Staying Safe: action plan
Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF)
http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/resources-and-practice/search/IG00312/
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Background

Staying Safe is a cross-government strategy for improving children and young people’s safety, and is meant to cover the full span of the Every Child Matters staying safe outcome. Its main aims are to:

- Raise awareness of the importance of safeguarding children and young people
- Promote better understanding of safeguarding issues, encouraging a change in behaviour towards children and young people, and their safety and welfare
- Ensure work in this area is coherent, and effectively coordinated across government
- Reinforce existing activity by implementing a range of new commitments

Drafted within the overall context of the Children’s Plan, Staying Safe is organised into five chapters: the first provides a general introduction; chapters two to four cover universal (all children and young people), targeted (vulnerable groups of children and young people) and responsive (children who have been harmed) safety issues; and the final chapter sets out how the plan will be monitored and evaluated, linking it to Public Service Agreement (PSA) 12. PSA 12 deals with improving children and young people’s safety, with specific indicators on:

- Percentage of children who have experienced bullying
- Percentage of children referred to children’s social care who received an initial assessment with seven working days
- Hospital admissions caused by unintentional and deliberate injuries to children and young people
- Preventable child deaths as recorded through child death review panel processes

Each chapter contains quotations from adult and child respondents to the consultation, followed by proposed actions. The majority of the actions are drafted within the three-year Comprehensive Spending Review cycle, 2008-2011, and many have already been announced in publications like the Children’s Plan.

Annexe B provides a timetable for commitments from 2008 to 2011.

Chapter 2: Helping all children and young people to stay safe

Begins with a general statement that all children and young people should feel safe and protected, and that child safety is an issue for everyone. Areas for new action include:
**Play and taking part in positive activities**

- The government will work with the Play Safety Forum to help play providers understand the importance of balancing the benefits of offering children opportunities to take risks, with ensuring the levels of risk are reasonable.
- As announced in the Children’s Plan: make £225 million available for play initiatives, publish a play strategy by summer 2008, and create 30 adventure playgrounds for 8 to 13-year-olds in disadvantaged areas.
- Work with partners to ensure the £100 million additional investment in sporting and physical activity opportunities reaches the maximum number of young people.
- Work to improve the quality of parks and urban green spaces.
- Promote the neighbourhood management approach including warden schemes.
- Launch new guidance on taking pupils outside the classroom which will also include revised health and safety guidance.
- Work with the Health and Safety Executive and others to reinforce the message to schools that risk assessment must be proportionate.
- Launch a new Out and About framework for teachers.
- Bring together existing Safety and Quality badges and accreditation procedures to form one system for schools and others to select safe places for learning outside the classroom.
- Continue to make play a priority in the early years.
- Continue to promote positive activities for young people through the Aiming High strategy.

**Understanding and managing risks**

This section focuses on teaching children about risks, and giving parents and carers information on understanding and managing risks.

- Set up a new Child Safety Education Coalition to deliver and evaluate child safety education across the country.
- Launch a major new communications campaign on children’s safety for parents, including targeted communications to families living in high risk areas and public communications to encourage people to take responsibility for children’s safety.
- Publish the results of the review proposed in the *Staying Safe* consultation document, looking at which safety education resources for PSHE are of the most use.
- Explore ways in which safety education can be reflected in the National PSHE Continuing Professional Development Programme.
- Review the delivery of sex and relationships education in schools, so that it better meets young people’s needs, giving them the knowledge, skills and confidence to make safe choices in relation to their sexual health.
- Continue to provide clear messages through the teenage pregnancy strategy media campaign to help young people to: delay early sex; avoid peer pressure; and use contraception if they become sexually active.
- Continue to roll out the Extended Schools programme.

**A safe workforce**

The majority of respondents said they felt safe with the children’s workforce.

