

Safeguarding Updates

Information	Link
<p>Child protection: tutors Source: NSPCC Learning Date published: 12 February 2026</p> <p>NSPCC Learning has updated its elearning course for tutors working with children and young people. The training sets out tutors' roles and responsibilities in protecting children and young people from harm. Updates include: new and updated learning activities; a stronger focus on online safety; greater coverage of mental health and wellbeing; and clearer guidance on recording and reporting child protection concerns.</p>	<p>Take the course: Child protection training for tutors</p>
<p>Harmful online content Source: NSPCC Learning Date published: 09 February 2026</p> <p>NSPCC Learning has published a helplines insight briefing on the impact of harmful online content on children and young people. Drawing on Childline counselling sessions and NSPCC Helpline contacts, the briefing explores how exposure to online bullying, hate content, violent imagery, misinformation, pornography and addictive platform features can affect children's safety, wellbeing and sense of identity. The findings provide a snapshot of children's experiences before the implementation of the Online Safety Act's child safety duties, highlighting gaps in protection and ongoing challenges for families and professionals. This briefing offers valuable evidence to support safeguarding practice, policy development and future online safety interventions.</p>	<p>Read the briefing: The impact of harmful online content on children</p>
<p>Early years Source: NSPCC Learning Date published: 12 February 2026</p> <p>NSPCC Learning has published a report exploring early years policy and initiatives implemented by the Scottish Government, and previously the Scottish Executive, since devolution and the establishment of the Scottish Parliament in 1999. The analysis looks at how much the early years have been a national policy priority in Scotland with findings based on a review of policy developments and an audit of children's services plans. Findings show that despite a strong understanding of the importance of the early years, policy prioritisation has been inconsistent, leading to gaps in national and local service planning and delivery. Key recommendations include calls for the incoming government to renew and sustain prioritisation of the early years and to develop a comprehensive early years strategy, led by a Minister for Early Years.</p>	<p>Read the report: Early years policy development in Scotland since devolution</p>
<p>Suicide Source: NSPCC Date published: 09 February 2026</p> <p>The NSPCC has published a news story on children and young people experiencing suicidal thoughts. New data from Childline counselling sessions in 2025 shows that almost 19,000 sessions were about suicidal</p>	<p>Read the news story: Childline delivering over 50 suicide counselling sessions a day</p>

<p>thoughts and feelings. In 20% of these sessions, the child was deemed to be actively suicidal, with the other 80% seeking support outside of an immediate crisis. Children reached out to Childline for a range of reasons such as feeling lost and desperate about their current situation, the result of a mental health condition, and past experiences. The news story also includes advice for adults and children on suicidal thoughts.</p>	
<p>Infants and unborn babies Source: Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel Date published: 12 February 2026</p> <p>The Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel has published the national review into the death of baby Victoria Marten. The review looks at what happened to Victoria and sets out national learning for the child safeguarding system in England. It provides recommendations and findings for national government and local safeguarding partners to protect unborn babies and vulnerable infants at risk of serious harm. Recommendations include: earlier and stronger pre birth safeguarding, including national guidance that explicitly includes vulnerable unborn babies and infants; trauma informed practice to help reach families who do not engage with services; better engagement with and support for parents before and after child removal; and clearer arrangements when families move. NSPCC Learning will publish a CASPAR briefing summarising the learning from this review.</p>	<p>Read the press release: National review calls for urgent action to protect vulnerable unborn babies and infants</p> <p>Read the review: Protecting all vulnerable babies better</p> <p>See also on NSPCC Learning > Infants: learning from case reviews</p>
<p>Online advertising Source: Children’s Commissioner for England Date published: 10 February 2026</p> <p>The Children’s Commissioner for England has published a new report on children’s exposure to products online that are designed to change their appearance. A survey was carried out with 2,000 13- to 17-year-olds, as well as focus groups with young people, to find out how children are impacted. A substantial proportion of children reported seeing prescription-only weight loss drugs, supplements for muscle building, and beauty products and procedures. Findings show 78% of children agreed that being exposed to appearance changing products online had a negative impact on self-esteem and explained that viewing unrealistic body standards put them under pressure. Recommendations include: amendments to the Children’s Code of Practice to protect children from body stigma content; and amendments to the Online Safety Act to ensure that children are not exposed to advertisements on social media.</p>	<p>Read the report: A healthy influence? Children’s exposure to appearance-changing products online</p> <p>See also on NSPCC Learning > Preventing online harm and abuse</p>
<p>Online safety Source: DSIT Date published: 10 February 2026</p> <p>The Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT) has launched a campaign to help parents talk to their children about harmful online content. The campaign includes practical information for parents on how to start conversations about online safety; parental controls; and where to report issues. This follows new media literacy research involving parents of 8- to 14-year-olds which found: parents think they understand</p>	<p>Read the press release: Is your child influenced by toxic content? New government campaign supports parents to talk about harmful online content</p> <p>Find out more about the study: Media Literacy Parent's study</p>

