs of possible abuse or neglect
  - Concerning comments or behaviour from the children



# Annex C - Criteria for effective safeguarding training

Inappropriate behaviour from adults working with or around the children

Any reasons to suspect neglect or abuse outside the setting e.g. in the child's home

How to respond, record, and effectively refer concerns or allegations related to safeguarding in a timely and appropriate way

The settings safeguarding policy and procedures

Legislation, national policies codes of conduct and professional practise in relation to safeguarding

Roles and responsibilities of practitioners and other relevant professionals involved in safeguarding

**3. Training for the DSL should take account of any advice from the local safeguarding partners or local authority on appropriate safeguarding courses**



# Changes to support whistleblowing

New whistleblowing requirements to make it clearer, when and how to escalate safeguarding concerns and support practitioner confidence with regards to whistleblowing



# Changes to support whistleblowing

## **MUST;**

- Put appropriate whistleblowing procedures in place for staff to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice in the setting
- Ensure all staff are aware of the settings whistleblowing procedures
- Ensure all staff feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practise and know that such concerns will be taken seriously by the senior leadership team



# The NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line



**I'm worried malpractice  
at work is affecting children.**

**Contact the Whistleblowing Advice Line**

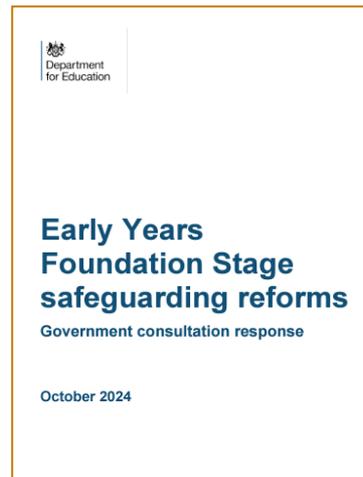
**Call: 0800 028 0285**

**Email: [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)**



# Changes on toileting and privacy

Amendments to ensure that children's privacy during nappy changing and toileting is considered and balanced with safeguarding considerations



# Changes on toileting and privacy

**MUST** ensure that ;

There is an adequate number of toilets and hand basins

There should usually be separate toilet facilities for adults

There are suitable hygienic changing facilities for children in nappies

Children's privacy is considered and balanced with safeguarding and support needs when changing nappies and toileting

There is sufficient supplies of clean bedding, spare clothes ,towels etc



# Changes to promote safer eating



New 'Safer Eating ' section ;

Including new requirements around allergies and anaphylaxis, introduction of solid foods and choking prevention

# Safer eating practises

## Choking can be completely silent

- Whilst children are eating there should always be a member of staff in the room with a valid PFA certificate
- Children must always be within sight **AND** hearing of a member of staff whilst eating
- Also consider food play – pasta, cereals ,

# Safer eating practises

- Staff should sit facing children whilst they eat
- Any choking incidents should be recorded
- Records should be reviewed and analysed for patterns
- Action should be taken to address any concerns
- Consider food play

# Safer eating practises

Before a child starts at the setting providers **MUST**;

- Obtain information about any dietary requirements, allergies, intolerances
- Obtain information about any specific health requirements
- Share this information with **ALL** staff involved in preparing and handling food
- Be clear who is responsible for checking food meets individual requirements
- Have ongoing discussions with parents/carers, health professionals etc



# Safer eating practises

- Information should be kept up to date
- Staff should know about allergies and anaphylaxis
- Staff have regular discussions with parents about weaning and solid foods
- Assumptions must not be made based on age and each child should be at the right stage for them and their individual needs
- Foods from home
- Weaning issues – 6 months plus

# Policies and Procedures

- All policies and procedures must be updated to reflect the changes, and all staff must be trained and aware of these changes
- Training must reflect the changes
- All policies and procedures must be fit for purpose and reviewed when necessary and at least yearly
- They must be available and accessible for all parents/carers to view any time



# Actions for settings

- Stay focussed on the child
- Know the changes and implement into practise
- Ensure policies and procedures are updated, and staff aware of changes and understand them
- Action plan

# Early Years Implementation Plan

- Attending Managers and CM network
- Principles of Safer Recruitment training – 18<sup>th</sup> September 2025  
9.30am Castle Cavendish
- Updated training materials
- Communications
- Tools and resources developed
- Continued review of plan as new info about the Reforms comes out over summer term
- Early Years workers



# Questions ?



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