- Work with the Children’s Workforce Development Council on new guidance and training on safer recruitment for all of the children’s workforce.
- Complete the policy development and secondary legislation for the Independent Safeguarding Authority scheme, launch the scheme, and continue the communications campaign about the scheme to employers, employees, and the general public.
- Revise the scope of the Exceptions Order to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 so that enhanced criminal record checks can be obtained on a wider range of occupations.
• Continue work to enhance police information capabilities and information flows and work with the Criminal Records Bureau to improve disclosure service arrangements
• Roll out safer recruitment training for the post-16 education and training sector run by the Centre for Excellence in Leadership and the National College of School Leadership (NCSL)

**Addressing new threats to children’s safety**
With specific reference to mobile phones, the internet and computers, and cyberbullying,
• Respond to the recommendations of the Byron Review, which is due to report in March 2008
• Continue to work with industry and children’s charities through the Home Secretary’s Task Force on Child Protection on the Internet, to include supporting the development and publication of the new guidance for the providers of social networking sites and the Ofcom/British Standards Institute (BSI) Standard for internet content control software
• Introduce the new ICT curriculum for Key Stage 3 in September 2008, which will have an increased emphasis on internet safety

**Helping Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) to make a difference**
• Provide funding for child death review processes (local authorities will receive £7.2 million in 2008-2009, £7.4 million in 2009-2010 and £7.7 million in 2010-2011) which are a responsibility of LSCBs. Additional NHS monies of £10 million per annum over the same period will be provided to support health professionals in their participation in these processes
• Use the findings from the forthcoming Child Death Review report published by the Confidential Enquiry into Maternal and Child Health to inform future developments
• Host a second national event for LSCBs in March 2008 to allow them to share their experience
• Issue a collection of readily accessible resources to clarify issues on LSCBs’ roles and responsibilities and facilitate improvement of LSCBs’ performance and effectiveness: non-statutory practice guidance, a good governance toolkit and exemplars of effective practice
• Identify and promote best practice in joint working between children’s and housing services, with research due to be published in Spring 2008

**Road safety**
This is an area of concern for both adults and children.
• Implement the 2007 child road safety strategy
• Consult in early 2008 on a new driver training and testing system to address the safety of drivers and passengers aged 16-18, including proposals for an overhaul of the current system for learning to drive, covering pre-driver education, testing and maintaining driving skills through life
• Encourage local authorities to create more 20 mph zones (which have been shown to reduce child pedestrian deaths by 70 per cent) where appropriate
• Encourage local authorities to support applications for Home Zones

**Health visiting services**
• Publish a new guide on the Child Health Promotion Programme (CHPP) in Spring 2008
• New investment of £30 million over 2008-2011 in the Family Nurse Partnership Programme
• Fund a project to test and develop the CHPP leadership role in children’s centres
• Consult on the post-registration framework including the proposed career pathway for professional staff working in ‘children, family and public health’
• Work with Strategic Health Authorities to remind them of the importance of the health visitor workforce and the need to increase such resources in deprived communities
Third sector engagement

- Set up a new National Safeguarding Unit for the Third Sector to provide advice and assistance to all third sector organisations on safer recruitment procedures, risk management in activity provision and anti-bullying policies. The Unit will also explore ways to help reassure parents about their children taking part in activities run by the third sector and how to choose a club or society.
- Make sure that the details of the Independent Safeguarding Authority scheme are properly communicated to third sector organisations.

Chapter 3: Protecting vulnerable children and young people

This chapter identifies particular groups of children and young people who may be at greater risk of harm: disabled children; looked after children; children in the youth justice system; unaccompanied asylum seeking children; travellers; children living in deprived areas; or children whose parents are experiencing domestic violence, drug or alcohol misuse, or have mental health problems. Universal services must be able to identify these children who have additional needs.

Improving practice in children’s social care

Respondents commented that social services would get involved in serious cases, and there was considerable concern about staff recruitment and retention, morale, and negative portrayals in the media.

- Publish the Children’s Workforce Action Plan in early 2008, which will include proposals to tackle recruitment and retention and to accelerate the pace of workforce re-modelling in social care.
- Improve appropriate referrals to social care by health professionals – the NICE will publish guidelines for health professionals in 2009 on the identification of children with suspected abuse.
- The revised Children Act 1989 Court Orders regulations and guidance and the judiciary’s Public Law Outline (underpinned by a revised Practice Direction) will be implemented from April 2008.
- During 2008/9, the government will work with Cafcass, the Legal Services Commission, local authority organisations and others to develop practitioner toolkits and deliver training to ensure implementation of the new guidance.
- Work with partners to establish awards for safeguarding – to recognise and celebrate good practice in keeping children safe.
- Put forward for consideration in 2008 a theme for the local authority beacon scheme.
- Disseminate the overview reports which draw together the learning from Serious Case Reviews.
- Consider the implications for policy and practice of the next joint Chief Inspectors’ report on safeguarding children, due to be published in Summer 2008.