<p>platforms, but not the content; most parents have not seen online safety resources; and conversations about online experiences remain rare.</p>	
<p>Artificial intelligence Source: Nominet Date published: 10 February 2026</p> <p>Nominet has published a new report examining the use of AI by children and young people in the UK. The report looks at how safe young people feel using AI and changes needed to ensure young people use it safely and responsibly. The report draws on survey data with 2,000 parents and 2,000 children aged 8- to 17-years-old, as well as focus groups with schoolchildren. Findings show: 97% of young people have used AI in some form; 60% of young people are worried about someone using AI to make inappropriate pictures of them, with 65% of parents and carers echoing this concern; and 75% of 8- to 17-year-olds think the government should make more rules so that AI companies keep children safe. The report includes calls for the government to ensure schools have adequate support for online safety education that keeps pace with the changing nature of AI technology and young people’s use of it.</p>	<p>Read the report: Almost all young Brits use AI – more than half say it makes life better</p>
<p>Gender and schools Source: DfE Date published: 12 February 2026</p> <p>The Department for Education (DfE) has announced plans to publish new guidance for schools in England on children who are questioning their gender. The guidance will be published within ‘Keeping Children Safe in Education’ (KCSIE). A press release and policy paper have been published about the proposed new guidance. The government are seeking views on the proposed revisions to the KCSIE statutory guidance for schools and colleges. The consultation closes on 22 April 2026.</p>	<p>Read the press release: Government to publish new gender guidance for schools Read the policy paper: Including guidance on children who are questioning their gender in KCSIE Find out more about the consultation: Keeping children safe in education: proposed revisions 2026</p>
<p>Youth violence Source: Youth Endowment Fund Date published: 05 February 2026</p> <p>The Youth Endowment Fund has published a blog post analysing new Office for National Statistics data on the number of annual homicides across England and Wales for the year ending March 2025, with a focus on young people. Findings show that in 2024/25, the total number of homicide victims across all ages fell 8% compared to the year before, with some of the biggest decreases amongst teenage victims. The blog reports that the number of knife-related homicides of 13-19 year-olds was down 59% compared to 2023/24, from 54 to 22. It highlights a need for continued investment in evidence-based approaches to preventing serious youth violence.</p>	<p>Read the blog post: Teenage homicides in England and Wales fall to a decade low Access the statistics: Homicide in England and Wales: year ending March 2025</p>
<p>Online harms Source: Ofcom Date published: 10 February 2026</p> <p>Ofcom has launched a call for evidence for its first statutory report on online content harmful to children. The report will set out a review of the incidence of content harmful to children on regulated services, and the</p>	<p>Find out more: Call for evidence: statutory report on content harmful to children</p>

<p>severity of harm that children in the UK may experience as a result of this content. Ofcom is seeking evidence from professionals on: the incidence of content harmful to children on regulated user-to-user, search and/or combined services; and physical or psychological harm to children. The call for evidence closes on 10 March 2026.</p>	
<p>Adoption and special guardianship Source: DfE Date published: 10 February 2026</p> <p>The Department for Education (DfE) has launched a consultation on improving the adoption and kinship system of support in England. The government is looking to understand what helps to maintain and improve the mental health and wellbeing of adopted and kinship children and young people. Views are being sought from adopted and kinship care children (under Special Guardianship Orders or Child Arrangement Orders), carers and families, practitioners and partners across health, education and social care. The consultation closes on 05 May 2026.</p>	<p>Find out more: Government unveils expanded support for adopted children</p>