Reducing numbers of accidents

This is an area of concern for many respondents, with considerable local variations in accident rates.

- Fund a new home safety equipment scheme totalling £18 million over three years, targeted at families in disadvantaged areas.
- Carry out a Priority Review of local area accident prevention.
- Include communications about home safety targeted at disadvantaged families within the broader communications campaign mentioned in Chapter 2.
- Publish new guidance for professionals on common risks in the home, and the most effective forms of intervention to prevent accidents and injuries.
- Continue to invest in making social sector homes decent and safe.
• Take action to reduce overcrowded housing as part of the overcrowding action plan published in December 2007, working with 38 pathfinder authorities
• Continue to promote fire safety messages through Child Safety Week

Addressing parental problems which impact on children’s welfare
Respondents particularly highlighted domestic violence and parental substance misuse as problems, as well as young carers, young people moving on to adult services, and care leavers.
• Ask the Families Information Services to inform parents of safeguarding issues they could consider when choosing childcare
• Implement Parent Know How, an information and support service for parents
• Implement the National Delivery Plan for Domestic Violence
• Implement the provisions in Part 1 of the Children and Adoption Act 2006 which will enable a court to order that parents take up contact activities designed to improve their contact with children
• Publish the revised version of Children’s Needs – Parenting Capacity (1999) that brings together available research findings on the impact of parental mental illness, alcohol and drug misuse and domestic violence on children’s development
• Ensure that Nominated Health Professionals (NHPs), working with Family Intervention Projects, are in place and able to deliver their role effectively by Spring 2008
• Pilot new National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE)/Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) guidelines on practice in five areas to test alternative approaches to improving the life chances of people with chaotic lives and multiple needs
• Disseminate NICE/SCIE cross-cutting practice guidelines on parenting
• Publish a new drug strategy in Spring 2008, a key part of which will be addressing problems caused by parental substance misuse
• Build on existing plans for Family Pathfinders and Extended Family Pathfinders for Young Carers, extending them to model more effective, preventative support around families affected by illness, disability or substance misuse
• Expand Family Nurse Partnerships and Family Intervention Projects

Improving safety on the streets
This was the primary area of concern for children and young people who responded to the consultation, especially bullying, anti-social behaviour and feeling intimidated by gangs.
• Launch new guidance and training for tackling bullying - including cyberbullying - which takes place outside schools in children’s homes, FE colleges, extended school services and youth groups
• In Spring 2008, launch a new pack for school staff to support them in dealing with cyberbullying
• Expand existing peer mentoring programme in schools
• Consider the recommendations of 11 Million’s report on schools’ bullying complaints systems
• Implement actions from the Flanagan Policing Review, due to report in 2008, in particular produce an action plan to improve neighbourhood safety
• Develop a youth crime prevention strategy as part of the forthcoming Youth Crime Action Plan, and work on ways to better identify and support young people who are victims of crime
• Continue to support the work of the police, local authorities and transport operators to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour on public transport
• Provide additional investment for positive activities programmes in 2008-2009 in 15 local authorities particularly affected by gang culture
Disabled children

About 7 per cent of children in the UK (770,000) are disabled.

- Launch new practice guidance on safeguarding disabled children, in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children
- Publish guidance in Spring 2008 to help schools tackle the bullying of children with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities
- Publish guidance in Spring 2008 for health professionals on transition which includes a reference to personal safety in a self-assessment tool for young people
- Work with the Healthcare Commission on measures to hold Primary Care Trusts to account in providing services for children and young people, including those with disabilities
- Expect to see parents’ forums in all areas shaping local services for disabled children

Safeguards for children who are employed

- Publish new guidance on child employment

Youth justice and children involved with the courts

- Work with the Youth Justice Board on a new safeguarding strategy for children and young people in the secure estate
- In the Youth Crime Action Plan, look at the way we treat young offenders in the criminal justice system, in terms of both community disposals and custody
- Support the Bradley Review which will examine the extent to which offenders with mental health problems or learning disabilities could, in appropriate cases, be diverted from custody
- Develop a strategy to improve health and social care services for young people subject to the criminal justice system, linked to the consultation paper Improving Health, Supporting Justice, published by the Department of Health, which closes 4 March 2008
- Support the independent review of restraint in juvenile secure settings, due to report to government in early April 2008
- Respond to the consultation on the way young witnesses give evidence in early 2008, and publish a toolkit on how to set up local support services for young witnesses based on good practice from existing schemes

Young runaways and missing children

The government will be working through a cross-departmental working group.

- Develop an action plan to implement the principles set out in The Children’s Society recommendations from its report Stepping Up: the future of runaway services. The action plan will be published in June 2008
- Initiate an early review of emergency accommodation provision, to consider how local authorities can best provide safe places and ‘breathing spaces’ for young runaways
- Revise the Missing from Home and Care guidance, in conjunction with the review of the Children Act 1989 regulations and guidance

Substance misuse by young people

The government will build on the revised Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy, published in June 2007, by:

- Announcing the detail of additional Government action – specifically on young people and alcohol – in April 2008, which may include actions to improve alcohol education in schools, and tackle parental alcohol misuse which can influence young people’s own consumption
- Publish a new drug strategy in Spring 2008
Chapter 4: Responding when children and young people have been harmed

This chapter not only refers to children who have suffered harm, but also those who self-harm.

Highlighting the role of the public in children and young people’s safety
The overwhelming response to the consultation was that children’s safety is everybody’s responsibility, but people admitted they might be reluctant to intervene if they themselves felt at risk or in danger.

- Continue to work with NSPCC to deliver improved listening services for children and for adults concerned about the welfare of children
- Include messages about taking responsibility for children’s safety within the broader communications campaign outlined in Chapter 2

Better safeguards for children coming into/going out of the country
Focus groups identified unaccompanied asylum seeking children as a particularly vulnerable group, with particular concerns expressed about trafficked children.

- Publish new guidelines on cross-border issues to help raise awareness amongst all children’s services professionals
- Implement reforms as set out in Better Outcomes: The Way Forward. Improving the care of unaccompanied asylum seeking children and trafficked children
- Issue a Code of Practice on keeping children safe from harm (A draft Code of Practice was published on 31 January 2008)
- Disseminate recent Working together to safeguard children: safeguarding children who may have been trafficked guidance for practitioners

Sexual exploitation and abuse of children and young people
Several respondents believed that the original consultation paper failed to give this issue sufficient coverage. Specific fears included parents worried about early sexual activity, and sexual exploitation through the internet.

- Implement the Government’s Coordinated Prostitution Strategy, which will include publishing updated guidance on tackling sexual exploitation of children
- Implement the Cross-Government Sexual Violence and Abuse Action Plan
- Implement actions from the review of protection of children from sex offenders, including:
  - Disclosure of information on sex offenders to the public. Launch pilots for the new arrangements for disclosure to individuals with registered child protection interest
  - Introduction of new legislation creating a duty on MAPPA (Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements) to consider disclosure of an offender’s convictions to members of the public in certain circumstances (in Criminal Justice and Immigration Bill)

- Develop national service guidelines through the Victims of Violence and Abuse Prevention Programme (VVAPP), to be published by Summer 2008. Guidance to include:
  - National service guidelines on therapeutic and preventive interventions
  - Guidance for Primary Care Trusts and local authorities on commissioning services for children and adults affected by sexual violence and abuse
  - Guidelines on the forensic and medical examination and support of victims of rape, sexual assault and child sexual abuse
  - A national framework for the development of services for young people who abuse
  - Guidelines on developing Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs) which have already been published
  - A guide for SARCs providing services for children
- Pilot a stepped-care approach to mental health treatment and care for individuals affected by domestic and sexual violence and abuse
Forced marriage
This section lists the work of the Forced Marriage Unit, established by government in 2005.

- Implement the Forced Marriage (Civil Protection) Act 2007 by Autumn 2008
- Develop a coherent national policy for improving the safeguarding of children at risk of forced marriage, including through building the capacity of schools to recognise and handle the issue
- Continue the work of the Forced Marriage Unit

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